Welcome to Adams 12 Five Star Schools!

The start of high school can be an overwhelming experience for students and their parents. Whether you are coming from a typical middle school or a K-8 school, there are many things about high school that are different from your old school environment. As parents, we often wonder how we can best prepare our children to make the transition smoothly and how to support them during their first year in a new environment.

We asked principals and staff from the Five Star District’s high schools to let us know what advice they would give to the parents of incoming 9th grade students. We have included the most frequently asked questions. We hope you find the information useful!

Special thanks

Thanks to all the parent and teacher volunteers who contributed to the creation of this document. Parents serving on the District School Improvement Team (DSIT), principals and staff at all the high schools, teacher representatives of the DTEA and students graciously contributed their time and expertise to create this document. If you have any other questions regarding your student’s transition to high school, please feel free to contact the school appropriate resource at the school. You can also feel free to ask any questions through the District School Improvement Team (DSIT) contact page at www.adams12.org/dsit.
Most Frequently Asked Questions

Click on a question to be taken to the answer

Outreach & Communications Questions:

1. How and when should we expect to hear about high school?
2. Are there opportunities outside of orientation for students and parents to visit the school before the school year starts?
3. When do students receive their schedules and locker assignments?
4. How does the school communicate with parents once the school year has begun?
5. Do high schools have Back-to-School Nights or Information Nights following the beginning of the school year?
6. Are there Parent-Teacher Conferences? How do they work?
7. I had access to Infinite Campus at my child's middle school. Do they use that or any other online tools at the high school level?

Student Services & Academic Questions:

8. How many credits can students take per year? How many classes will most Freshmen have?
9. What are requirements for graduation?
10. What classes are required for Freshmen?
11. Can Freshmen choose any electives?
12. How are Freshmen assessed academically?
13. How do students/parents know what level classes they should take? (reg./CP/AP, etc.)
14. What happens if a Freshman fails a class? Are there ways to make up the credit?
15. Are students assigned a school counselor as Freshmen? What is the role of the school counselor?
16. What is a block class and which Freshmen classes are block classes?
17. What can students do during their free period(s)?
18. What systems do high schools have in place to help students struggling academically?
19. What is the typical daily schedule – start time, lunch, end time?
20. How do school lunches work? Can students leave campus to go to lunch?
21. What do you do for students with special needs?
22. Do you have programs or structures specifically to help the Freshmen?
23. Please describe any special programming offered at your school and if all students participate or if there is an application process.

Parent Involvement & General Student Questions:

24. What leadership or service opportunities are there for Freshmen?
25. What sports and clubs are open for Freshmen to participate?
26. Is there a parent group at the school?
27. How do parents learn about volunteer opportunities?
28. When are students allowed to drive their own cars to school? Is there a parking fee?
Outreach & Communication Questions

1. How and when should we expect to hear about high school?

The first main outreach to families occurs at the high school night conducted in the fall of each year. The event is open to anyone in the district and all 8th grade students and their families are invited to attend. During this night each school gives a presentation about its programs. The evening is divided into two sessions so you have the opportunity to see presentations about programs at two different schools.

Other opportunities are generally provided in the winter or spring at the various schools. If your student is accepted to a special program like IB programme, Global Studies, L2K, SOAR, STEM, these programs will have information nights to talk about program expectations and provide detailed information. Some high schools have general open house nights for 8th grade students and parents. This information should be communicated through the middle school or the high school’s website. Keep in mind, if you are going to a school that is not your boundary school, you will need to check that high school’s website to find out information to learn about scheduling, general culture or special programs.

Most schools have a check-in day in the late summer where students pay fees, get their school pictures taken, get locker assignments and pick up schedules. In addition, Freshmen typically have an orientation day before the start of school where they walk through their schedule and pick up schedules. In addition, Freshmen typically have an orientation day before the start of school where they walk through their schedule and pick up schedules.

2. Are there opportunities outside of orientation for students and parents to visit the school before the school year starts?

Parents and students can always visit the school by attending events such as plays, concerts and games. Additionally, you can call the school to set up an appointment to look around and some schools allow 8th grade students to shadow current high school students.

3. When do students receive their schedules and locker assignments?

There is typically a student check-in/registration day held in early August where students get their schedules, locker assignments and have their pictures taken for the yearbook. Students are also given a student identification badge. Check-in dates are posted in the spring for the following school year.

