



PREPARATION WITH PURPOSE™

ACADEMIC AND CAREER RESOURCE GUIDE

PARENT EDITION

PREPARE • POSITION • PURPOSE • PROMISE

Every Family Deserves a Plan.



SUPPORT WITH PURPOSE

Practical tools to support your student every step of the way.



ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Build a strong foundation for college, career & life.



EXPLORE OPTIONS

Discover pathways and opportunities that fit your student.



BUILD CHARACTER

Encourage growth, integrity and leadership at home and beyond.



LAUNCH WITH CONFIDENCE

Prepare today for a future filled with purpose.



A FOUR-YEAR
RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR PARENTS OF
GRADES 9-12

FAITH ★ ACADEMICS
CAREER PATHWAYS
LIFE SKILLS ★ FAMILY



D. MICHELE BARNES JENKINS

AUTHOR & FOUNDER, PREPARATION WITH PURPOSE™

Academic and Career Resource Guide — Parent Edition



PREPARATION WITH PURPOSE™

Parent Edition

A Guide for Parents, Guardians, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, Mentors, and Caring Adults

Helping Families Build a Game Plan for High School Success

Every Family Deserves a Plan.

By D. Michele Barnes Jenkins

Author & Founder, Preparation With Purpose™

Preparation With Purpose™ equips families with practical tools, intentional planning, meaningful conversations, and faith-centered encouragement to help students confidently prepare for high school, postsecondary education, career pathways, military service, skilled trades, entrepreneurship, and lifelong success.

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Preparation With Purpose™ Academic and Career Resource Guide — Parent Edition

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To God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

Before there was a manuscript, a workbook, a roadmap, or a plan, there was a seed.

What began in my heart as a desire to help my grandson prepare for high school became something far greater than I could have imagined. And I know without question that I did not arrive here alone.

To God be the glory.

Thank You, Lord, for the vision of **Preparation With Purpose™**. Thank You for taking what began as a grandmother's desire to help one child and showing me that it could become a resource to help many.

Thank You for every idea that came at just the right moment, every door You opened, every person You placed along the journey, and even the moments when I had to stop, rethink, rebuild, and begin again.

Thank You for the wisdom to recognize that preparation is about more than academics. It is about purpose, character, faith, opportunity, responsibility, service, and helping young people recognize the gifts You have already placed within them.

There were moments when I wondered whether I was capable of carrying something this large. Yet You continued to remind me that when You give the vision, You also provide what is needed to walk it out.

I have said throughout this journey: **Helping my Buddy was not just a good idea. It was a GOD IDEA.**

And I still believe that with my whole heart. May every student who opens these pages discover that their life has purpose. May every parent, guardian, grandparent, mentor, educator, coach, and caring adult who walks beside them be given wisdom for the journey. May these pages encourage families to ask questions, seek knowledge, prepare intentionally, and trust You with the future they cannot yet see.

And may I never become so focused on what has been built that I forget **Who gave me the ability to build it.**

Preparation With Purpose™ belongs to the assignment You placed in my hands. My responsibility is simply to steward it with integrity, excellence, humility, and faith.

So, before the first student begins the journey and before the first family turns the page, I give You what belongs to You: **All honor. All praise. All glory.**

Thank You for trusting me with the seed. Thank You for giving me the courage to plant it. And thank You for allowing me to watch it grow. **To God be the glory for the things He has done—and for all that is still to come. Amen.** 🙏💜

Special Dedication

To my Buddy, Savion—

You were the spark that started it all.

What began as a grandmother simply wanting to help her grandson prepare for high school became something far greater than I could have imagined. Watching you grow, work, overcome challenges, and discover what you are capable of made me realize that other students—and the people who love and guide them—needed this kind of support too.

Preparation With Purpose™ began with you.

You are, and always will be, my million in every way. I pray that as you continue your own journey, you remember that your gifts have purpose, your preparation matters, and God has already placed possibilities inside of you that you have yet to discover.

And to my Husband, Darion

Thank you for standing beside me while an idea became a vision and that vision became something real.

Thank you for the patience, encouragement, sacrifices, quiet support, and countless ways you made room for me to build. Through the long days, late nights, scattered papers, new ideas, revisions, and moments when this project seemed to take over everything, you remained beside me.

Having someone who believes in the dream—and in the person carrying it—is a gift I never take for granted.

To both of you:

One inspired the beginning.

One stood beside me through the building.

And both of you are forever woven into the story of **Preparation With Purpose™**.

With all my love,

Memee

Staying Connected

Preparation With Purpose™ is more than a guide—it is an opportunity to encourage another family.

At the back of this resource guide, you'll find a QR code that you can share with parents, guardians, grandparents, mentors, and other caring adults who are preparing a student for high school.

By scanning the QR code, they can receive a complimentary Grade-Level Progress Guide created specifically for their student's current grade level.

One conversation can make a difference.
One shared resource can change a family's journey.

Our mission is simple:

To encourage, equip, and empower families as they prepare with purpose.

Faith-Based Encouragement

Preparation With Purpose™ includes Scripture references and faith-based encouragement throughout this resource guide as a source of inspiration, wisdom, and reflection.

These elements reflect the author's mission to encourage students and families while remaining respectful of readers from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs.

Publisher Preparation With Purpose™

Founded by **D. Michele Barnes Jenkins**

Humble, Texas

United States of America

Dedication

To Every Family Walking This Journey Together...

This resource guide is dedicated to every parent, grandparent, guardian, aunt, uncle, mentor, teacher, coach, counselor, pastor, and caring adult who has ever wondered how to best prepare a young person for the future.

Raising and guiding a student through the high school years is one of life's greatest responsibilities. It is a journey filled with questions, decisions, celebrations, unexpected challenges, and countless opportunities to encourage growth. No family begins this journey with every answer, but every family can choose to prepare with purpose.

This book is also dedicated to the students whose dreams inspired these pages. May they always know they can achieve far more than they can imagine when preparation, perseverance, character, and faith work together.

Finally, this resource guide is lovingly dedicated to my grandson, whose journey became the spark for a vision much greater than our own family. What began as a desire to help one student confidently navigate high school has grown into a mission to encourage and equip families everywhere.

My prayer is that this resource guide brings clarity where there is uncertainty, confidence where there is doubt, and hope for every family preparing for what comes next.

With faith, hope, and unwavering belief in every student's potential,

D. Michele Barnes Jenkins

A Prayer for Parents & Families

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the incredible privilege of guiding and encouraging the life of a young person. As our family begins this high school journey, grant us wisdom to make thoughtful decisions, patience to listen with understanding, and courage to lead with love.

Help us create a home where learning is valued, character is strengthened, and faith remains the foundation through every success and every challenge. Remind us that we do not have to have every answer, but we can trust You to guide each step along the way.

Give us discernment as we navigate opportunities, confidence when difficult decisions arise, and grace to support our student as they discover the gifts and purpose You have placed within them.

May our words build confidence, our actions model integrity, and our encouragement inspire perseverance. Strengthen our family to work together, celebrate each milestone, learn from every setback, and remain united through every season.

Above all, help us remember that true success is measured not only by achievements, but by the character, compassion, faith, and purpose that are developed along the journey.

We place this school year, our family, and our student's future into Your hands, trusting that You will direct our paths and prepare us for every opportunity ahead.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.



Academic and Career Resource Guide — Parent Edition

About the Author

D. Michele Barnes Jenkins

D. Michele Barnes Jenkins is the Author & Founder of **Preparation With Purpose™** a faith-centered educational initiative created to help students and families confidently navigate the high school years and prepare for life beyond graduation.

Although the vision began with a simple desire to help her grandson prepare for high school, it quickly grew into a calling to equip students and the adults who love them with practical guidance, meaningful conversations, and intentional planning. What started as one family's plan became a comprehensive collection of resources designed to serve families from all backgrounds and across a wide range of postsecondary pathways. Through personal experience, research, and the process of helping her own family prepare for the high school journey, Michele came to believe that preparation should extend beyond academics. True success is built through character, responsibility, perseverance, faith, and a willingness to learn and grow.

Preparation With Purpose™ reflects her commitment to making educational planning understandable, encouraging, and accessible. Through the Academic and Career Resource Guide — Student Edition, Academic and Career Resource Guide — Parent Edition, Student-Athlete Advantage, Scholarship Research Lagniappe, and complimentary Grade-Level Progress Guides, her mission is to help families replace uncertainty with confidence and preparation with purpose. Above all, Michele hopes every student discovers that their future is not determined by where they begin, but by the intentional choices they make, the character they develop, and the purpose they pursue each day.

When she is not writing or developing new educational resources, Michele enjoys spending time with her family, encouraging others through faith, and investing in projects that strengthen students, families, and communities.

A Note From the Founder

D. Michele Barnes Jenkins

Every family wants the very best for the young people they love.

We want them to discover their gifts, pursue meaningful opportunities, make wise decisions, overcome challenges, and build lives filled with purpose. Yet somewhere between middle school and graduation, many families find themselves asking the same questions:

Are we doing enough? What should we be preparing for next? What opportunities don't we even know exist?

How can we help without overwhelming our student—or ourselves?

Those questions are not signs of failure. They are signs that you care.

Preparation With Purpose™ was created to help answer those questions—not by promising every solution, but by providing practical guidance that helps families move forward with confidence, one conversation and one decision at a time.

This resource guide is not about creating perfect students or perfect parents.

It is about creating intentional families. Families that communicate openly.

Families that celebrate growth.

Families that recognize that success is about more than grades, scholarships, athletic achievements, or career choices. It is about developing character, responsibility, resilience, wisdom, faith, and the confidence to embrace whatever path lies ahead.

As you journey through these pages, I encourage you to remember that your influence extends far beyond the classroom.

The conversations you have today may become the confidence your student carries tomorrow.

The encouragement you offer during difficult seasons may become the strength they remember years later.

The example you set may become the legacy they choose to continue.

Whether your student dreams of attending college, learning a skilled trade, serving in the military, starting a business, entering the workforce, or pursuing a path uniquely their own, your presence matters.

Your encouragement matters. Your belief in them matters.

Thank you for making the decision to prepare with purpose.

My prayer is that this resource guide becomes more than a book sitting on a shelf.

I pray it becomes a trusted companion that encourages meaningful conversations, strengthens family relationships, and reminds every student that they are surrounded by adults who believe in their future.

Together, let's prepare the next generation—not simply for graduation, but for a lifetime of purpose.

With gratitude and hope,

D. Michele Barnes Jenkins

Author & Founder, **Preparation With Purpose™**

Founder Philosophy

The Journey Begins at Home

Every student's future is influenced long before a college application is submitted, a career is chosen, or a graduation stage is crossed.

It begins at home. Preparation With Purpose™ was founded on a simple belief:

When families prepare together, students are better equipped to succeed.

Success is not built during a student's senior year. It is built through thousands of ordinary moments—conversations around the dinner table, rides home from practice, encouragement after disappointment, celebrating small victories, asking difficult questions, and making intentional decisions one step at a time.

This resource guide was not created because families are failing. It was created because families deserve a practical roadmap.

Too often, parents and caregivers are expected to navigate high school planning, college admissions, financial aid, career exploration, military opportunities, skilled trades, and countless other decisions without a clear guide. Preparation With Purpose™ exists to replace uncertainty with confidence by helping families understand what matters, when it matters, and how to prepare together.

At its heart, this resource guide is about more than academic success.

It is about helping students become responsible, resilient, compassionate, and purpose-driven young adults who are prepared for whatever path they choose.

No two students will follow the same journey. Some will pursue higher education. Some will enter the workforce.

Some will answer a call to military service. Some will build businesses, master skilled trades, serve their communities, or discover opportunities that have not yet been imagined.

Every path has value. Every student has potential. Every family has influence.
Our role as caring adults is not to choose a student's future for them.

Our role is to help them discover who they were created to become, equip them with the tools to pursue that purpose confidently, and remind them that character will always carry them farther than talent alone.

Preparation With Purpose™ is more than a publication. It is a commitment.
A commitment to preparing intentionally. To lead with wisdom. To encourage consistently.
To believing in every student's God-given potential—even before they can fully see it themselves.
Because the greatest legacy we can leave our children is not simply what we provide for them.
It is how faithfully we prepare them for the life they are called to live.
Together, we will prepare with purpose.

D. Michele Barnes Jenkins
Author & Founder, Preparation With Purpose™

Daily Declaration

Preparing My Family with Purpose

Today, I will choose to lead my family with purpose.

I recognize that I do not have to know every answer to make a meaningful difference in my student's life. I will continue learning, asking questions, and growing alongside them.

I will create a home where education is valued, character is developed, responsibility is encouraged, and dreams are nurtured.

I will celebrate progress over perfection, remembering that small, consistent steps often lead to extraordinary outcomes.

I will encourage my student to discover their unique gifts, pursue opportunities with confidence, and build a future rooted in integrity, perseverance, and purpose.

I will choose conversations over assumptions, encouragement over criticism, patience over frustration, and faith over fear.

When challenges arise, I will remain present. When decisions become difficult, I will seek wisdom.

When success is achieved, I will celebrate with gratitude. I believe my student was created with purpose.

I believe preparation creates opportunity. I believe our family can grow stronger through every season of this journey.

Today, I commit to preparing intentionally, leading faithfully, and believing wholeheartedly in the incredible potential that God has placed within my student.

Together, we will prepare with purpose.

How to Use This Resource Guide

Welcome to the **Preparation With Purpose™ Academic and Career Resource Guide — Parent Edition.**

Whether you are a parent, grandparent, guardian, mentor, coach, pastor, counselor, or another caring adult, thank you for choosing to invest in the life of a young person. Your willingness to prepare alongside your student is one of the greatest gifts you can give.

This resource guide was designed to be practical, encouraging, and easy to use. Rather than reading it from beginning to end in a single sitting, we encourage you to use it as a companion throughout your student's high school journey.

Each Foundation builds upon the previous one and follows a consistent format to help families move from learning to action.

Each Foundation Includes:

Principle

Introduces the core lesson and explains why it matters for your student's growth and success.

Explore Further

Provides additional insight, perspective, and practical guidance to help you better understand the topic.

Prepare Today

Offers simple, actionable steps your family can begin implementing right away.

Memee Says

A personal word of encouragement, wisdom, and reflection designed to remind you that you are not walking this journey alone.

Continue the Conversation

Conversation starters that encourage meaningful discussions between you and your student.

Journal

Space to record thoughts, reflections, goals, and observations as your family grows through each Foundation.

Principle Builder Activity

Practical activities and planning tools that help turn ideas into intentional action.

Faith Reflection

Scripture and prayer to encourage your family and keep your focus grounded in faith, purpose, and hope.

A Few Encouragements Before You Begin

There is no such thing as a perfect family. There is no perfect timeline. there is no perfect student. Preparation is not about having every answer. It is about being willing to learn, ask questions, stay engaged, and continue moving forward together.

Celebrate progress. Extend grace. Keep the conversations going. Most importantly, enjoy the journey. The seeds you plant today may not produce fruit overnight, but they have the power to influence your student's future for years to come.

Thank you for allowing **Preparation With Purpose™** to become part of your family's journey. Let's begin.

A Note from Memee

Dear Parent,

Before you turn the page and begin this journey, I want to share something from my heart. Preparation With Purpose™ was never created because I believed families weren't doing enough. It was created because I realized just how many families are expected to figure out on their own.

As I began helping my own grandson prepare for high school, I quickly discovered that every answer seemed to lead to another question. Graduation requirements, career pathways, college planning, financial aid, scholarships, athletics, military options, skilled trades, dual credit, certifications. The list seemed endless.

I remember thinking, "**How are families supposed to know all of this?**" That question became the beginning of this blueprint.

What started as a notebook filled with reminders for one student slowly became a resource designed to encourage families everywhere.

Along the way, I learned something that changed my perspective. Students don't need perfect parents. They need present parents.

