

## **A Parent's Troubleshooting Guide To Improving Your Child's Grades**

If, after reading Everything CV Parents need to Know, your child is still not meeting your academic expectations, this article should be helpful. Below you will find ideas for solving the problem(s) you may encounter while helping your child become academically successful.

### **Troubleshooting**

#### **If your child is not filling out the agenda for every class::**

- Set up a consequence every night that student doesn't have agenda filled out. Assigning chores such as cleaning the kitchen or not getting free time for that night may help motivate student. Student starts with a clean slate the next day.
- Have your child write down the names and phone numbers of 3 reliable students in every class on the last page of the agenda. Instruct your child to call these students for every class that he/she forgot to fill out the agenda for.
- Buy a student directory from the PTSA. Use the directory to call students in each class yourself. This seems to work extremely fast!
- Email the teachers letting them know that you would like each teacher to initial the agenda when your child approaches the teacher with it. Getting the teacher involved can be very helpful because your child becomes accountable to someone in the classroom. Although it is unrealistic to ask teachers to remember to sign the agenda, letting the teacher know that you want your child to get their initials often helps them to remember in case your child forgets.
- If you have done all the above, and it still doesn't work, email the teachers to see if they have any insights into what the problem might be. If they have any suggestions, try them. If not, call your child's counselor.

#### **If student has a problem staying on task during the assigned homework/study time:**

- Check in regularly to see if he/she needs help. If a student is having problems understanding an assignment, it is easy for them to get off task.
- Determine how long your child can stay focused. Then set up 5-10 minutes breaks so he/she can stretch, get up and walk around, or get a drink of water.
- Email the teachers to see if they've noticed inattention issues in class. Then, take your child to his/her doctor to see if he/she might have an attention problem.

#### **If student is not completing homework in the allotted time:**

- Sit with your child while he's doing an assignment and see if you can see what the problem is. With students who are perfectionists, they just might be spending too much time on insignificant details. Or, you may find that they get distracted easily.
- Email teachers or check teacher websites to find out how much time should be spent on assignments. Get teacher feedback on what the issue might be and ask for advice on what should be done about it.
- If you tried all the above and your child is still not able to get the homework done in a timely manner, call your child's counselor to discuss the problem.

#### **If student has persistent difficulties understanding the homework:**

- Offer your assistance, however, be aware of the fine line between helping and doing it for him/her.
- Help your child identify where the breakdown occurs. For example, does he understand steps A,B, and C, but not D? This is an important learning strategy.
- Check teacher website for helpful suggestions.
- Seek feedback from the teacher on what the issue might be and what can be done about it.
- If none of the above works, call your child's counselor.

### **If student is not turning in assignments on time:**

- Make sure student's notebook is organized and that all homework to be turned in the next day is kept in one particular place.
- Check teacher website for helpful information.
- Right after school, check to make sure that all the homework has been turned in. If not, have student run to the classes and turn it in. If the teacher is not there, put the assignment in the teacher's mailbox with date and time turned in.
- Email the teacher regarding the problem for insights into what is (or isn't) happening in class. Ask teacher for suggestions.
- Call your child's counselor if you are not able to resolve the issue after trying the above strategies.

### **If an adult is not at home after school to supervise study time:**

- Arrange for another adult to supervise study time. When you get home, check that all work is completed and that he/she is prepared for the next day.
- Set up the study time after you get home. This will give the student a long break between school and homework, which can be beneficial.
- Call your child's counselor and ask about after school programs. Set up a system where student signs in and out. Call program supervisor periodically to make sure your child is attending.

**Important:** Strictly following the steps outlined above can help pinpoint whether there is another factor involved in your child's inability to realize his full potential. If you have been consistent in your methods and your child's grades are still not what they should be, the counselor should become involved in finding a solution. With the data that you've gathered from implementing these strategies and working with your child's teachers, the counselor can better determine the next steps to be taken to help your child succeed.

### **Other factors important to students' academic success:**

- Adequate rest. Much research has shown that middle school age students should be in bed no later than 9:00 pm. This can include time to unwind by lying in bed reading until they feel sleepy.
- Health: Plenty of exercise and regular physicals is encouraged. Make sure your child gets adequate nutrition. A good breakfast can help energy and concentration levels.
- Providing a supportive and encouraging environment in which to talk will encourage your child to be honest and open with you