4. How does the school communicate with parents once the school year has begun?

Once the school year has started you will hear from the school primarily through Infinite Campus messaging and autodialer calls. The school will also provide information on their websites and online newsletters, and on marquis signs in front of their schools.

5. Do high schools have Back-to-School Nights or Information Nights following the beginning of the school year?

Most schools hold a Back-to-School Night at the start of the year. This allows parents to go through their student’s schedules, meet the teachers and have an opportunity to ask questions. Some special programs and even subject areas also hold back to school nights (e.g., IB programme, Global Studies, L2K, SOAR, STEM, etc.) where students and parents can learn about the programs and meet the teachers. Some schools also have informational nights for particular programs or subject areas, such as IB, Global Studies, L2K, SOAR, STEM, etc.

Visit Your Child’s School Online Today
6. Are there Parent-Teacher Conferences? How do they work?

High schools hold conferences in the fall and in the spring. At most schools they are held in the gym and are a drop in format where parents wait without a set appointment. Some schools will organize conference nights by alphabet or have their spring conferences by appointment. See your individual school for conference details. You can always communicate with your child’s teachers between conference and request meetings if you have concerns.

7. I had access to Infinite Campus at my child’s middle school. Do they use that or any other online tools at the high school level?

Infinite Campus (IC) is a comprehensive student data management system. It houses all student information including: class schedules, teachers grade books, household contact information, attendance, discipline, enrollment history, graduation credit summary, transcripts, student fees, etc. Students and parents can log on at any time and see attendance, assignments and grades in each class as soon as the teacher has updated the gradebook. This information is password protected and is not shared with others outside the school.

Naviance is a college and career planning software that is used in high school counseling departments to help students explore and plan for their futures. This program is used to house each student’s ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan) that is required by the state for grades 9-12. Students will learn about Naviance and how to use it through a mixture of classroom lectures and individual meetings.
8. How many credits can students take per year? How many classes will most Freshmen have?

All students must take 6 credits. A year-long class counts as a credit and semester classes count as ½ credit. With 6 credits, a Freshman will have 6 classes in each semester, a lunch and an off period. At some schools, students may take 7 classes if there is course availability or if they are enrolled in choir, band or some of the special high school programs like IB programme, Global Studies, L2K, SOAR and STEM.

It seems early, but it is wise to know all the graduation requirements when your student starts high school. This helps you plan out how to get all the required coursework in along with any special interest classes or programs your child would like to pursue. If students plan on pursuing higher education, they may also want to look at entrance requirements at colleges (for example, Adams 12 Five Star Schools graduation requirements require 2 Arts credits which can cover world language but some colleges want students to have 3 World Language credits).
9. What are requirements for graduation?

In order to be eligible for a district traditional diploma, students must earn twenty-three (23) credits in grades 9-12 distributed in the following areas of instruction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.E.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
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Arts include coursework in Music, Art, Drama, Career & Technical Education, Business, Marketing, Consumer & Family Studies and World Languages.

Students in grades 9, 10 and 11 must be enrolled in one (1) credit each of Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies. Seniors must take a minimum of three (3) credits in a core area. For the purposes of this requirement, core areas are defined as English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, or World Languages. Exceptions to the three (3) core class requirement may be made for students at Bollman Technical Education Center, provided such students can demonstrate competency in the core areas, and for students with special circumstances as approved by the principal or designee. Graduation requirements can be found as part of Superintendent Policy 6340.

Physical Education

The district requires 2 credits of Physical Education (.5 is a health credit) to graduate. Juniors and seniors are eligible to request a .5 to 1.0 credit waiver for P.E. if they participate in some academic programs (e.g., IB Diploma, STEM) or spirit squad or marching band. Participation in these programs qualifies students for a P.E. waiver. Students must apply for a waiver and one is not guaranteed for simply participating in band or a sport. A counselor will work with your student to look at his/her class load and scheduling ability to accommodate taking P.E. before a waiver is granted. Superintendent policy 6330 has more information on the criteria for getting up to one credit waived for P.E.

Students completing special programs such as IB Diploma and STEM may be eligible for special diplomas.