They need adults who are willing to listen, ask questions, celebrate progress, offer encouragement, and remind them that setbacks are simply opportunities to learn and grow.

If you're holding this resource guide today, you've already taken one of the most important steps. You've chosen to prepare. That choice alone speaks volumes about your love and commitment. As you work through these Foundations, give yourself permission to learn alongside your student. Celebrate small victories. Ask the questions. Laugh often. Pray together.

Keep the conversation going and remember you are not expected to walk this journey alone.

My hope is that every page reminds you that preparation isn't about perfection. It's about faithfully taking the next step.

Thank you for allowing me to be a small part of your family's story. I'm cheering for you. I'm praying for you, and I believe with all my heart that your student has incredible potential waiting to be discovered.

Memee 



PARENT JOURNEY MAP

Eight Foundations. One Purposeful Journey.

EVERY FAMILY DESERVES A PLAN.™

Your guidance today shapes their tomorrow. Walk alongside your student with purpose, preparation, and confidence—one step at a time.

1

LEADING WITH PURPOSE™



Lead with vision, faith, and intentionality. Your example sets the direction.

2

DISCOVERING YOUR STUDENT'S PURPOSE™



Help them uncover their God-given talents, interests, and passions.

3

BUILDING AN ACADEMIC GAME PLAN™



Create a strong academic foundation and develop smart strategies for success.

4

EXPLORING PATHWAYS & OPPORTUNITIES™



Explore all pathways so they can make informed, confident choices.

5

BUILDING CHARACTER & LIFE SKILLS™



Strengthen character, communication, and life skills for a strong foundation.

6

PREPARING TOGETHER™



Work side by side to build good habits, strong values, and lasting support.

7

LAUNCHING WITH CONFIDENCE™



With preparation and faith, they step forward ready to take on the world.

8

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES™



Keep growing together, celebrate milestones, and embrace new challenges.

OUR ROLE

- GUIDE with wisdom
- LISTEN with love
- SUPPORT with consistency
- PRAY with faith
- CELEBRATE every step



OUR FOCUS

- FAITH
- FAMILY
- EDUCATION
- OPPORTUNITY
- PURPOSE

Every Family Deserves a Plan.™

Your Journey Through the Academic and Career Resource Guide — Parent Edition

Every family begins this journey from a different place. Some are preparing for high school for the very first time. Some are navigating athletics, academics, dual credit, or career exploration. Others are simply trying to make sure they don't miss an opportunity that could change their student's future.

No matter where you begin, Preparation With Purpose™ was designed to help you move forward with confidence—one Foundation at a time.

Each Foundation builds upon the one before it, guiding families through the conversations, decisions, and preparations that support student success both during high school and beyond graduation.

Your Journey Through the Foundations



Foundation 1

Leading with Purpose

Build a strong foundation by recognizing the influence you have in your student's life and establishing a family commitment to intentional preparation.



Foundation 2

Discovering Your Student's Purpose

Learn how to recognize strengths, interests, abilities, and opportunities while encouraging your student to explore possibilities with confidence.



Foundation 3

Building an Academic Game Plan

Understand graduation requirements, academic planning, study habits, course selection, and the importance of consistent progress.



Foundation 4

Exploring Pathways & Opportunities

Discover the many options available after high school, including college, career training, skilled trades, military service, entrepreneurship, certifications, and workforce pathways.



Foundation 5

Building Character & Life Skills

Help your student develop responsibility, leadership, communication, resilience, financial awareness, and the character needed for lifelong success.

Foundation 6

Preparing Together

Strengthen communication, encourage healthy decision-making, build support systems, and prepare your family to navigate challenges together.

Foundation 7

Launching with Confidence

Support your student through applications, financial planning, scholarships, interviews, commitments, and the transition into adulthood.

Foundation 8

The Journey Continues

Celebrate the progress you've made, reflect on the lessons learned, and embrace lifelong learning as your family continues preparing with purpose.

Before We Begin...

Preparation is not a single event—it is a series of intentional conversations, thoughtful decisions, and faithful steps taken over time.

You don't have to complete everything at once. Instead, move through this resource guide one Foundation at a time. Read, reflect, have meaningful conversations, and put what you've learned into practice. Small, consistent actions often create the greatest lasting impact.

Every family begins this journey from a different place. Some of you are opening this resource guide before your student enters high school, while others are guiding a freshman to help them find their footing, a sophomore exploring new opportunities, a junior preparing for important decisions, or a senior getting ready for graduation.

Wherever you begin, know this: **you are not behind.**

Preparation With Purpose™ was created to meet families where they are and help them move forward with confidence. Some Foundations may affirm what you're already doing well, while others may introduce new ideas, conversations, or opportunities you haven't yet considered. Both are signs of growth.

Rather than becoming another item on your family's to-do list, allow this resource guide to become a trusted companion throughout the high school years, one that encourages thoughtful planning, meaningful conversations, and intentional action.

Read together whenever possible. Pause to reflect. Celebrate progress. Extend grace to one another. Most importantly, enjoy the journey.

Years from now, your student may not remember every assignment they completed or every test they took. What they are likely to remember is something far more meaningful: how you encouraged them, believed in them, listened to them, and consistently showed up. Those moments become the foundation they carry into adulthood.

Thank you for choosing to prepare with purpose. Let's begin.

Daily Family Commitment

Before we begin the Foundations, let's take a moment to make a simple commitment—not to perfection, but to intentionality.

Preparation With Purpose™ is not about having every answer or checking every box. It is about choosing to be present, growing together, and making the most of the opportunities God places before your family.

As we begin this journey, we commit to:

- Listen before reacting.
- Encourage before criticizing.
- Learn before assuming.
- Prepare before panicking.
- Celebrate progress instead of pursuing perfection.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Choose faith over fear when the future feels uncertain.
- Support one another through every success and every challenge.
- Value character as highly as achievement.
- Take intentional steps toward our goals

We understand that every family's journey will be different. Rather than comparing ourselves to others, we will focus on becoming the family God has called us to be while helping our student become the person they were created to become. Together, we choose to prepare with purpose.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." **Joshua 24:15**

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STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVANTAGE RESOURCE LIBRARY

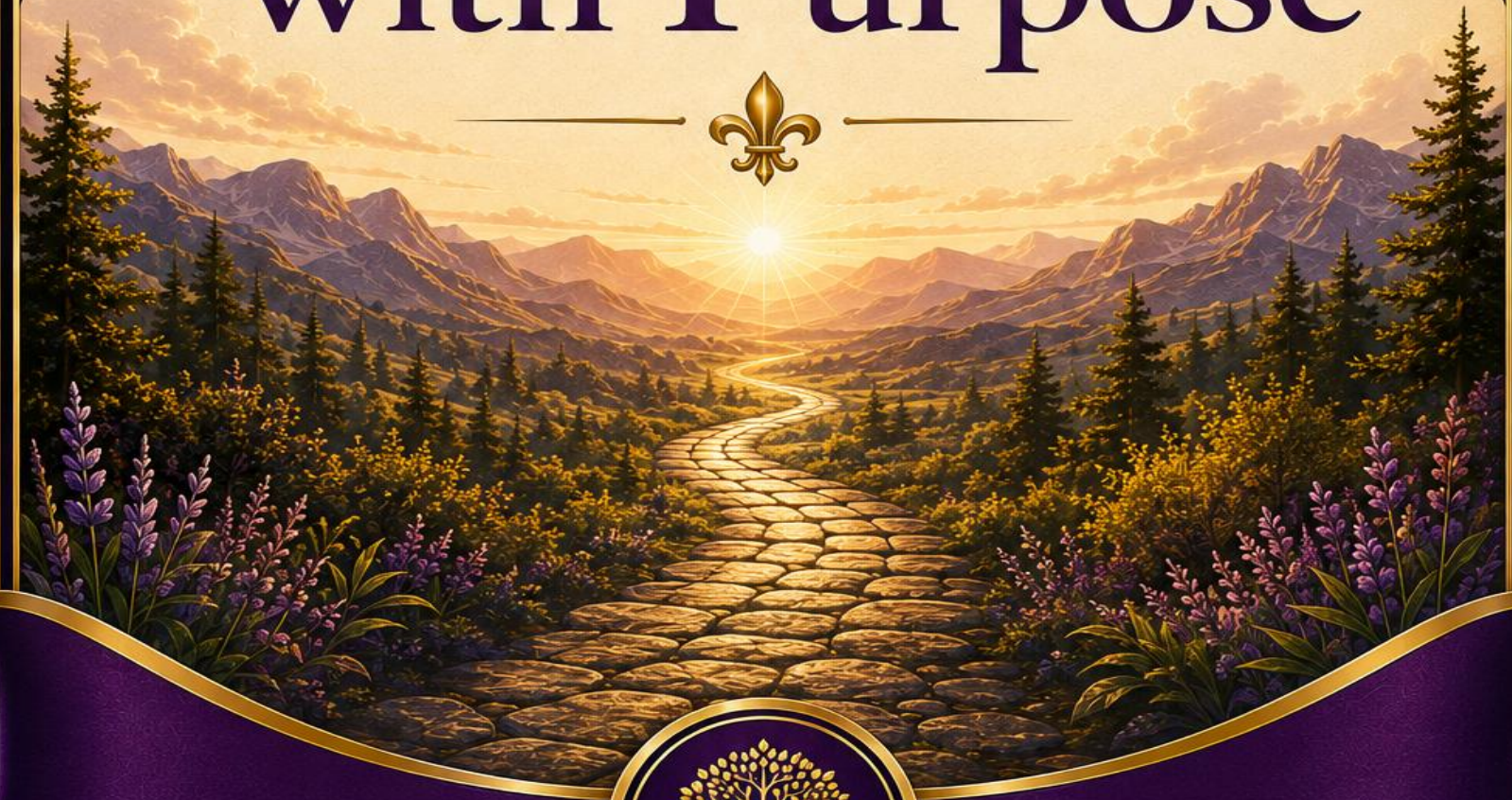
Student-Athlete Advantage — Helping Families Navigate the Student-Athlete Journey
Questions Every Parent Should Ask Before the Season Begins
Building Your Student-Athlete Support Team
Understanding the Recruiting Process
Campus Visits — Making the Most of Every Visit
Questions to Ask About Athletic Scholarships
Making a College Commitment
NCAA Eligibility Center
Communicating with College Coaches
Social Media & Your Student-Athlete's Digital Footprint
Name, Image & Likeness (NIL)
Recruiting Services, Showcases & Camps
Building Your Student-Athlete Portfolio
Exploring Careers in the World of Sports
Understanding Recruiting Timelines & Important Deadlines
Understanding the True Cost of Participation
Official Resources & Trusted Organizations
Final Thoughts



FOUNDATION 1



Leading with Purpose



 FOUNDATION 1

Leading with Purpose

Your Influence Matters More Than You Know

Principle

Long before a student receives a diploma, accepts a college offer, begins military service, earns a certification, starts a career, or launches a business, they are learning from the people they see every day.

They are watching how challenges are handled. How decisions are made. How people treat one another. How responsibility is modeled. How faith is lived. Whether we realize it or not, our daily choices become lessons that shape the next generation.

That is why Preparation With Purpose™ begins with you. Not because parents are expected to be perfect. But because your influence is one of the greatest gifts your student will ever receive. Many parents believe they must become experts in college admissions, financial aid, NCAA eligibility, military opportunities, apprenticeships, or career planning before they can effectively guide their students.

The truth is much simpler: Students rarely need parents who know everything. They need adults who are willing to learn with them. This resource guide is designed to give you confidence—not because you'll leave with every answer, but because you'll know where to look, what questions to ask, and how to help your student make informed decisions.

Preparation begins with presence. It continues with conversations. It grows through consistency. And it flourishes when families choose to prepare together. You are more influential than you realize. Your encouragement can strengthen confidence.

Your example can inspire perseverance. Your belief can help your student see possibilities they never imagined for themselves.

As you begin this journey, remember this: Your greatest contribution will not be creating the perfect plan.

It will be creating an environment where your student continues to feel supported, challenged, encouraged, and deeply loved. That is where purpose begins.



Explore Further

One of the greatest misconceptions about parenting during the high school years is believing that your influence gradually fades as your student becomes more independent. In many ways, the opposite is true.

As students begin making more decisions on their own, they often look to the trusted adults in their lives for reassurance, perspective, and guidance. They may not always ask for advice directly, agree with every suggestion, or even appear to welcome your input. Yet they are paying close attention.

They notice how you respond to disappointment, solve problems, treat others, manage responsibilities, and navigate life's unexpected challenges. Often, your example speaks louder than your words.

The moments that seem ordinary today—rides home from practice, dinner around the table, or a quiet conversation before bed—often become the memories your student carries long after leaving home.

As your student grows, your role will naturally evolve. You may spend less time making decisions for them and more time helping them develop the wisdom and confidence to make good decisions for themselves. That isn't a loss of influence; it's the next stage of it.

Preparation With Purpose™ is designed to help families embrace that transition with confidence. You're not simply preparing your student to graduate from high school. You're helping them become a thoughtful decision-maker, a responsible adult, a compassionate leader, and a lifelong learner.

That kind of preparation doesn't happen through one conversation. It is built through trust, strengthened through consistency, and demonstrated through love.

As you continue this journey, remember that your greatest impact may never appear on a transcript, résumé, or scholarship application. Instead, it will be reflected in the character your student carries into every classroom, workplace, relationship, and opportunity throughout their life.

Never underestimate the quiet power of your influence.



A Gentle Reminder...

This Week's Family Focus

Life has a way of filling every hour with responsibilities. Whether you're commuting to work, working from home, homeschooling, caring for multiple children, or simply trying to keep up with everyday life, it can feel like there is never enough time. The good news is that meaningful connection doesn't always require more time; it often grows from the ordinary moments you're already sharing.

If an opportunity presents itself this week, pause for a few minutes and simply check in with your student. It doesn't have to be a planned conversation or a special event. Some of the best conversations happen while driving to practice, preparing dinner, folding laundry, or ending the day together.

Rather than searching for the perfect words, simply be present. Listen a little longer than usual. Ask how they're doing. Let them know you're interested in what's happening in their world.

Those ordinary moments often become the memories our children carry with them long after they've left home.

This week don't worry about doing more. Simply look for one opportunity to be fully present. Sometimes that's more than enough.

A Moment with Memee

When I first started helping my grandson prepare for high school, I thought I was simply creating a plan for one student. I wanted to make sure we didn't miss important deadlines, overlook valuable opportunities, or wait until senior year to ask questions we should have been asking much earlier.

The more I learned, the more I realized how much families are expected to figure out on their own. There wasn't one resource that simply said, *"Here's a place to start. Let's take this one step at a time."*

That's when my focus began to change. What started as a plan for my family became a vision for yours.

I don't know what your days look like. You may be leaving for work before sunrise, balancing a career while homeschooling, juggling practices, appointments, homework, dinner, and laundry, or stepping into the role of parent again as a grandparent. Whatever your circumstances, I hope this resource guide reminds you that you don't have to do everything perfectly.

Your student doesn't need a perfect parent. They need someone who keeps showing up—someone who listens, encourages, and reminds them that one difficult season never defines the rest of their story.

If this resource guide helps your family have even one meaningful conversation you might not have had otherwise, then every page will have been worth writing.

As we continue this journey together, give yourself permission to breathe. You don't have to finish everything today, and you don't have to know everything today. Simply keep taking the next step, trusting that small, intentional moments often make the greatest difference.

I'm honored to walk this journey with your family, and we'll walk this road together.

Memee 

Continue the Conversation

One of the greatest gifts we can give our students isn't having all the right answers; it's creating space where they feel comfortable asking questions.

You don't have to cover everything in one conversation. In fact, some of the most meaningful discussions happen over time, one small conversation building upon another. If your student doesn't have much to say today, that's okay. Keep showing up. Keep asking. Keep listening.

Here are a few gentle conversation starters you might use whenever the opportunity feels natural.

- **What has been the best part of your week so far, and what made it meaningful?**
- **Is there anything you've been thinking about lately that you'd like to talk through together?**
- **As you think about high school and your future, what excites you the most? Is there anything that feels uncertain or overwhelming?**

Remember, the goal isn't to finish a conversation. The goal is to have one.

Sometimes the most important thing a parent can do is create a safe place where a student knows they can always come back and continue the conversation.

Journal

Every family has a unique story, and every student's journey begins from a different starting point. Before moving on to the next Foundation, take a few moments to reflect on where your family is today.

What are you most excited about as your student begins (or continues) this high school journey? What hopes do you have for your student over the next four years?

Are there any questions, concerns, or uncertainties you would like to learn more about as you work through this resource guide?

Most importantly, what is one strength you already see in your student that you want to continue encouraging?

There are no right or wrong answers. This journal is simply a place to capture your thoughts, celebrate your family's growth, and look back one day to see how far you've come.



Principle Builder Activity

Building Your Family's Foundation

Every family has its own rhythm.

Some families gather around the dinner table every evening. Others connect in the car between activities, during evening walks, while preparing meals, or at the end of a busy day. There is no single "right" way to stay connected. What matters most is finding moments that fit naturally into your family's life.

As you begin this journey, consider one simple question:

When does your family naturally have its best conversations?

Maybe it's Saturday morning over breakfast. Maybe it's the ride home after practice.

Maybe it's during a family game night or while folding laundry together.

Wherever that place or moment may be, protect it.

Those ordinary moments often become the foundation for extraordinary conversations.

Rather than trying to create something new, build upon what already works for your family.

Our Family Connection Moment

Our family usually connects best when:

One conversation we would like to have this week is:

One way we can encourage one another this week is:

There is no perfect formula for raising a family. The goal isn't to create more to do.
The goal is to be intentional with the moments you already have.
Small moments, repeated consistently, often become the memories our children carry with them long after they've grown.

Faith Reflection

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." **Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV)**

Lord,
Thank You for the privilege of guiding the life of a young person. Give us wisdom when decisions feel difficult, patience when the journey feels long, and peace when we are tempted to worry about the future.

Help us recognize the opportunities You place before our family each day. Teach us to encourage more than we criticize, to listen more than we speak, and to trust that You are working even when we cannot yet see the outcome.

Strengthen our family with love, grace, and unity as we prepare for the future together.
One conversation. One decision.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



FOUNDATION 2



Discovering Your Student's Purpose





FOUNDATION 2

Discovering Your Student's Purpose

Principle

Every student has been uniquely gifted with talents, interests, abilities, and experiences that help shape who they are becoming. As parents, our role is not to decide our student's future, but to help them discover it.

Purpose isn't something we assign to our children. It's something we help them uncover over time.

Some students know exactly what they want to pursue. Others may explore several interests before discovering what truly excites them. Both journeys are normal.

One student may dream of becoming an engineer, another a teacher, entrepreneur, nurse, electrician, artist, business owner, athlete, or serving in the military. Some students will change directions more than once, and that's okay. Growth often begins with exploration.

As families, we can create an environment where curiosity is welcomed, questions are encouraged, and students feel safe exploring the possibilities before them. Our greatest gift is not choosing their path but helping them build the confidence to walk it.

The goal isn't to have every answer by the ninth grade.

The goal is to keep discovering, keep learning, and keep preparing together.



Explore Further

Purpose rarely arrives all at once. More often, it unfolds through everyday experiences, new opportunities, meaningful conversations, and a willingness to try something unfamiliar. A class, a volunteer opportunity, a part-time job, a church ministry, or a conversation with a trusted adult can all become part of helping a student discover what brings them joy and where their gifts are best used.

It's also important to remember that purpose and career are not always the same thing. A student's occupation is how they may earn a living. Their purpose is often reflected in how they serve others, use their gifts, and make a positive impact wherever life leads them.

As parents, we don't have to rush the process. We simply create opportunities for exploration while reminding our students that their worth is never defined by a job title, scholarship offer, or college acceptance letter. The journey of discovering purpose isn't about finding one perfect destination. It's about becoming the person God created them to be along the way.

A Gentle Reminder...

This Week's Family Focus

As parents, it's natural to want our students to have everything figured out. We want to know that they're headed in the right direction and making good decisions. But discovering purpose isn't a race, and it rarely happens overnight.

This week, simply pay attention to what naturally brings your student to life. Notice what captures their attention, what they're excited to talk about, or the activities they enjoy without being reminded. Those moments often reveal more than any personality test or career assessment ever could.

Purpose grows through discovery, not pressure.

Sometimes the greatest thing we can do is simply notice what God may already be revealing.

A Moment with Memee

One of the hardest things we do as parents is separate our dreams from our student's dreams.

We often recognize gifts in our children long before they do. Sometimes we hope they'll choose a path that feels familiar because we know it's safe. And if we're honest, we may even hope they'll accomplish things we never had the opportunity to pursue ourselves.

Over the years, I've come to realize that our students don't need us to write their story. They need us to help them discover the story God is already writing.

That takes patience, trust, and the courage to let them explore—even when the outcome is uncertain. Not every opportunity becomes a lifelong destination, but every experience has something to teach them about who they are and who they are becoming.

Our role isn't to map out every step of their journey. It's to encourage them, guide them, and remind them that their worth is never measured by a title, a trophy, a paycheck, or someone else's expectations.

The greatest success our students will ever achieve is becoming the person God created them to be.

Memee 

Continue the Conversation

Purpose has a way of revealing itself through conversations, not just accomplishments. As you continue encouraging your students to explore their interests, keep the dialogue open and pressure-free.

Here are a few conversation starters to help you begin.

- What is something you've enjoyed learning or doing recently, and why do you think it stood out to you?
- If you could spend a day learning about any career, hobby, or skill, what would you choose?
- Who is someone you admire, and what qualities do you admire most about them?

There are no perfect answers. Sometimes the conversation itself is more valuable than the answers it produces.

Journal

As you reflect on this Foundation, consider your student's unique gifts and personality.

What strengths have you noticed in your student over the years?

Have you seen new interests or talents begin to emerge?

What opportunities would you like to help them explore during high school?

What encouragement do you want your student to hear from you more often?

As your student grows and changes, you may find your answers changing as well—and that's part of the journey.

Principle Builder Activity

Discovering Strengths Together

Helping a student discover purpose doesn't require having all the answers. Sometimes it begins by simply noticing what makes them come alive.

Take a moment this week to reflect on these three simple questions.

My student seems most energized when...

One strength I consistently see in my student is...

One opportunity I'd like to encourage them to explore is...

Remember, purpose isn't discovered in a single day.

It grows one experience, one conversation, and one opportunity at a time.

Faith Reflection

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” — Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for creating each student with unique gifts, talents, and purpose. Help us to see our children through Your eyes and to encourage the gifts You have placed within them.

Give us the wisdom to guide without controlling, to encourage without comparing, and to trust Your timing as our students discover the path You have prepared for them.

Open doors of opportunity, surround them with positive influences, and give them the courage to explore, learn, and grow with confidence.

May our home always be a place where dreams are nurtured, questions are welcomed, and purpose is discovered one step at a time.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



FOUNDATION 3



Building an Academic Game Plan



FOUNDATION 3

Building an Academic Game Plan

Principle

Success in high school isn't built on a single test, one report card, or one important decision. It's built over time through consistent habits, thoughtful planning, and a willingness to keep moving forward, even when the journey feels challenging.

An academic game plan isn't about expecting perfection. It's about helping your student understand where they are, where they want to go, and what steps will help them get there.. Every assignment completed, every question asked, every class attended, and every new skill learned becomes another brick in the foundation they're building for the future.

As parents, it's easy to focus on grades because they're measurable. But grades tell only part of the story. Growth, effort, resilience, responsibility, and a willingness to learn are just as important. Those qualities often become the difference between students who simply complete high school and those who are truly prepared for what comes next.

An academic plan should also leave room for balance. Students need time to learn, rest, participate in activities they enjoy, spend time with family, and simply be teenagers. Preparation isn't about filling every available minute—it's about making thoughtful choices with the time they have.

When families focus on steady progress instead of constant pressure, students are more likely to develop confidence, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

The goal isn't to raise a perfect student.

The goal is to help your student become a prepared one.

Explore Further

Every student's academic journey will look a little different. Some students will excel in every subject, while others may need extra support in certain areas. Some will discover a passion for advanced coursework, while others will thrive through career and technical education, dual credit, apprenticeships, or hands-on learning experiences. None of these paths are more valuable than another—they are simply different ways of preparing for the future.

One of the greatest gifts we can give our students is helping them understand that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness. Whether it's meeting with a teacher, finding a tutor, forming a study group, or simply asking one more question in class, learning to seek support is a skill that will benefit them long after graduation.

Academic success is also about helping students learn how they learn best. Some retain information by reading, others by listening, writing, discussing, or practicing. As families discover what works best for their student, learning often becomes more enjoyable and less stressful.

Remember, education isn't simply about earning good grades.

It's about developing the knowledge, confidence, and lifelong learning habits that will serve your student wherever their journey leads.

A Gentle Reminder...

This Week's Family Focus

Every student has an off day, a difficult class, or a season when school feels harder than usual. Those moments don't define their future, and they don't define your success as a parent.

This week, instead of asking, "How was school?" consider asking a question that invites a conversation. You might discover your student needs encouragement more than answers.

Progress is rarely measured in one assignment or one report card. It's often found in the quiet determination to keep showing up, keep learning, and keep trying.

A Moment with Memee

Can I share something I've learned over the years?

Some students will bring home report cards filled with A's, while others may work twice as hard to earn a passing grade. Neither report card tells the whole story.

I've come to believe that some of life's most valuable lessons are learned through the struggle. A student who refuses to give up after failing a test, asks for help when they don't understand, or perseveres through a difficult semester is developing qualities that can never be fully measured by a letter grade.

Celebrate the achievements, of course, but don't overlook the growth that happens along the way. Encourage effort. Recognize progress. Celebrate perseverance. Those are the qualities that build confidence, resilience, and character—qualities that will serve your student long after they've forgotten what was on their Algebra test.

Years from now, your student may not remember every grade they earned, but they will remember who believed in them, encouraged them, and stood beside them through every success and every setback.

Sometimes the greatest gift we can give our children isn't celebrating what they accomplish. It's helping them believe they are loved, valued, and capable every step of the way. **Memee** ❤️

 Continue the Conversation

One of the best ways to support your students academic growth is to stay curious about what they're learning, not just how they're performing. As you continue these conversations, remember that your interest can often be more encouraging than your advice.

You might ask:

- What's something you learned this week that surprised you?
- Is there a class you enjoy more than the others? What makes it interesting to you?
- Is there anything at school that's been more challenging than you expected?

You don't have to solve every challenge during one conversation. Sometimes your willingness to listen is the encouragement your student needs most.

 Journal

Every student will experience academic highs and lows. This is an opportunity to reflect on your student's journey without focusing solely on grades. What learning habits have you seen your student develop? Where have you noticed growth—not only academically, but in responsibility, perseverance, or confidence?

Is there an area where your student may need additional encouragement or support?
How can you help create an environment where learning feels less stressful and more rewarding?
As you continue this journey together, remember that progress will often happen one lesson, one conversation, and one day at a time.



Principle Builder Activity

Building an Environment for Success

Every family supports learning differently, and that's okay. The goal isn't to create the perfect study routine but to create an environment where your student knows learning is valued and support is always available.

Take a moment to reflect.

One thing our family is already doing well to support learning is...

One small adjustment that could make learning a little easier is...

One way I can encourage my student this week is...

Remember, students don't need perfect circumstances to succeed. They need people who believe in them and encourage them to keep growing.



Faith Reflection

"Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." **Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)**

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for reminding us that growth takes time. Help us to encourage our students with patience, celebrate their progress with gratitude, and support them through every challenge with love.

When the journey feels difficult, remind us that every lesson learned, every obstacle overcome, and every step forward is preparing them for the future You have planned.

Give our families wisdom, perseverance, and peace as we continue growing together.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



FOUNDATION 4



Exploring Pathways & Opportunities



→ Every Family Deserves a Plan. ←



FOUNDATION 4

Exploring Pathways & Opportunities

Principle

One of the greatest gifts we can give our students is the freedom to explore the many paths available to them after high school. While college is a wonderful option for many students, it is not the only path to a meaningful, successful, and purpose-filled future.

Today's students have more opportunities than ever before. Some may pursue a four-year university, while others choose community college, technical or trade schools, apprenticeships, military service, entrepreneurship, certifications, or enter the workforce to gain valuable experience. Each pathway offers unique opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute to the world.

As parents, our role is not to convince our students that one path is better than another. Instead, we can help them understand the options available, encourage them to explore thoughtfully, and remind them that success is built through preparation, commitment, and character—not simply by the name of a school or career.

Exploring pathways also helps students discover possibilities they may have never considered. A conversation with a mentor, a campus visit, a job shadowing experience, a trade demonstration, a military information session, or volunteering in the community can all provide valuable insight into future opportunities.

Preparation becomes less overwhelming when students understand they have choices. The goal is not to rush the decision.

The goal is to prepare wisely so that when the time comes, your student can move forward with confidence.



Explore Further

It's easy to think of career planning as something that happens during the senior year of high school. Preparation often begins much earlier through experiences that help students learn more about themselves and the world around them. Some students discover their interests through school organizations, athletics, fine arts, or volunteer opportunities. Others gain confidence through part-time jobs, church involvement, internships, career fairs, dual-credit courses, or technical education programs. Every experience teaches something valuable, even the ones that don't become lifelong careers. Families don't have to map out every detail today. Instead, remain open to opportunities as

they arise and encourage your student to ask questions, explore new interests, and learn from every experience. The future doesn't belong to the students who have every answer. It belongs to those who are willing to keep learning, growing, and preparing for whatever opportunities come next.

A Gentle Reminder...

This Week's Family Focus

When we hear someone ask a student, *"What are you going to do after high school?"* it's easy to feel like an answer should already exist.

The truth is, many adults have changed careers, discovered new passions, or found opportunities they never imagined when they were teenagers.

Allow your student the freedom to explore without feeling pressured to have every detail figured out today.

The goal isn't to have all the answers. The goal is to remain open to the possibilities God places along the journey.

Moment with Memee

For a long time, success was often measured by a single question: **"Where are you going to college?"** Today, that question has become much bigger.

I've met young adults who earned college degrees and built careers they love. I've also met skilled trades professionals, entrepreneurs, military service members, healthcare professionals, first responders, and business owners who found fulfillment by taking a different path.

What they all had in common wasn't the path they chose; it was the preparation, character, and commitment they brought to it.

I hope our students grow up knowing there is dignity in honest work, purpose in serving others, and value in every opportunity that allows them to use the gifts God has given them.

If your student's journey looks different from someone else's, don't be afraid. Different doesn't mean less it simply means God may be leading them along a path that was uniquely designed for them.

Help your student focus less on comparing their journey and more on preparing faithfully for the opportunities ahead. Success isn't found in following someone else's path; it's found in becoming the person God created them to be.

Memee ❤️



Continue the Conversation

As your student begins exploring different pathways, remember that every conversation doesn't have to lead to a decision. Sometimes the best conversations simply open the door to new possibilities.

You might ask:

- Has anything you've learned this year made you curious about a career or field you didn't know much about?
- If you could spend a day with someone in any profession, what would you want to learn from them?
- What kind of difference would you like to make in the lives of other people one day?

Listen with curiosity rather than expectation. Today's interests may become tomorrow's opportunity.



Journal

Every student is created with unique gifts, interests, and aspirations. As you reflect on this Foundation, think about the opportunities that may help your student continue discovering what's possible.

What interests or talents seem to come naturally to your student?

Have you noticed any new interests developing over the past year?

What experience would you like your student to have before graduating from high school?

How can you encourage exploration without creating unnecessary pressure?