**Five Star Diploma**

In addition to a standard diploma, graduating seniors of any Adams 12 Five Star District high school may also receive a Five Star Diploma for completing all of the following requirements:

- Complete 23 credits;
- Cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher as of the end of first semester of the graduating year;
- Receive test scores of proficient or advanced on all common district and state assessments in 9th and 10th grade;
- Receive a test score of 23 or higher on the state-mandated ACT test given on the required date at the student’s school;
- Meet or exceed the CDHE requirements (HEAR - Higher Education Admission Requirements) during their secondary education and;
- Participate in all state-mandated assessments at the current school while enrolled as a student in Adams 12 Five Star Schools.
10. What classes are required for Freshmen?

At all high schools, Freshmen are required to take 4 core courses in the areas of Math, English, Social Studies (1/2 credit Government, ½ credit Economics) and Science. Math courses are often blocked which means they will get 2 credits per semester in Math. Special programs at the various high schools may have other required classes (e.g., a World Language credit is required for Thornton IB Freshmen year and L2K students have a required 1 credit course). Freshmen are encouraged to use the remaining one or two classes for electives to meet graduation requirements.

11. Can Freshmen choose any electives?

Freshmen generally can select 1-2 electives beyond their core classes. Electives generally chosen are in the areas of Music, World Language, Physical Education and Health to help meet graduation requirements.

12. How are Freshmen assessed academically?

Freshmen take assessments in each of their courses and, in addition, participate in common assessments. State mandated assessments include TCAP (formerly called CSAP) and CMAS for Science and Social Studies and PARRC testing. For more information on common assessments, please visit: http://www.adams12.org/student_learning/assessments

13. How do students/parents know what level classes they should take? (reg./CP/AP, etc.)

As the year approaches, students will be placed in their Math courses based on performance data (e.g., TCAP results and performance on district placement tests). Teacher recommendations may be considered in this placement.

Depending on the school, there are college-level courses and other courses. Students have the choice and are encouraged to take the highest level courses they can. Advanced Placement (AP) and other college-level course opportunities are available at other grade levels. For more information, contact a counselor.

There are a few classes for only Freshmen in certain subject areas like English and Social Studies in most schools, but the majority of classes will group your child by interest or ability level and will have students of all grade levels. It is important for students to note that many classes at the high school level are mixed, meaning Freshmen will be with students of other grade levels and differing ability levels. For example, it is possible for a Freshman in a higher level Math class to be in a class with Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors. Many academic courses are grade-specific, however most elective courses are mixed.

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Gsxpih vkmwexsr jsqv wevi xvywihxs the high school and processed by the Registrar throughout the spring and summer to ensure Wgi hypwyx Äepri herh vpevih xs wyhirw in early-mid August, typically at orientation or check-in (varies by school).
14. What happens if a Freshman fails a class? Are there ways to make up the credit?

Depending on the class, students can re-take it if there is space and availability in the class. Students can re-take some courses online or during summer school. It is important to note that any credits not earned due to failure must be recovered in order to earn enough credits to graduate. It is critical to talk to a school counselor right away after a student fails a class to get details on what options are available to make up the credit and stay on track for on-time graduation. Counselors will have details on specific online, summer school or other credit recovery options.

15. Are students assigned a school counselor as Freshmen? What is the role of the school counselor?

Most schools assign students a counselor as Freshmen alphabetically and that counselor stays with the student throughout the four years. Counselors help students with their course schedules and make sure they are on track with credits for graduation. Counselors help with credit recovery, college applications and the social/emotional needs of students.

16. What is a block class and which Freshmen classes are block classes?

A block class is one that takes two back-to-back class periods versus one. These courses will cover more material, typically a year’s worth of material in one semester with the extra time. Which classes are blocked depends on the school. In many schools Math is a block class during Freshmen year. In a few schools English and Social Studies are paired together in a block. When you get your registration materials and begin to pick classes, you will see which classes at the high school your child will be attending are block courses.

17. What can students do during their free period(s)?

Freshmen can get homework done, socialize with friends in school common areas, go to the library, sign up to be a student assistant, make arrangements to meet with a teacher or, in some schools, see a peer tutor. Most schools do not allow Freshmen to leave campus, although a few allow students in good academic standing to go off campus second semester.