As your student grows, remember that discovering purpose is a journey, not a deadline.



Principle Builder Activity

Exploring Possibilities Together

Every opportunity helps students learn something about themselves. Some experiences confirm an interest, while others simply help them discover what isn't the right fit—and both are valuable.

Take a few moments to think about experiences your student might enjoy exploring over the next year.

One opportunity my student may enjoy exploring is...

Someone who could encourage or mentor my student is...

One new experience I'd love for my student to have is...

The goal isn't to fill every weekend with activities.

It's simply to remain open to opportunities that help your students continue discovering who they are becoming.



Faith Reflection

"Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established." **Proverbs 16:3 (NASB)**

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the many opportunities You place before our students. Give us wisdom to recognize the doors You are opening and patience to trust your timing for those that have not yet appeared.

Help us encourage our students with confidence rather than fear, reminding them that You have created each of them with purpose. As they explore the future, may they seek Your guidance, remain teachable, and walk forward with courage.

May our family continue preparing with faith, hope, and confidence, trusting that You will direct every step.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



Looking Beyond the Pathway

As your family explores the many pathways available after high school, remember that choosing a pathway is only the beginning. Within every pathway are countless opportunities to serve, grow, lead, and build a meaningful future.

The goal isn't simply choosing **where** your student will go after graduation.

It's helping them discover **who God created them to become** and how their gifts can make a difference in the lives of others.

As you continue these conversations together, encourage your student to look beyond job titles and consider the many ways their interests, talents, and passions can become a lifelong calling.



Exploring Career Pathways & Future Possibilities

Helping Your Student Discover a Meaningful Future

One of the greatest gifts we can give our students is the freedom to explore possibilities.

Some students know exactly what they want to become. Others will discover their purpose through exploration, experience, and exposure. As parents, our role is not to choose their path—it is to help them discover it.

Encourage your student to explore careers that align with their interests, strengths, values, and God-given gifts. Every career has the potential to become meaningful work when it is pursued with excellence, integrity, and purpose.

Whether your student's future includes college, technical training, military service, entrepreneurship, ministry, or entering the workforce, every pathway deserves thoughtful preparation.



Career Fields Worth Exploring

Rather than focusing on one specific job, encourage your student to explore industries that offer a wide variety of opportunities.



Healthcare & Medical Careers

- Nursing
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Sports Medicine
- Dentistry
- Pharmacy
- Mental Health & Counseling
- Radiologic Technology
- Healthcare Administration



STEM & Technology

- Engineering
- Computer Science
- Artificial Intelligence
- Cybersecurity
- Robotics
- Data Analytics
- Environmental Science
- Information Technology



Business & Entrepreneurship

- Accounting
 - Marketing
 - Finance
 - Human Resources
 - Project Management
 - Real Estate
 - Small Business Ownership
 - Entrepreneurship
-

Skilled Trades & Technical Careers

- Electrician
 - HVAC
 - Plumbing
 - Welding
 - Construction Management
 - Automotive Technology
 - Manufacturing
 - Industrial Maintenance
-

Education & Human Services

- Teaching
 - School Counseling
 - Educational Leadership
 - Social Work
 - Child Development
 - Instructional Design
-

Creative Arts & Media

- Graphic Design
 - Photography
 - Film & Video Production
 - Music
 - Animation
 - Interior Design
 - Digital Content Creation
-

Public Service

- Fire Service
 - Law Enforcement
 - Emergency Medical Services
 - Emergency Management
 - Criminal Justice
 - Public Administration
-

Ministry & Community Leadership

- Ministry
 - Missions
 - Nonprofit Leadership
 - Community Outreach
 - Youth Ministry
 - Faith-Based Counseling
-

Military Pathways

- Enlisted Careers
 - ROTC
 - Officer Programs
 - Service Academies
 - Civilian Careers Supporting the Military
-

Athletics & Sports Industry

Not every student-athlete will become a professional athlete—but athletics can open the door to many rewarding careers.

Students may choose to pursue opportunities in:

- Coaching
- Athletic Training
- Sports Medicine
- Physical Therapy
- Sports Broadcasting
- Sports Journalism
- Sports Marketing
- Sports Management
- Strength & Conditioning
- Sports Psychology
- Event Management
- Recreation
- Officiating
- Equipment & Product Design
- Entertainment & Sports Law
- Data Analytics

See the Student-Athlete Advantage section for expanded guidance related to athletics.. .

A Moment with Memee

One of the best conversations you can have with your student is simply asking: **"What do you enjoy doing so much that you lose track of time?"**

Sometimes the answer isn't a specific career. It may be helping people, building things, creating, teaching, designing, leading, encouraging others, serving the community, solving problems, or working with technology. The answers to those conversations often reveal gifts that can grow into meaningful careers.

Keep asking questions. Keep exploring together. Sometimes purpose is discovered in one conversation at a time.

Continue the Conversation

Take a few moments to talk together.

- What subjects or activities seem to energize your student?
- Which careers have they already expressed interest in?
- What new careers surprised your family while reading this section?
- Is there a professional your student could interview or shadow?
- What is one career your family will learn more about this month?

Family Discovery Activity

Together, choose **three careers** your student would like to explore.

Career	Why It Interests Me	Next Step
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Principle Builder Activity

This month, encourage your student to learn something new about one career that interests them. Watch a video. Visit a college campus. Attend a career fair.

Talk with someone working in the field. Read about the education or training required.

Every small step builds confidence and brings your student one step closer to discovering their purpose.



FOUNDATION 5

Building Character & Life Skills



INTEGRITY • CONFIDENCE • COMPASSION
COMMUNICATION • RESPECT • RESPONSIBILITY
LEADERSHIP • RESILIENCE • FAITH



FOUNDATION 5

Building Character & Life Skills

Principle

Long after students forget the questions on a history test or the formula from a math class, the character they develop during these years will continue shaping the choices they make and the lives they lead.

High school is about more than earning credits or preparing for graduation. It is a season when students are learning responsibility, integrity, perseverance, compassion, leadership, communication, and the importance of keeping their word. These qualities influence every relationship, every opportunity, and every decision they will encounter in adulthood.

While academic knowledge opens doors, character determines how students walk through them.

As parents, we have the privilege of helping our students understand that success is about more than achievements. It's about becoming someone others can trust someone who demonstrates kindness, treats people with respect, accepts responsibility, and continues growing through both success and disappointment.

Life skills develop in ordinary moments. They are learned by keeping commitments, managing time, serving others, solving problems, practicing gratitude, and taking responsibility when mistakes are made. These lessons may not always appear on a transcript, but they often become the qualities that employers, colleges, military leaders, coaches, and communities value most.

Character is not built in a single day.

It is strengthened by one choice at a time.

Explore Further

One of the beautiful things about character is that it continues to grow throughout our lives. None of us begins with every quality fully developed, and neither do our students. Patience is cultivated through waiting, responsibility grows through practice, integrity is revealed when no one is watching, and perseverance is often strengthened through life's challenges.

The good news is that parents don't have to create extraordinary moments to teach these lessons. Everyday life provides countless opportunities. Keeping commitments, apologizing after making a mistake, showing kindness to a neighbor, following through on responsibilities, managing money wisely, respecting others, and serving with a willing heart all become powerful examples our students quietly observe.

Our children are always learning from what we say, but they often learn even more from what we consistently do. The example we set today may become the standard they carry into their own families tomorrow.

Character isn't built in extraordinary moments alone. More often, it's shaped through the ordinary choices we make every day.

A Gentle Reminder...

This Week's Family Focus

Character isn't built only during life's biggest moments. More often, it's shaped through the ordinary choices we make every day.

As you move through this week, notice the moments when your student demonstrates kindness, honesty, responsibility, or perseverance. Those qualities can be easy to overlook because they don't always come with awards or recognition.

When you see them, say something.

A few sincere words of encouragement can stay with a student far longer than we realize.

Sometimes the character we choose to recognize is the character that continues to grow.

A Conversation with Memee

As parents, it's easy to celebrate the big moments—a great report card, making the team, earning an award, or receiving an acceptance letter. Those milestones deserve to be celebrated.

But some of the moments that have made me the proudest never came with applause.

They're the moments when a student tells the truth, even when it's difficult. When they apologize without being asked. When they help someone who has nothing to offer in return. When they choose to keep going after disappointment instead of giving up.

Those are the moments that quietly shape who they are becoming.

Long after people forget a GPA, they'll remember whether they were honest, dependable, compassionate, and willing to do the right thing—even when it wasn't the easy thing.

As parents, we have the privilege of noticing those moments, celebrating them, and reminding our students that character matters just as much as achievement.

Because in the end, the greatest accomplishments aren't always the ones that earn applause—they're the ones that shape a life.

Memee ❤️

Continue the Conversation

Character is often revealed in everyday moments, making them some of the best opportunities for meaningful conversations. Rather than focusing only on accomplishments, consider talking about the qualities your student is developing along the way.

You might ask:

- Who is someone you admire because of their character?
- What makes that person stand out to you?
- What do you think it means to be someone others can trust?
- When life gets difficult, what helps you keep going instead of giving up?

There are no perfect answers. The goal is simply to encourage your student to think about the kind of person they want to become, not just what they want to achieve.

Journal

Character is built one choice at a time. As you reflect on this Foundation, think about the qualities you already see developing in your student.

What character traits make you smile when you see them?

Where have you noticed growth over the past year?

What qualities would you like to continue encouraging as your student matures?

How can your family intentionally model the character you hope your student carries into adulthood?

One day, your student may forget many of the details of high school, but the character they build will remain with them for a lifetime.

Principle Builder Activity

Building Character at Home

Character isn't taught through one conversation. It's developed through everyday life and the example we set for one another. Take a moment to reflect.

One character quality I already see growing in my student is...

One quality I'd like to encourage even more is...

One way our family can model that quality together is...

Small moments of consistency often leave the greatest impression.

Faith Reflection

"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the opportunity to help shape not only our student's future, but also their character. Help us model integrity, kindness, humility, perseverance, and love in our own lives so our students can see those qualities lived out each day.

When challenges come, remind us that You are using every experience to strengthen our faith and refine our character. May our home be a place where grace is given freely, forgiveness is practiced often, and love remains at the center of every conversation.

Guide our family as we continue becoming the people You created us to be.
In Jesus' name, Amen.



PREPARATION WITH PURPOSE™

FOUNDATION

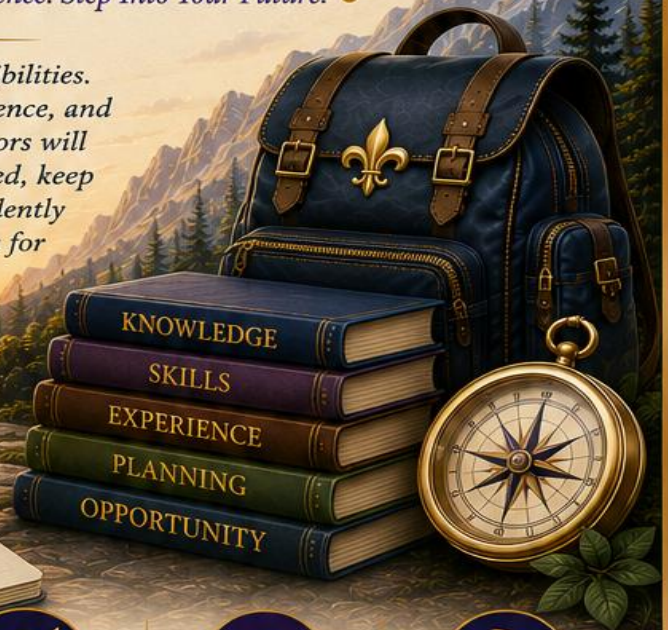
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PREPARING FOR FUTURE PATHWAYS

• *Prepare with Purpose. Choose with Confidence. Step Into Your Future.* •

*Your future is full of possibilities.
The more you learn, experience, and
prepare now, the more doors will
open for you. Stay focused, keep
growing, and step confidently
into the path God has for
your life.*

PREPARATION
TODAY
CREATES
OPTIONS
TOMORROW.
PURPOSE
TURNS OPTIONS
INTO
OPPORTUNITIES.



EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

Learn about college, careers, military, trades, and more. Keep your mind open to all possibilities.



BUILD YOUR SKILLS

Develop the academic, technical, and life skills you need for any path you choose.



GAIN EXPERIENCE

Get involved, volunteer, job shadow, intern, or work. Real experience opens real doors.



SET GOALS & MAKE A PLAN

Create a plan for your future and take consistent steps toward your goals.



BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Surround yourself with mentors, positive peers, and resources that support your journey.



STEP INTO YOUR FUTURE

Be prepared to seize opportunities and walk boldly in the purpose God has for you.



• *One Purposeful Step at a Time.* ♥ •

FOUNDATION 6

Preparing Together

Principle

As students grow, so do the decisions they face. High school brings new responsibilities, greater independence, and opportunities that require thoughtful choices. During this season, one of the greatest gifts a family can give a student is the confidence of knowing they don't have to navigate those decisions alone.

Preparing together doesn't mean making every decision for your student. It means creating an environment where questions are welcomed, conversations are ongoing, and wisdom is shared with love and respect.

As parents, our role naturally begins to shift during these years. We move from directing many of our students' decisions to helping them develop the confidence to make wise decisions for themselves. That transition isn't always easy, but it is one of the most important parts of preparing them for adulthood.

Students who know they can come home and talk honestly about challenges, disappointments, successes, and uncertainty often develop greater confidence because they know they are supported, not judged.

Preparing together means celebrating victories together, learning from mistakes together, praying together, and reminding one another that every season—whether exciting or difficult—offers an opportunity to grow.

Strong families aren't built because they never face challenges. They're built because they continue facing them together.



Explore Further

Every family communicates differently, and that's okay. Some conversations happen around the dinner table, while others unfold during a drive across town, while watching a game, taking a walk, or sharing a quiet moment at the end of a busy day. There is no perfect setting for meaningful conversations.

What matters most is creating an environment where your student knows they can speak honestly without fear of disappointing you or being judged.

As students become more independent, they won't always need us to solve their problems. More often, they'll need someone who will listen, ask thoughtful questions, offer wise perspective, and remind them they can find a way forward.

Preparing together also means allowing students to experience appropriate responsibility. We don't have to remove every obstacle from their path. Some of life's greatest lessons are learned by working through disappointment, accepting responsibility, asking for help, and finding the courage to try again.

When families remain connected through every season, students gain something that will serve them for the rest of their lives: the confidence of knowing they are deeply loved, fully supported, and never have to face life's challenges alone.

A Conversation with Memee

One of the hardest parts of parenting is watching our children become more independent.

We spend years teaching them how to tie their shoes, ride a bike, solve problems, and make wise decisions. Then, almost without realizing it, we begin stepping back so they can do those things on their own.

If I'm honest, that can be bittersweet. We want them to spread their wings, yet a part of us still wants to protect them from every disappointment and every difficult moment.

Over the years, I've learned that preparing our children for life isn't about removing every obstacle from their path. It's about giving them the confidence to face those obstacles, knowing they never have to face them alone.

There will be times when they make choices we wouldn't have made. There will also be moments when they surprise us with wisdom, courage, and resilience beyond their years. Both are part of growing.

So, keep being the safe place they know they can return to. Keep listening. Keep encouraging. Keep praying. Keep reminding them that home is not just a place; it is a relationship built on love, grace, and trust.

One day, they may not remember every piece of advice you gave them, but they'll always remember how you made them feel. And that may become one of the greatest gifts you ever give them.

Memee 

Continue the Conversation

As your student grows, your conversations may begin to change. Instead of giving instructions, you may find yourself asking more questions, listening more carefully, and encouraging them to think through decisions for themselves.

You might ask:

- What's a decision you've had to make recently that made you think?
- When something doesn't go as planned, what helps you move forward?
- How can I best support you as you continue growing and becoming more independent?

Sometimes the most meaningful conversations aren't about finding immediate answers. They're about reminding your student that they'll always have someone in their corner.

Journal

Every family experiences seasons of change. As your student becomes more independent, take a moment to reflect on your journey together.

What has your student taught you about yourself as a parent?

In what ways have you seen your relationship grow over the past few years?

As your student takes on more responsibility, what hopes do you have for the relationship you continue building together?

What is one conversation you hope your student will always feel comfortable having with you?

Remember, strong relationships aren't built through perfect conversations; they're built through consistent love, trust, and grace.



Principle Builder Activity

Strengthening Your Connection

Every family connects differently. Rather than trying to create the “perfect” relationship, focus on creating one where your student knows they are heard, valued, and loved. Take a moment to reflect.

One thing that helps my student feel supported is...

One tradition or routine I’d like our family to continue is...

One way I’d like to strengthen our relationship during the coming year is...

Strong relationships are not built only through extraordinary moments. They are strengthened through ordinary moments shared consistently.

II The PAUSE Method

As your student becomes more independent, there will be moments when emotions are high, information is incomplete, or an important decision needs more thought. The PAUSE Method offers a simple way for families to slow down, gather perspective, and move forward with greater wisdom.

P — Pray: Invite God into the decision and ask for wisdom, clarity, and peace.

A — Assess: Consider what is happening, what information is available, and what may still need to be learned.

U — Understand: Think through the possible consequences, responsibilities, opportunities, and how the decision aligns with your student’s goals and values.

S — Seek Wise Counsel: Talk with a trusted parent, guardian, counselor, coach, mentor, teacher, pastor, or qualified professional who can offer helpful perspective.

E — Evaluate and Execute: Review the options, make the most informed decision possible, and move forward with confidence.

The goal is not to make a perfect decision every time. It is to build the habit of slowing down, seeking wisdom, and responding thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively.

One situation where our family could use the PAUSE Method is...

One trusted person we can seek wise counsel from is...

One important branding correction

Faith Reflection

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. Ecclesiastes 4:9–10 (NKJV)

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of family and the opportunity to grow together through every season of life. Help us build relationships rooted in love, trust, patience, and understanding.

Teach us to listen with compassion, encourage with wisdom, and support one another through both celebrations and challenges. May our home always be a place where grace is abundant, forgiveness is freely given, and every member of our family knows they are deeply loved.

As we continue this journey together, strengthen the bonds that unite us and remind us that with You at the center, we never walk alone.

In Jesus' name, **Amen.**



PREPARATION WITH PURPOSE™

FOUNDATION

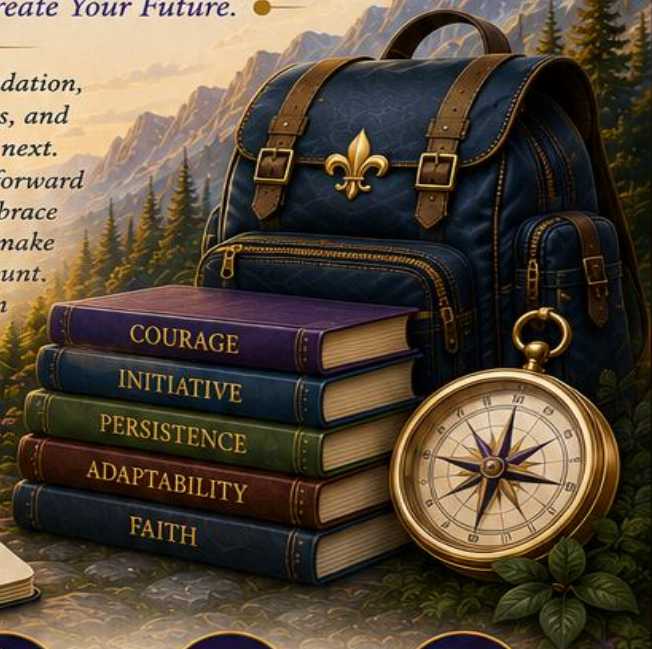
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STEPPING INTO OPPORTUNITIES

• Be Ready. Take Action. Create Your Future. •

*You've built your foundation,
explored your options, and
prepared for what's next.
Now it's time to step forward
with confidence, embrace
opportunities, and make
every experience count.
Your future is in
your hands.*

OPPORTUNITIES
DON'T
HAPPEN BY
ACCIDENT.
PREPARATION
OPENS DOORS.
ACTION
WALKS YOU
THROUGH
THEM.



BE READY

Stay prepared so
when opportunities
come, you are
ready to go.



SEEK OUT OPPORTUNITIES

Look for scholarships,
programs, leadership
roles, and experiences
that align with your
goals.



TAKE INITIATIVE

Don't wait to be
asked. Step up,
raise your hand,
and take action.



MAKE AN IMPACT

Use your gifts and
passions to help
others and leave
a positive mark.



KEEP GROWING

Learn from every
experience and
keep developing
your skills.



STEP THROUGH THE DOOR

Walk boldly through
the doors God opens
and trust Him for
what's next.



• One Purposeful Step at a Time. ♥ •

FOUNDATION 7

Launching with Confidence

Principle

Senior year often arrives faster than families expect. What once felt like a distant milestone suddenly becomes a season filled with applications, deadlines, celebrations, important decisions, and the excitement of new beginnings. While this season can feel overwhelming at times, it is also an opportunity to reflect on how far your student has come. The years of learning, growing, overcoming challenges, and preparing have all been building toward this moment.

Launching with confidence doesn't mean having every detail perfectly planned. It means helping your student move into the next season of life knowing they have developed the character, knowledge, and resilience to continue learning wherever life leads them.

Every student's launch will look different. Some will move into college classrooms, others into military service, apprenticeships, technical programs, the workforce, entrepreneurship, or missions and ministry. Each path deserves to be celebrated because each represents another step toward fulfilling the purpose God has placed within them.

As parents, our role during this season is to continue encouraging, guiding, and cheering from the sidelines while allowing our students to begin taking ownership of their future.

Preparation has brought them this far. Confidence helps them take the next step.

Explore Further

The final year of high school often becomes a season of mixed emotions. Families celebrate accomplishments while also recognizing that change is on the horizon. Excitement, uncertainty, pride, anticipation, and even a little nervousness can all exist at the same time.

As your student prepares for graduation, remember that this season isn't only about completing applications or making final decisions. It's about helping them transition into adulthood with confidence, responsibility, and faith.

Continue asking questions. Continue encouraging conversations. Continue to remind your student that success isn't measured by one acceptance letter or one decision. Their future will continue unfolding long after graduation day.

This season is not the end of your influence. It is the beginning of a new chapter in your relationship.

Your student may need your guidance differently than before, but they will always benefit from your love, your prayers, and the confidence that comes from knowing someone believes in them. Preparation doesn't end at graduation. It simply enters a new season.

A Moment with Memee

Life has a way of getting and keeping parents busy. One day you'll realize there was a **last time** for so many things, and you probably didn't know it when it happened.

The last ride to an early morning practice. The last school program.
The last time they asked you to quiz them before a test.
The last football game. The last band concert. The last first day of school.
The last time they walked through your front door as high school students.
Those moments have a way of quietly becoming memories before we realize they're becoming milestones.

So, if I could encourage you to do one thing during this season, it would simply be this:
Be present. Put the phone down occasionally. Take the picture but don't forget to be in the moment, too.

Laugh a little longer. Celebrate a little louder. Give a few more hugs and hold them a little tighter.
Tell them you're proud of them more often than you think you need to.

Years from now, your student may not remember every deadline they met, every application they completed, or every form they submitted. But they'll remember how you celebrated this season with them. They'll remember that you showed up, cheered them on, and made them feel seen, loved, and believed in.

Those memories become part of the legacy your family carries forward.
And long after graduation, they'll continue reminding your student that home has always been a place where they were deeply loved.

Memee



Continue the Conversation

As graduation approaches, your student may be thinking about the future more than they're saying out loud. Continue creating space where they feel comfortable sharing both their excitement and their uncertainty.

You might ask:

- As you think about life after high school, what are you looking forward to the most?
- Is there anything about this next season that feels a little overwhelming?
- As you begin this new chapter, what do you hope you'll always remember about home?

As you listen, remember that your presence and encouragement may become the confidence your student carries into the next chapter of life.



Journal

The high school years are ending, but your family's journey is far from over. As you reflect on this season, what are you most proud of?

What growth have you seen in your student that goes beyond grades or accomplishments?

What family memories from these high school years do you hope you'll never forget?

As your student prepares to launch into a new season, what is your greatest hope and prayer for their future?

Take a moment to celebrate how far you've both come.



Principle Builder Activity

Looking Ahead with Confidence

Graduation isn't simply an ending—it's the beginning of a new chapter.

Take a moment to reflect.

One life lesson I hope my student always carries with them is...

One tradition or value I hope remains part of our family for generations is...

One prayer I will continue praying over my student is...

No matter where life leads, your influence will continue long after graduation.



Faith Reflection

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." **Philippians 1:6 (NKJV)**

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for faithfully walking beside our family through every season of this journey. As our student prepares to step into a new chapter, remind us that Your plans continue far beyond graduation.

Give them courage for new beginnings, wisdom for every decision, and confidence that comes from knowing You are directing their steps. Help us continue encouraging, praying, and believing in them as they pursue the future You have prepared.

May they always remember that wherever life leads, they never walk alone, because You go before them.

In Jesus' name, **Amen.**



PREPARATION WITH PURPOSE™

FOUNDATION

8

LAUNCH WITH PURPOSE

● Be Ready. Take Action. Create Your Future. ●

*You've learned, grown,
and built a strong foundation.
Now it's time to launch
into the life God designed
for you. Step forward
with confidence, stay true
to your purpose, and make
a difference that lasts.
Your journey is just
beginning.*

THE FUTURE
BELONGS TO
THOSE WHO
PREPARE
TODAY.
WALK BOLDLY
IN FAITH,
LIVE YOUR
PURPOSE, AND
LEAVE A LEGACY
THAT INSPIRES
OTHERS.

COLLEGE
CAREER
MILITARY
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
LEADERSHIP
LIFE OF PURPOSE

My Launch Plan

- ☒ Define My Purpose
- ☒ Set My Goals
- ☒ Take Action
- ☒ Build My Future
- ☒ Make an Impact
- ☒ Leave a Legacy



BE READY

Prepare yourself mentally, spiritually, and academically for what's ahead.



SEEK OUT OPPORTUNITIES

Explore, ask questions, and open doors that lead to your calling and purpose.



TAKE INITIATIVE

Don't wait to be asked. Step up, raise your hand, and take action.



MAKE AN IMPACT

Use your gifts and passions to help others and leave a positive mark.



KEEP GROWING

Keep learning, building new skills, and becoming the best version of you.



STEP THROUGH THE DOOR

Walk boldly through the doors God opens and trust Him for what's next.



• One Purposeful Step at a Time. ♥ •

FOUNDATION 8

The Journey Continues

Principle

If there's one thing I hope this resource has reminded you, it is that graduation is not the finish line. It's a milestone.

Long before your student received a diploma, they were learning how to become the person they were created to be. And long after graduation, they will continue growing, learning, changing, and discovering new opportunities.

Your role as a parent doesn't end when high school ends.

It simply changes. The conversations may look different. The decisions may become bigger.

The visits home may become less frequent.

But your encouragement, your prayers, your wisdom, and your love will continue to shape your student's life in ways you may never fully realize.

As your student steps into adulthood, remember that preparation was never about helping them have every answer.

It was about helping them develop confidence, character, and faith to keep learning throughout their lives.

Every lesson you've shared. Every conversation you've had. Every prayer you've prayed.

Every hug you've given. Every sacrifice you've made.

None of it has been wasted.

You have been helping build a foundation that will continue supporting your student long after this resource guide has been placed on a bookshelf.

The journey doesn't end here. In many ways...

It's just beginning.

Explore Further

As families, we sometimes measure success by the milestones we can see—graduation, acceptance letters, first jobs, promotions, marriages, and other accomplishments. While those moments deserve to be celebrated, some of the greatest victories are the ones that quietly unfold over time.

Sometimes, success looks like watching your student become someone who keeps their word.

Someone who treats others with kindness.

Someone who serves with humility.

Someone who gets back up after disappointment.

Someone who trusts God through uncertainty.

Those moments become part of your family's legacy.

As you continue this journey together, remember that your student will always need a place where they can return—not because they have all the answers, but because they know they are loved exactly as they are.

Preparation With Purpose™ was never meant to end with the final page of this book.

My hope is that it becomes part of the conversations, traditions, prayers, and memories your family continues sharing for years to come.

PREPARED • POSITIONED • PURPOSED • PROMISED

One Last Thought Before We Close

When I first began writing Preparation With Purpose™, I thought I was creating a resource to help families prepare.

Somewhere along the way, I realized it had become much more. It became a reminder that our children don't need us to have every answer.

They simply need to know we're walking beside them. As parents, we spend years preparing and preparing for our children to leave home. What we sometimes forget is that we're also preparing our hearts to cheer them on as they do.

That isn't always easy. But it is one of the greatest privileges we'll ever have. There will be moments when you wonder if you said enough, taught enough, prayed enough, or prepared them well enough. When those moments come, I hope you'll remember this...

Love has a way of leaving fingerprints on a child's life that cannot always be seen immediately. The conversations you had. The prayers you whispered. The sacrifices you made. The examples you lived. The hugs you gave. The times you simply showed up. Those things matter more than you'll ever know.

So, as you close this resource guide, I hope you don't close the conversations. Keep asking. Keep listening. Keep praying. Keep believing.

Whenever your student needs a safe place to land, I hope they always know they can come home. Thank you for allowing me to walk beside your family for a little while.

It has truly been an honor.

Memee ❤️

Continue the Conversation

As your student enters this next chapter, remember that your conversations don't end with graduation; they simply continue in new ways.

You might ask:

- What are you most hopeful about as you begin this next season of life?
- How can I continue supporting you as you grow into adulthood?
- What family traditions or values do you hope to carry with you in the years ahead?

The greatest conversations are often the ones that continue long after the answers have changed.

Journal

As you close this resource guide take a moment to reflect on your family's journey.

What has this experience taught you about yourself as a parent?

What moments from these high school years will you treasure most?

How have you seen your student grow—not only academically, but as a person?

As you look toward the future, what prayer will remain in your heart for your student?

This may be the last journal page in this book, but it is only the beginning of the next chapter in your family's story.

Principle Builder Activity

Looking Back... Looking Forward

Every journey leaves us with lessons worth carrying into the future.

As you close this resource guide reflect on what you hope will remain long after these pages have been turned.

One lesson our family will carry forward is...

One tradition or value we want future generations to remember is...

One prayer I will continue praying over my student for years to come is...

Preparation With Purpose™ may come to its final page, but your family's story is still being written.

Faith Reflection

"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." **Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV)**

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for every lesson, every challenge, every joyful moment, and every opportunity You have used to shape our family throughout this journey.

As our student steps into a new season of life, remind us that Your faithfulness does not end with graduation. Continue guiding their steps, strengthening their character, and surrounding them with people who encourage them to grow in wisdom, faith, and purpose.

May our home always remain a place of love, grace, encouragement, and hope. Help us continue trusting You with every chapter still to come.

In Jesus' name, Amen



PREPARATION WITH PURPOSE™

STUDENT-ATHLETE ADVANTAGE

Academic & Athletic Resource Guide

PREPARE • POSITION • PURPOSE • PROMISE



BUILT ON FAITH. FOCUSED ON PURPOSE.
PREPARED FOR LIFE BEYOND THE GAME.



Student Athlete Advantage

Helping Families Navigate the Student-Athlete Journey

Introduction

For many families, athletics become one of the most rewarding parts of the high school experience. Through sports, students develop discipline, perseverance, leadership, teamwork, resilience, and time management—qualities that serve them long after the final whistle.