18. What systems do high schools have in place to help students struggling academically?

Beyond teachers working individually with students, systems to help struggling students vary by high school. Teachers provide opportunities for help and options for assessment retakes and corrections. Some schools build intervention time into the school day a few days a week. Intervention time offers the chance for students to meet with teachers for help without coming in early or staying after school. Some schools also offer peer tutoring.
19. What is the typical daily schedule — start time, lunch, end time?

For the bell schedule for each high school, please check the website at your high school. In general:

School start (M, T, Th, F): 7:15 a.m.
School start Wed.: 7:10 a.m.
End of day (M, T, Th, F): 3:00 p.m.
End of day Wed.: 12:30 p.m.

Times for lunch, class periods and scheduled intervention time vary by school.

20. How do school lunches work? Can students leave campus to go to lunch?

Each school handles lunch a bit differently. There is hot lunch available at all schools through a school lunch program and a la carte options like Subway and pizza. You can pay for high school lunches online (except for Northglenn and Thornton) as in middle school and elementary school. Freshmen cannot leave campus for lunch at most schools all year. A few schools will allow Freshmen in good academic and attendance standing to go off campus second semester. These policies vary between schools and are subject to change at any time.

21. What do you do for students with special needs?

All high schools work with students with special needs through their Individual Education Plans (IEPs), 504 plans or Advanced Learning Plans (ALPs). Some schools have caseworkers assigned to students with IEPs. If you have questions or concerns about your child’s transition, you should contact his or her current specialist or program coordinator.

22. Do you have programs or structures specifically to help the Freshmen?

Programs to help Freshmen vary from school to school. At all schools, Freshmen have a day where they can orient themselves without upper classmen present. Many schools also have programs linking Freshmen with upper classmen to serve as mentors and help them navigate. Most also have peer counseling, peer tutoring and intervention programs available throughout the school year. For more information, contact the school.

23. Please describe any special programming offered at your school and if all students participate or if there is an application process.

All schools offer advanced placement courses and students from any high school can take classes at Bollman Technical Education Center. Special programs by school:

**Horizon**
- SOAR (application)
- Autism center (district placement)
- Special Education magnet

**Legacy**
- Legacy 2000 (application)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (district placement)

**Mountain Range**
- Global Studies Program (application)

**Northglenn**
- STEM pathways (application)

**Thornton**
- International Baccalaureate (application)
24. What leadership or service opportunities are there for Freshmen?

Some schools have a student government that will have Freshmen representatives. They apply in 8th grade and go through an interview process before the end of the school year. For school, please visit the website or contact the school directly.

25. What sports and clubs are open for Freshmen to participate?

Most clubs and sports are open to Freshmen with the exception of honors clubs like National Lsrs svHl GE {l i u q e} i course requirements to join. There are many websites of each of the high schools to see what sports and clubs are available.

**Sports**

It is important to note that there are regulations dictating when high schools may contact and begin to work with 8th grade athletes interested ml rd vgl sspr sw2 Eggs vhmk x i Gps vhs L rd Vgl vgl ssp Eggs vhmk x i Gps vhs

**26. Is there a parent group at the school?**

Each school has a School Accountability Gs q ni 0syv v i q School Improvement Teams (SITs) where they need parent representatives to come and discuss issues related to academics, achievement data and school budgets. Many activity and athletic teams have specific booster clubs to support those activities (e.g., band, theater, football, basketball, etc.) Look for information on how to get involved on the school’s website. If you can’t find it, ask the school’s principal about how to get involved.

27. How do parents learn about volunteer opportunities?

Gs x {l exi vgl ssp vq e} i you, high schools do want parent volunteers. You will post opportunities on their website, send newsletters or put information in their newsletter. Newsletters are not typically printed and sent home but are available on the school’s website.

28. When are students allowed to drive their own cars to school? Is there a parking fee?

Gl x {l exi vgl ssp x i} i s you out when students can drive to school. Some schools allow students to drive as soon as they can show a valid driver’s license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. Other schools restrict Freshmen from driving the whole year or until they can show good academic standing. There is a $50 district parking fee and students are issued a window tag for their car.
For More Information On Your Child’s School, Visit Their Website:

Horizon High School  
Legacy High School  
Mountain Range High School  
Northglenn High School  
Thornton High School