For some students, athletics may also open doors to scholarships, collegiate competition, military opportunities, and careers connected to the sports industry. But those opportunities are rarely the result of talent alone. They are built through preparation, academic commitment, informed decision-making, and a strong support system.

Today's student-athletes and their families must navigate far more than practices and game schedules. Recruiting, eligibility requirements, academics, social media, financial planning, health and wellness, and changing regulations all play an important role in the journey. Understanding these areas early helps families make informed decisions and avoid common mistakes.

Student-Athlete Advantage was created to serve as a practical resource for families navigating the student-athlete journey. Rather than attempting to provide every answer, this guide is designed to help you ask the right questions, recognize important opportunities, identify potential red flags, and know where to find reliable, up-to-date information.

Throughout this section, you will find planning tools, checklists, conversation starters, and practical guidance to help your family move forward with confidence.

While every athletic journey is unique, one truth remains the same: **Preparation beyond the game is one of the greatest advantages a student-athlete can have.**

Understanding the Student-Athlete Journey

Athletics can be an incredible opportunity, but they should never become the only plan. One injury, a coaching change, shifting interests, or an unexpected life event can alter the direction of a student's athletic career. That's why the most successful student-athletes prepare for life both on and off the field.

Families often feel pressure to focus solely on competition, statistics, rankings, or recruiting. While those areas are important, they represent only one part of a much larger picture. Academic performance, character, leadership, communication, financial literacy, health and wellness, and career preparation all contribute to a student's long-term success.

Throughout high school, encourage your student to develop the habits that colleges, employers, military leaders, and scholarship committees consistently value:

- Strong academic performance
- Integrity and good sportsmanship
- Leadership and teamwork
- Time management and personal responsibility
- Effective communication
- Community service and volunteerism
- Financial awareness
- Healthy decision-making on and off the field

Remember that athletic participation has an expiration date. Whether a student competes for four years of high school, continues into college athletics, or plays professionally, every athletic career eventually comes to an end.

The education, character, relationships, and life skills developed along the way will continue long after the final game has been played.

Student-Athlete Advantage encourages families to prepare for every opportunity while keeping the ultimate goal in focus:

Developing a well-rounded young adult who is prepared for success in every season of life.

Questions Every Parent Should Ask Before the Season Begins

A successful season begins long before the first practice or the opening kickoff. Taking time to ask thoughtful questions helps families understand expectations, avoid misunderstandings, and support their student-athlete throughout the year.

Every school, coach, athletic program, and governing organization operates differently. Use the questions below as a starting point for meaningful conversations with coaches, athletic directors, counselors, and other school officials.

Program Expectations

- What are the expectations for student-athletes both on and off the field?
- What are the attendance requirements for practices, games, and team activities?
- How are playing time and team positions determined?
- What is the team's communication process with athletes and parents?
- How are injuries, illnesses, or missed practices handled?

Academic Expectations

- What academic standards must student-athletes maintain to remain eligible?
- Does the school provide academic support or tutoring for student-athletes?
- How are missed assignments handled when students travel for competitions?

- Who should we contact if academic concerns arise during the season?

Health & Safety

- What medical forms or physical examinations are required?
- What is the school's concussion protocol?
- Who is responsible for communicating injuries to parents?
- Is athletic training or rehabilitation available if my student is injured?
- What emergency procedures are in place during practices and competitions?

Communication

- What is the best way to communicate with coaches?
- When are coaches available to discuss concerns?
- Are there team meetings for parents?
- How are schedule changes communicated?
- Who should families contact if concerns cannot be resolved with the coach?

Financial Responsibilities

- Are there participation fees or booster club requirements?
- What equipment or uniforms must families purchase?
- Are fundraising activities required?
- Are there travel expenses families should anticipate?

Parent Tip

Begin each season by gathering information—not making assumptions.

Clear communication early in the season helps prevent confusion later and allows everyone to focus on what matters most: supporting the growth, development, and success of your student-athlete.



Red Flags Every Parent Should Recognize

Athletics should provide opportunities for growth, leadership, and healthy competition. While most coaches, organizations, and programs are committed to serving student-athletes well, families should remain informed and ask questions whenever something doesn't seem right.

Being proactive can help prevent misunderstandings and protect your students' well-being throughout their athletic journey.

Communication Red Flags

Consider asking additional questions if:

- Parents are discouraged from asking reasonable questions.
- Expectations, policies, or team rules are unclear or constantly changing.
- Important information is shared inconsistently or only through student athletes.
- Concerns are dismissed rather than addressed respectfully.
- Communication lacks professionalism or transparency.

Academic Red Flags

Be cautious if athletics consistently take priority over academics.

Examples may include:

- Encouraging students to miss class unnecessarily.
- Discouraging participation in academic support programs.
- Suggesting grades are less important than athletic performance.
- Ignoring eligibility requirements or academic progress.

Remember: Athletic opportunities often begin with academic eligibility.

Recruiting Red Flags

Families should proceed carefully if anyone:

- Promises recruitment opportunities without evaluation.
- Guarantees athletic scholarships or roster spots.
- Creates unnecessary pressure to make immediate decisions.
- Requests for large upfront payments without clearly explaining services.
- Discourages families from seeking additional information or second opinions.

Legitimate opportunities welcome informed families who ask thoughtful questions.

Social Media Red Flags

Student-athletes should understand that their online presence matters.

Parents should be concerned if online activity includes:

- Inappropriate language or behavior.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Posts that conflict with team expectations.
- Content that could negatively impact future educational, athletic, or employment opportunities.

Encourage your student to think carefully before posting. A positive digital reputation can become an asset.

Health & Wellness Red Flags

Never ignore concerns related to your student's physical or emotional well-being.

Seek additional guidance if your student feels pressure to:

- Play while injured.
- Hide symptoms or medical concerns.
- Participate in unsafe conditioning practices.
- Ignore recommendations from qualified healthcare professionals.

A student's long-term health should always come before short-term competition.

Parent Reminder

When something doesn't feel right, pause and gather information before making decisions.

Ask questions. Seek clarification. Consult trusted professionals.

Verify information through official sources.

An informed family is one of a student-athlete's greatest advantages.

Building Your Student-Athlete Support Team

No student-athlete succeeds alone.

Behind every successful athlete is a network of individuals who provide guidance, encouragement, accountability, and support. While parents remain students' greatest advocates, building a strong support team helps ensure your student has access to the knowledge, resources, and encouragement needed throughout high school.

Every student's team will look different, but families should consider developing relationships with trusted individuals who can provide support in key areas.

Building Your Student-Athlete Support Team

Parents & Guardians

Provide encouragement, advocacy, accountability, transportation, financial planning, and guidance while helping students maintain balance between athletics, academics, and personal responsibilities.

Coaches

Teach athletic skills, teamwork, leadership, discipline, and sportsmanship while helping students develop both on and off the field.

School Counselors

Assist with graduation planning, course selection, NCAA eligibility requirements, dual credit opportunities, college admissions, scholarships, and postsecondary planning.

Teachers

Provide academic instruction while identifying areas where additional support or enrichment may be beneficial.

Athletic Trainers & Healthcare Professionals

Help students maintain their physical health, recover safely from injuries, and make informed decisions regarding conditioning, nutrition, and overall wellness.

Strength & Conditioning Coaches

When properly qualified, these professionals help student-athletes safely improve strength, flexibility, speed, endurance, and injury prevention through age-appropriate training.

Mentors

Trusted adults, including family members, educators, faith leaders, former athletes, or community leaders—can provide perspective, encouragement, and life experience that extends beyond athletics.

College & Career Advisors

Provide guidance regarding admissions, scholarships, career exploration, technical education, military pathways, certifications, apprenticeships, and workforce opportunities.

Parent Action Steps

As the school year begins, identify the individuals who will become part of your student support network.

Take time to:

- Introduce yourself to coaches, counselors, and teachers.
- Learn who to contact with questions related to academics, athletics, or eligibility.
- Maintain updated contact information for key personnel.
- Encourage respectful communication between your student and trusted adults.
- Reevaluate your support team as your student's needs and goals evolve.

Strong support systems are built through relationships, communication, and collaboration—not just during a crisis

Planning Worksheet

My Student's Support Team

Role	Name	Contact Information	Notes
Parent/Guardian			
Coach			
School Counselor			
Teacher			
Athletic Trainer			
Mentor			
Healthcare Provider			
Other			

Understanding the Recruiting Process

For many families, recruiting is unfamiliar territory. The process can seem exciting, overwhelming, and sometimes confusing, especially when information comes from multiple sources.

It's important to remember that recruiting is not a single event. It is a process that develops over time through academic achievement, athletic performance, character, communication, and preparation.

Every student-athletes' journey will be different. Some students may receive early interest from college programs, while others may not be recruited until later in high school. Some may pursue NCAA programs, while others find opportunities through NAIA schools, junior colleges (NJCAA), community colleges, military academies, or other competitive organizations.

Families should focus on helping their students develop academically and athletically while learning how the recruiting process works. Preparation, patience, and realistic expectations often lead to better long-term decisions than rushing opportunities.

Remember that recruiting rules, eligibility requirements, and communication timelines may vary by athletic association and are subject to change. Always verify current information through the appropriate governing organizations and the institutions your student is considering.

Parent Action Steps

Help your student prepare for the recruiting process by:

- Learning the recruiting rules that apply to your student's sport and level of competition.
- Encouraging strong academic performance alongside athletic development.
- Maintaining organized records of athletic accomplishments, academic achievements, and extracurricular activities.

- Teaching your student to communicate professionally with coaches and recruiters.
 - Keeping an open mind when exploring schools and athletic opportunities.
 - Verifying recruiting information through official sources before making important decisions.
-

Questions Parents Should Ask College Coaches

When speaking with college coaches, consider asking:

Athletic Program

- What qualities are you looking for in prospective student-athletes?
- How many athletes do you anticipate recruiting for this position?
- What opportunities exist for first-year students to compete?
- How is playing time earned?
- What expectations do you have for athletes during the off-season?

Academic Support

- What academic support services are available for student-athletes?
- What is the team's academic success rate?
- How do coaches support athletes during demanding academic periods?
- What resources are available if my student needs tutoring or academic assistance?

Student Experience

- What is the team culture like?
- How do upperclassmen mentor younger athletes?
- What leadership opportunities are available?
- What expectations do you have regarding community service or campus involvement?

Next Steps

Before concluding the conversation, ask:

- What does your recruiting timeline look like?
 - What are the next steps if my student remains interested?
 - Is there additional information you would like us to provide?
 - Who should we contact if we have future questions?
-

Parent Reminder

Recruiting is about more than finding a school that wants your student!

It's about finding a school where your student can succeed academically, grow personally, compete confidently, and graduate prepared for life beyond athletics.

Take your time. Ask thoughtful questions. Make informed decisions.

Preparation today creates confidence tomorrow.

Campus Visits

Making the Most of Every Visit

A campus visit is more than a tour—it is an opportunity to determine whether a school is the right academic, athletic, financial, and personal fit for your student.

While facilities, stadiums, and campus amenities can make a strong first impression, families should look beyond appearances and gather information that will support long-term success.

Encourage your student to participate in the conversation, ask questions, and reflect on their experience after each visit. This helps them take ownership of the decision-making process while developing confidence in evaluating their options.

Remember that no college is perfect. The goal is to find an environment where your student can grow academically, compete successfully, graduate prepared, and thrive beyond athletics.

Questions to Ask During a Campus Visit

Academic Experience

- What academic programs are available in my student's area of interest?
- What academic support services are offered to student-athletes?
- What is the average class size?
- Are tutoring, study labs, or learning specialists available?
- What percentage of student-athletes graduate?

Athletic Program

- What does a typical in-season and off-season schedules look like?
- How is playing time earned?
- What strength and conditioning resources are available?
- What sports medicine and athletic training services are provided?
- How does the coaching staff support student-athletes academically?

Student Life

- What housing options are available?
- What meal plans are offered?
- What campus organizations can student-athletes participate in?
- What resources support students' mental health and well-being?
- How does the university help students transition into college life?

Financial Considerations

- What scholarships may be available?
- What costs are not covered by scholarships?
- Are there additional athletic fees?

- What financial aid resources are available?
 - Who can help us understand the total cost of attendance?
-

Career Preparation

- What internship opportunities are available?
 - Does the university offer career planning and job placement services?
 - What resources help student-athletes prepare for careers after graduation?
 - Are alumni mentoring opportunities available?
-

Parent Action Steps

During every campus visit:

- ✓ Take notes.
 - ✓ Collect contact information.
 - ✓ Take photos if permitted.
 - ✓ Encourage your student to ask their own questions.
 - ✓ Meet with admissions, academic advisors, and coaching staff whenever possible.
 - ✓ Compare each school using the same evaluation criteria.
-

Campus Visit Reflection

Immediately after leaving campus, discuss the visit while the experience is still fresh.

Ask your student:

- What stood out most about this campus?
- Could you picture yourself living and learning here?
- Did you feel welcomed and respected?
- What questions do you still have?
- Would you like to learn more about this school?

Record your thoughts before visiting the next campus. Comparing notes later will make decision-making much easier.

Parent Reminder

A successful college experience is about more than choosing the most recognizable name or the nicest facilities.

Look for a place where your student can learn, compete, grow, and graduate prepared for the opportunities that lie ahead.

A campus should feel like an investment in your student's future—not just their athletic career.

Campus Visits

Making the Most of Every Visit

For many families, the possibility of an athletic scholarship is both exciting and motivating. While athletic scholarships can help reduce the cost of higher education, it's important to understand that they are only one part of the overall financial picture.

Scholarship opportunities vary by sport, division, institution, available funding, and the individual needs of each athletic program. Some students may receive full scholarships, while others may be offered partial scholarships or a combination of athletic, academic, merit-based, and need-based financial aid.

Families should avoid making assumptions based on stories from other athletes or information shared on social media. Every student's situation is unique, and scholarship opportunities can change from year to year.

Understanding how athletic scholarships work allows families to make informed decisions and plan realistically for college expenses.

Questions to Ask About Athletic Scholarships

When discussing scholarship opportunities with coaches or admissions representatives, consider asking:

Scholarship Details

- Is the scholarship full or partial?
 - What expenses are covered by the scholarship?
 - Which expenses are the family's responsibility?
 - Is the scholarship guaranteed for multiple years or renewed annually?
 - Under what circumstances could the scholarship change?
-

Academic Expectations

- Are there minimum GPA requirements to maintain the scholarship?
 - Are there credit hour requirements each semester?
 - What academic support services are available if additional assistance is needed?
-

Athletic Expectations

- What participation requirements must be met?
 - What happens if my student is injured?
 - How are medical hardships handled?
 - What happens if there is a coaching change?
-

Financial Planning

- What other scholarships may my student qualify for?
 - Can athletic scholarships be combined with academic or merit scholarships?
 - What financial aid opportunities are available?
 - Are work-study programs available?
-

Parent Action Steps

Before accepting any scholarship offer:

- ✓ Request all scholarship information in writing.
 - ✓ Review the terms and renewal requirements carefully.
 - ✓ Understand which expenses remain the family's responsibility.
 - ✓ Compare financial aid packages from multiple institutions.
 - ✓ Discuss both the academic and athletic opportunities available at each school.
 - ✓ Allow your student time to carefully consider the decision before making a commitment.
-

Scholarship Planning Checklist

Before making a final decision, confirm that your family understands:

- ☐ Scholarship amount
 - ☐ Length of the award
 - ☐ Renewal requirements
 - ☐ GPA and academic expectations
 - ☐ Athletic participation expectations
 - ☐ Housing and meal plan costs
 - ☐ Books and required fees
 - ☐ Transportation expenses
 - ☐ Medical insurance requirements
 - ☐ Remaining out-of-pocket costs
-

Parent Reminder

An athletic scholarship is one factor in choosing a college, not the only factor. The best decision is one that supports your student's academic success, athletic development, financial well-being, and long-term goals. A thoughtful decision today can create opportunities that extend far beyond graduation.

Making a College Commitment

Receiving an offer to continue competing after high school is an exciting milestone. Before making a commitment, families should take time to fully understand what they are agreeing to and ensure the decision supports the student's academic, athletic, financial, and personal goals.

A college commitment is more than choosing a team. It is a commitment to an educational institution, academic expectations, athletic responsibilities, and a campus community.

Commitment and signing processes may vary by institution and athletic association. Always verify current requirements directly with the college and the appropriate governing organization before signing any official documents.

Questions to Ask Before Making a Commitment

Academic Fit

- Does this school offer my student's intended major or program of study?
- What academic support services are available?
- What is the graduation rate for student-athletes?
- Will my student be prepared for life after athletics?

Athletic Fit

- Does my student feel comfortable with the coaching staff?
- Is the program's philosophy a good fit?
- What opportunities exist for development and competition?
- Does my student understand the expectations for participation?

Financial Fit

- Have we reviewed all scholarship and financial aid information?
- Do we understand the total cost of attendance?
- Have we identified any remaining financial responsibilities?
- Have all questions regarding scholarship renewal been answered?

Personal Fit

- Can my student see themselves living here for the next several years?
- Does the campus environment support their personal values and goals?
- Are support services available if challenges arise?
- Will they have opportunities to grow beyond athletics?

Before Signing Any Documents

Take time to:

- ✓ Read every document carefully.
- ✓ Ask questions about anything that is unclear.
- ✓ Keep copies of all signed documents.
- ✓ Discuss the decision as a family.
- ✓ Consult school counselors or trusted advisors if additional guidance is needed.
- ✓ Verify all information through official institutional representatives.

Parent Checklist

Before your student makes a final commitment, confirm that you have discussed:

- ☐ Academic goals
- ☐ Athletic expectations
- ☐ Scholarship details

- ☐ Financial responsibilities
 - ☐ Campus resources
 - ☐ Housing
 - ☐ Health insurance requirements
 - ☐ Transportation
 - ☐ Career preparation
 - ☐ Graduation expectations
-

Parent Reminder

Choosing a college is one of the most significant decisions your family will make during the high school years.

Take your time.

Ask thoughtful questions.

Review the details carefully.

A well-informed decision today helps lay the foundation for success tomorrow.



NCAA Eligibility Center

Understanding Eligibility Requirements

For students who plan to participate in NCAA athletics, eligibility is an important part of the college planning process. Meeting NCAA eligibility requirements involves more than athletic ability—it also includes academic preparation, course completion, and compliance with NCAA regulations.

Because NCAA requirements may change over time, families should become familiar with the eligibility process early and verify current information through the NCAA Eligibility Center and their student's school counselor.

Beginning the process early helps families avoid unnecessary delays and provides time to address questions before graduation.

Why Early Preparation Matters

Preparing early allows families to:

- Understand NCAA academic requirements.
- Monitor progress toward eligibility.
- Keep important records organized.
- Ask questions before deadlines become critical.
- Reduce stress during the senior year.

Early preparation also gives students more time to focus on academic success while continuing to develop athletically.

Parent Action Steps

Work with your student to:

- ✓ Meet regularly with the school counselor to review graduation requirements and course selections.
- ✓ Maintain accurate academic records throughout high school.
- ✓ Monitor your student's GPA and academic progress.
- ✓ Keep copies of important documents and transcripts.
- ✓ Learn the eligibility requirements that apply to your student's intended level of competition.
- ✓ Visit the NCAA Eligibility Center for the most current information and registration requirements.

Questions Parents Should Ask

When meeting with your school counselor or college representatives, consider asking:

Academic Planning

- Is my student's current course schedule aligned with NCAA eligibility requirements?
- Are we on track academically each year?
- Are there courses that may require special consideration?

Eligibility Process

- When should our family begin the NCAA eligibility process?
- What records should we maintain?
- What important deadlines should we be aware of?
- Are there additional steps our student should complete before graduation?

College Planning

- How does NCAA eligibility fit into the overall college admissions process?
- Are there additional institutional requirements beyond NCAA eligibility?
- What resources are available if we have questions?

Parent Checklist

Before graduation, confirm that your family has:

- ☐ Met with the school counselor regularly.
 - ☐ Reviewed academic progress each school year.
 - ☐ Maintained organized academic records.
 - ☐ Verified current NCAA requirements.
 - ☐ Completed required registration steps, if applicable.
 - ☐ Asked questions whenever clarification was needed.
-

Parent Reminder

Eligibility requirements, approved coursework, timelines, and NCAA policies are subject to change.

Always verify the most current information through the NCAA Eligibility Center, your student's school counselor, and the colleges your student is considering.

Preparation begins with reliable information—and informed families are better equipped to support confident decisions.



Communicating with College Coaches

Building Professional Relationships

One of the most valuable skills a student-athlete can develop is the ability to communicate professionally and respectfully with college coaches. While parents play an important supporting role, coaches also want to hear directly from prospective student-athletes.

Teaching your student how to introduce themselves, ask thoughtful questions, respond professionally, and follow up appropriately demonstrates maturity and personal responsibility.

Every interaction contributes to the impression your student leaves with a program.

Encourage Your Student to:

- Respond to emails, phone calls, and messages promptly.
- Use professional language in written and verbal communication.
- Proofread emails before sending them.
- Be honest about academic achievements, athletic accomplishments, and goals.
- Ask thoughtful questions about the program and institution.
- Express appreciation for a coach's time and consideration.

Professional communication reflects character just as much as athletic performance.

Questions Student-Athletes Should Ask College Coaches

Athletic Program

- What qualities are you looking for in student-athletes?
- How would you describe your coaching philosophy?
- What opportunities exist for player development?
- What expectations do you have during the off-season?

Academic Support

- How does your program support student-athletes academically?
- What tutoring or academic resources are available?

- How do athletes balance practices, travel, and coursework?
-

Campus Experience

- What do your athletes enjoy most about attending this institution?
 - What leadership opportunities are available?
 - How does your program support personal development beyond athletics?
-

Looking Ahead

- What are the next steps in your recruiting process?
 - What additional information would you like from me?
 - How can I continue learning more about your program?
-

Parent Action Steps

Parents can support the recruiting process by:

- ✓ Encouraging students to communicate directly with coaches whenever appropriate.
 - ✓ Reviewing emails or correspondence if requested by the student.
 - ✓ Helping students stay organized with recruiting contacts and important deadlines.
 - ✓ Reinforcing professionalism in all forms of communication.
 - ✓ Respecting the student's growing responsibility throughout the recruiting process.
-

Communication Checklist

Before contacting a coach, encourage your student to confirm that they have:

- ☐ Used a professional email address.
 - ☐ Reviewed the message for spelling and grammar.
 - ☐ Included accurate academic and athletic information.
 - ☐ Asked thoughtful questions.
 - ☐ Thanked the coach for their time.
 - ☐ Saved copies of important communications.
-

Parent Reminder

Communication is key and is about more than making a good first impression.

It is an opportunity for your student to demonstrate responsibility, professionalism, and character—qualities that will benefit them throughout college, their careers, and every stage of life.



Social Media & Your Student-Athlete's Digital Footprint

Social media has become an important part of the recruiting process. Coaches, admissions representatives, employers, scholarship committees, and military recruiters may review a student's online presence as part of their evaluation.

Every post, photo, comment, video, and shared image contributes to a student's digital footprint. While social media can be an excellent tool for showcasing athletic accomplishments, leadership, community involvement, and personal achievements, it should always reflect the character and maturity expected of a student-athlete.

Encourage your student to think carefully before posting and to remember that once something is shared online, it may be difficult—or impossible—to remove completely.

A positive online presence can strengthen opportunities. A poor online presence can limit them.

Building a Positive Digital Reputation

Encourage your student to:

- Share accomplishments with humility and gratitude.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship in victories and defeats.
- Highlight academic achievements, leadership, volunteer service, and extracurricular involvement.
- Treat teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, and others with respect.
- Protect personal and family privacy.
- Remember that their online presence represents both themselves and those associated with them.

Think Before You Post

Before sharing content online, encourage your student to ask:

- Would I be comfortable if a college coach saw this?
- Does this post reflect my character and values?
- Could this be misunderstood or taken out of context?
- Does this show respect for myself and others?
- Will I still be proud of this post a year from now?

If the answer is "no" or "I'm not sure," it may be best not to post.

Parent Action Steps

Parents can help by:

- ✓ Having regular conversations about responsible social media use.
 - ✓ Encouraging privacy and security settings where appropriate.
 - ✓ Discussing the long-term impact of a digital footprint.
 - ✓ Modeling respectful online behavior.
 - ✓ Reminding students that social media should support—not distract from—their academic and athletic goals.
-

Digital Footprint Checklist

Review your student's online presence together.

- ☐ Profile photos present a positive image.
- ☐ Privacy settings have been reviewed.
- ☐ Posts reflect good judgment and sportsmanship.
- ☐ Photos and videos are appropriate.
- ☐ Language demonstrates maturity and respect.
- ☐ Academic, leadership, volunteer, and athletic accomplishments are highlighted appropriately.
- ☐ Inappropriate content has been removed whenever possible.

Parent Reminder

A student's reputation is built over time—both in person and online.

Encourage your student to use social media as a tool that reflects integrity, responsibility, and character.

A strong digital reputation can help open doors to future educational, athletic, and career opportunities.

Name, Image & Likeness (NIL)

Helping Families Understand New Opportunities

The landscape of college athletics has changed significantly with the introduction of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) opportunities. Depending on applicable laws, institutional policies, and governing organization rules, eligible student-athletes may have opportunities to earn compensation using their name, image, or likeness.

NIL opportunities can include endorsement agreements, social media partnerships, appearances, instructional camps, autograph sessions, merchandise, and other business activities. However, not every student-athlete will receive NIL opportunities, and compensation should never become the primary reason for choosing a college or athletic program.

Because NIL regulations continue to evolve, families should become familiar with current rules before entering into any agreement. Requirements may vary by state, athletic association, conference, institution, and governing organization.

Questions Families Should Ask

Before considering any NIL opportunity, discuss:

Opportunity

- What is the purpose of this opportunity?
 - Who is offering the agreement?
 - Does the organization have a positive reputation?
 - Is the opportunity appropriate for my student?
-

Financial Considerations

- How will compensation be provided?
 - Are there tax responsibilities?
 - Will expenses be deducted from earnings?
 - Are professional financial advisors recommended?
-

Compliance

- Does this opportunity comply with current NIL rules?
 - Have we reviewed institutional reporting requirements?
 - Are there restrictions that apply to this agreement?
 - Have we consulted the appropriate compliance office if necessary?
-

Long-Term Impact

- Will this opportunity support my student's long-term goals?
 - Could this agreement affect future opportunities?
 - Does this partnership reflect our family's values?
 - Is my student comfortable representing this organization publicly?
-

Parent Action Steps

Before signing any NIL agreement:

- ✓ Read every document carefully.
 - ✓ Encourage your student to ask questions.
 - ✓ Verify current NIL policies with the institution and governing organizations.
 - ✓ Consider seeking qualified legal, financial, or tax advice when appropriate.
 - ✓ Keep copies of all agreements and related correspondence.
 - ✓ Never feel pressured to make an immediate decision.
-

NIL Readiness Checklist

Before accepting an opportunity, confirm that your family has:

- ☐ Reviewed the agreement thoroughly.
 - ☐ Verified current NIL policies.
 - ☐ Discussed financial and tax responsibilities.
 - ☐ Considered the long-term impact.
 - ☐ Asked all necessary questions.
 - ☐ Maintained copies of all documentation.
-

Parent Reminder

Name, Image, and Likeness opportunities can be valuable, but they should complement, not replace, your student's education, athletic development, and long-term career preparation.

Help your student make decisions that protect both their opportunities today and their future tomorrow.

Recruiting Services, Showcases & Camps

Making Informed Decisions

Many student-athletes participate in showcases, prospect camps, combines, recruiting events, and recruiting services to gain exposure and improve their skills. These opportunities can provide valuable experience, instruction, and networking when selected carefully.

However, participation alone does not guarantee recruitment, scholarship offers, or roster opportunities.

Before investing significant time or money, families should research each opportunity carefully, understand its purpose, and evaluate whether it aligns with the student's athletic ability, academic goals, and long-term plans.

Every family should remember that there is no single event, service, or showcase that guarantees success.

Preparation, consistent performance, academic achievement, and character remain the strongest foundation for long-term opportunities.

Questions to Ask Before Registering

About the Organization

- Who is sponsoring the event or recruiting service?
 - How long has the organization been operating?
 - What is its reputation among coaches and families?
 - Are references or testimonials available?
-

About the Event

- Which colleges or coaches are expected to attend?
 - Is attendance confirmed or simply advertised?
 - What age groups and competition levels are participating?
 - Will participants receive instruction, evaluation, or both?
-

Financial Considerations

- What is the total cost to participate?
 - What expenses are not included (travel, lodging, meals, equipment)?
 - What is the cancellation or refund policy?
 - Are additional services being promoted during the event?
-

Follow-Up

- Will participants receive written evaluations?
 - Will performance data or measurements be provided?
 - How are athletes expected to follow up with college coaches?
 - What support is available after the event?
-

Parent Action Steps

Before committing to any recruiting event or service:

- ✓ Research the organization thoroughly.
 - ✓ Compare multiple opportunities before registering.
 - ✓ Speak with your student's coach or trusted mentors.
 - ✓ Understand exactly what is—and is not—being offered.
 - ✓ Keep realistic expectations about the recruiting process.
 - ✓ Avoid making decisions based solely on advertising or social media.
-

Before You Pay...

Ask yourself:

- ☐ Does this opportunity match my student's current skill level?
 - ☐ Have we researched the organization?
 - ☐ Have we spoken with trusted coaches or counselors?
 - ☐ Do we understand all costs involved?
 - ☐ Are the advertised benefits realistic?
 - ☐ Will this experience contribute to my student's overall development, even if recruiting opportunities do not result immediately?
-

Parent Reminder

No camp, showcase, recruiting service, or evaluation can replace consistent academic performance, athletic development, strong character, and thoughtful preparation.

The best investment you can make is helping your student continue growing as both an athlete and a young adult while making informed decisions every step of the way.

Building Your Student-Athlete Portfolio

Organizing for Opportunity

As opportunities begin to develop, keeping important information organized becomes increasingly valuable. A well-maintained student-athlete portfolio helps families respond quickly to requests from coaches, admissions offices, scholarship committees, and other organizations while reducing stress during the recruiting process.

Your portfolio should grow throughout high school and be reviewed regularly to ensure the information remains current and accurate.

Organization demonstrates preparation, professionalism, and attention to detail.

Documents to Keep Organized

Maintain copies of important records, including:

Academic Records

- Report cards
- High school transcripts
- Standardized test scores, if applicable
- Academic awards and honors
- Dual credit or certification records

Athletic Information

- Athletic résumé
- Season schedules
- Statistics and performance summaries
- Awards and recognitions
- Highlight videos
- Skills evaluations
- Camp and showcase participation records

Leadership & Activities

- Volunteer service
- Community involvement
- Student organizations
- Leadership positions
- Church or faith-based activities
- Employment history, if applicable

Recruiting Records

- College contacts
- Coach communications

- Campus visit notes
 - Recruiting questionnaires
 - Scholarship information
 - Important deadlines
-

Parent Action Steps

Help your student:

- ✓ Maintain both digital and printed copies of important documents.
 - ✓ Update the portfolio at the end of each semester.
 - ✓ Save certificates, awards, and letters of recognition.
 - ✓ Organize files by category for quick access.
 - ✓ Back up digital files regularly.
-

Student-Athlete Portfolio Checklist

Academic

- ☐ Transcript
 - ☐ Report cards
 - ☐ Test Scores
 - ☐ Academic Awards
-

Athletics

- ☐ Athletic Résumé
 - ☐ Statistics
 - ☐ Highlight Video
 - ☐ Awards
 - ☐ Skills Evaluations
-

Leadership

- ☐ Volunteer Service
 - ☐ Leadership Activities
 - ☐ Extracurricular Activities
 - ☐ Employment (if applicable)
-

Recruiting

- ☐ Coach Contact List
 - ☐ Campus Visit Notes
 - ☐ Scholarship Information
 - ☐ Recruiting Timeline
 - ☐ Important Deadlines
-

Parent Reminder

A portfolio cannot earn opportunities on its own, but it allows your student to present their accomplishments clearly, respond promptly, and stay prepared as new opportunities arise.

Good organization today can save valuable time tomorrow.

Preparing for Life Beyond the Game

Every athletic career eventually comes to an end. For some students, that may happen after high school. Others may continue competing in college or beyond. Regardless of how long athletics remain part of a student's life, preparing for what comes next is essential.

Student-athletes develop valuable skills through competition that extend far beyond sports. Discipline, teamwork, communication, leadership, resilience, time management, and problem-solving are qualities that colleges, employers, military leaders, and communities value.

Encourage your student to see athletics as one part of a much larger journey. While success on the field is worth celebrating, lasting success is built by preparing for opportunities beyond the game.

Help Your Student Build a Well-Rounded Future

Encourage participation in experiences that support long-term growth, including:

- Academic achievement
- Career exploration
- Leadership opportunities
- Community service
- Volunteer activities
- Part-time employment, when appropriate
- Financial literacy
- Public speaking and communication skills
- Internships or job-shadowing opportunities
- Faith, character, and personal development

These experiences help students develop confidence while preparing for life after athletics.

Questions Families Should Discuss

As your student progresses through high school, consider discussing:

- What interests do you have outside of athletics?
- What careers would you enjoy exploring?
- Which subjects do you enjoy most in school?

- What skills would you like to continue developing?
- How can athletics prepare you for your future career?
- What goals do you have beyond competition?

These conversations encourage students to think broadly about their future while recognizing the many opportunities available to them.

Parent Action Steps

Help your student:

- ✓ Explore careers related to and beyond athletics.
- ✓ Develop strong study habits and academic goals.
- ✓ Build leadership experience through school and community involvement.
- ✓ Learn practical life and financial management skills.
- ✓ Continue developing interests outside of sports.
- ✓ Remember that education and personal growth remain lifelong investments.

Future Planning Checklist

Encourage your student to:

- ☐ Explore possible career interests.
- ☐ Research education or training requirements.
- ☐ Develop a résumé of academic, athletic, leadership, and volunteer experiences.
- ☐ Build relationships with mentors and trusted adults.
- ☐ Continue developing skills that will serve them beyond athletics.
- ☐ Create both short-term and long-term goals.

Parent Reminder

Athletics may open doors.

Character, preparation, education, and perseverance help students walk through them.

The greatest goal is not simply preparing your student for the next season.

It is preparing them for a lifetime of opportunity, purpose, and success.

Exploring Careers in the World of Sports

One of the greatest misconceptions about athletics is believing that success only means becoming a professional athlete.

Athletics can open the door to a wide variety of rewarding careers that allow students to stay connected to the sports they love in meaningful ways. Some students may continue competing after high school.

Others may discover a passion for coaching, teaching, sports medicine, athletic training, broadcasting, marketing, business, event management, or countless other professions that support the world of sports.

Every role plays an important part. Every profession makes a valuable contribution. Help your student understand that while an athletic career may have seasons, the opportunities to learn, lead, serve, and build a meaningful career can last a lifetime.

Athletics may be where your student's journey begins—but it doesn't have to be where it ends.

Career Pathways to Explore

Health & Performance

- Sports Medicine Physician
- Physical Therapist
- Athletic Trainer
- Occupational Therapist
- Sports Psychologist
- Strength & Conditioning Coach
- Sports Dietitian/Nutrition Professional
- Exercise Physiologist

Coaching & Education

- Coach
- Athletic Director
- Physical Education Teacher
- Skills Trainer
- Youth Sports Director
- Camp Director
- Recreation Coordinator

Media & Communications

- Sports Broadcaster
- Sports Journalist
- Photographer
- Videographer
- Podcast Host
- Social Media Manager
- Public Relations Specialist

Business & Administration

- Sports Marketing
- Event Management
- Sponsorship Coordinator
- Facilities Management

- Ticket Operations
 - Sports Agent
 - Compliance Officer
 - Athletic Administration
-

Law & Finance

- Sports Attorney
 - Entertainment Attorney
 - Contract Negotiator
 - Financial Advisor
 - Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
-

Science & Technology

- Sports Analytics
 - Performance Data Analyst
 - Biomechanics
 - Equipment Design
 - Wearable Technology
 - Artificial Intelligence in Sports
 - Performance Technology
-

Creative Industries

- Graphic Designer
 - Apparel Designer
 - Brand Manager
 - Merchandise Development
 - Product Design
-

Community & Youth Development

- YMCA Leadership
 - Parks & Recreation
 - Adaptive Sports Programs
 - Community Outreach
 - Youth Development Organizations
-

Parent Conversation

One of the best conversations you can have with your student is simply asking:

"What do you enjoy most about sports?"

Sometimes the answer isn't competing. It may be encouraging others, Teaching.

Helping athletes recover. Studying performance.

Broadcasting games. Designing equipment. Managing events.

Creating content. Building businesses or solving problems behind the scenes.

The answer to that question may reveal a career your student has never considered.

Parent Action Steps

Encourage your student to:

- ✓ Research careers connected to the sports industry.
 - ✓ Interview professionals working in sports-related careers.
 - ✓ Job shadow when opportunities become available.
 - ✓ Explore college majors, certifications, and training programs related to sports professions.
 - ✓ Remember that many rewarding careers allow people to stay connected to athletics without competing professionally.
-

Parent Reminder

An athletic career may last a season.

A career built around a passion for sports can last a lifetime.

Help your student see that the game may eventually end—but the opportunities don't have to.



Understanding Recruiting Timelines & Important Deadlines

One of the greatest advantages families can have is understanding that the recruiting process follows a timeline. While every student's journey is unique, there are important milestones throughout high school that can help families stay organized and prepared.

Waiting until junior or senior year to begin asking questions may limit opportunities that could have been explored earlier. By becoming familiar with the recruiting timeline, families can make informed decisions, prepare required documents, and reduce last-minute stress.

Remember that recruiting timelines, eligibility requirements, and communication rules may differ by sport, athletic association, and institution. Families should verify current information through official organizations, school counselors, and college admissions or athletic offices.

Preparation begins long before recruitment becomes a reality.

Parent Action Steps

Encourage your student to:

- ✓ Stay focused on academic success every year of high school.
 - ✓ Meet regularly with their school counselor to review graduation and eligibility requirements.
 - ✓ Keep athletic and academic records organized.
 - ✓ Participate in activities that support leadership, service, and personal growth.
 - ✓ Review important deadlines throughout each school year.
-

Suggested Planning Timeline

Parent Note: If your student is still in middle school, don't worry, you don't have to wait to begin preparing. Encouraging strong academic habits, character development, leadership, and exploration of interests before high school can help build a solid foundation for future opportunities.

8th Grade & Before High School

- Begin exploring interests, strengths, and future goals.
 - Develop strong academic habits.
 - Learn the importance of eligibility requirements.
 - Encourage participation in school and community activities.
-

Freshman Year

- Build a strong academic foundation.
 - Get involved in school activities and leadership opportunities.
 - Begin maintaining records of awards, accomplishments, and athletic participation.
 - Develop healthy study habits and time management skills.
-

Sophomore Year

- Continue strengthening academics.
 - Begin researching colleges, careers, military pathways, technical programs, and apprenticeship opportunities.
 - Attend college fairs, career events, or informational workshops when available.
 - Continue building relationships with coaches, teachers, and mentors.
-

Junior Year

- Narrow college choices, career interests, and visit campuses when possible.
 - Learn about financial aid and scholarship opportunities.
 - Continue communicating with coaches and admissions representatives.
 - Review eligibility requirements and important deadlines.
-

Senior Year

- Complete college, scholarship, and financial aid applications.
 - Meet all institutional deadlines.
 - Review financial aid offers carefully.
 - Make informed decisions regarding post-secondary plans.
 - Celebrate the accomplishments that have resulted from years of preparation.
-

Questions Parents Should Ask

Throughout high school, ask:

- What deadlines should we be aware of this year?
- Are we meeting academic expectations?
- Have we completed required forms or applications?
- What opportunities should we begin exploring now?
- What can we do this year to better prepare for next year?

Parent Reminder

Preparation is most effective when it happens consistently—not all at once. Small, intentional steps taken throughout high school often lead to greater confidence and more opportunities when important decisions begin to unfold.

Understanding the True Cost of Participation

Participating in athletics is an investment of time, commitment, and, in many cases, financial resources. While every program is different, families should understand the potential costs associated with participation and plan accordingly.

Having open conversations about expenses early can help reduce unexpected financial stress throughout the season.

Remember that costs vary by school, sport, level of competition, travel requirements, and individual circumstances.

Expenses Families May Encounter

School Athletics

Depending on the program, expenses may include:

- Participation or athletic fees
 - Physical examinations
 - Uniforms and practice apparel
 - Equipment
 - Team shoes, sport-specific gear or spirit wear
 - Team meals and transportation
 - Banquets or team events
-

Club & Travel Sports

Additional expenses may include:

- Club membership fees
 - Tournament registration
 - Travel and lodging
 - Meals during travel
 - Private instruction or lessons
 - Showcase or camp registration
 - Equipment upgrades
-

College Recruiting

Families may also budget for:

- Campus visits
 - Application fees
 - Official transcripts
 - Standardized testing (when applicable)
 - Recruiting event participation
 - Travel associated with recruiting opportunities
-

Parent Action Steps

Before each season:

- ✓ Review anticipated expenses.
 - ✓ Create an athletic budget.
 - ✓ Ask about fundraising opportunities.
 - ✓ Understand payment deadlines.
 - ✓ Prioritize needs over unnecessary purchases.
 - ✓ Keep receipts and important records.
-

Questions to Ask

- Which expenses are required?
 - Which expenses are optional?
 - What fundraising opportunities are available?
 - Are payment plans offered?
 - Are financial assistance programs available through the school or organization?
-

Parent Reminder

Investing in your student's development is more than purchasing equipment or paying fees.

The greatest investment you can make is your encouragement, your presence, and your commitment to helping your student grow academically, athletically, and personally.

Official Resources & Trusted Organizations

One of the best ways to support your student is by using reliable, up-to-date information from official sources. Policies, eligibility requirements, financial aid programs, recruiting rules, scholarship opportunities, and admission requirements can change over time.

Rather than relying solely on social media, word of mouth, or outdated information, make it a habit to verify important details through official organizations and your student's school.

This section is designed to help you identify the types of resources that may support your family's planning throughout high school. Because websites, policies, and requirements change periodically, always confirm the most current information through appropriate organizations.

Resources Families Should Become Familiar With

College Admissions

Use official college admissions offices to learn about:

- Admission requirements
- Application deadlines
- Campus visits
- Degree programs
- Housing
- Financial aid
- Student support services

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Research:

- Federal financial aid
- State financial aid programs
- Institutional scholarships
- Local and community scholarships
- Private scholarship opportunities
- Employer-sponsored scholarships

Keep a calendar of important deadlines and required documentation.

Athletic Associations

Families should become familiar with the athletic association that applies to their student's goals and level of competition. Each organization establishes its own eligibility requirements, recruiting guidelines, and participation standards.

Examples may include:

- NCAA
- NAIA
- NJCAA
- State high school athletic associations

Career & Technical Education

Students pursuing skilled trades, certifications, apprenticeships, or technical careers should explore resources related to:

- Apprenticeship programs
 - Trade organizations
 - Industry certifications
 - Workforce development
 - Technical colleges
 - Career training opportunities
-

Military Pathways

Students interested in military service should research:

- Branch-specific opportunities
- ROTC programs
- Service academies
- Enlistment options
- Education benefits
- Career pathways

Career Exploration

Encourage students to learn about:

- Career outlooks
- Salary information
- Education requirements
- Licensing or certification requirements
- Job-shadowing opportunities
- Internships

Parent Action Steps

- ✓ Bookmark official resources for easy access.
- ✓ Review important updates each school year.
- ✓ Verify deadlines before submitting applications.
- ✓ Meet with school counselors regularly.
- ✓ Keep important documents organized.

Encourage your student to participate in research opportunities and encourage them to ask appropriate questions.

Verify Before You Act

Requirements, deadlines, eligibility standards, fees, and application or registration procedures may change. Before applying, registering, submitting documents, or making decisions, verify current information directly with the appropriate official organization or program.

Parent Reminder

The best decisions are made using accurate, current information.

When questions arise, begin with official sources, consult trusted professionals, and verify information before making important educational, athletic, or financial decisions.

Parent's Season Preparation Checklist

Every athletic season brings new opportunities, responsibilities, and decisions. Taking a few moments before the season begins can help families stay organized and reduce unnecessary stress throughout the year.

Use this checklist as a planning tool and revisit it before each season.

Student Preparation

- ☐ Current physical examination completed (if required)
- ☐ Academic eligibility confirmed
- ☐ Emergency contact information updated
- ☐ Transportation plan established
- ☐ Personal goals discussed
- ☐ Team expectations reviewed
- ☐ Equipment inspected and ready
- ☐ Practice and competition schedule added to the family calendar

Family Preparation

- ☐ Review anticipated expenses
- ☐ Discuss academic expectations
- ☐ Establish communication expectations
- ☐ Review family schedules and commitments
- ☐ Plan for meals and transportation
- ☐ Identify important school and athletic deadlines
- ☐ Discuss healthy sleep, nutrition, and recovery habits

Parent Communication

- ☐ Know how to contact coaches
 - ☐ Understand the team's communication process
 - ☐ Attend parent meetings when available
 - ☐ Know where schedules and updates are posted
 - ☐ Understand team policies and expectations
-

Academic Success

- ☐ Monitor grades throughout the season
 - ☐ Encourage consistent study habits
 - ☐ Schedule tutoring or academic support if needed
 - ☐ Balance athletics with school responsibilities
 - ☐ Celebrate progress both in the classroom and in competition
-

Health & Wellness

- ☐ Report injuries promptly
 - ☐ Encourage proper hydration and nutrition
 - ☐ Prioritize adequate sleep and recovery
 - ☐ Follow medical recommendations before returning to play
 - ☐ Support emotional well-being throughout the season
-

Family Reminder

Athletics should enhance your student's high school experience—not overwhelm it. Maintain healthy priorities, communicate often, and remember that your greatest role is not simply cheering from the stands. It is helping your student grow into a confident, responsible, and well-rounded young adult.



Student Athlete Advantage

Final Thoughts

The journey of a student-athlete is about far more than practice, competitions, rankings, or recruiting. It is an opportunity to develop habits, character, and life skills that will continue to serve your student long after their athletic career has ended.

As a parent, you don't need to have every answer. Your role is to remain engaged, ask thoughtful questions, encourage wise decisions, and help your student make informed choices throughout the journey.

Celebrate victories, learn from the challenges, and remember that every season offers opportunities for growth.

Most importantly, encourage your student to pursue excellence both on and off the field. A strong education, good character, healthy relationships, and thoughtful preparation will continue opening doors long after the final whistle.

Thank you for investing your time, your encouragement, and your support in helping your student prepare for the future.

The lessons learned through athletics can last a lifetime—and with intentional preparation, the opportunities can as well.

Parent Reflection

As you continue supporting your student-athlete, consider these questions:

- How can I encourage my student to grow beyond their athletic abilities?
- Am I helping them prepare for life after high school, not just the next season?
- What conversations do we need to have before the next opportunity or decision?
- Where can we continue learning together as new opportunities arise?

Preparation doesn't end with one season or one decision.

It continues through every conversation, every lesson learned, and every step forward.

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