

Peer mentoring offers middle and high school students meaningful opportunities to learn from one another while exploring high school success, college planning, and career pathways. This collection of activities and campus experiences is designed to help peer mentors guide younger students with practical advice, shared experiences, and supportive conversations.

ASPIRE High School Panel

High School Success Panel

Choose 3-5 ASPIRE high school peer mentors to serve on a panel to answer questions about their high school experience. It is wise to meet with HS panelists prior to the event to provide them with the list of questions that will be asked. Discuss with them the importance of appropriate answers that steer middle school students to positive behavior and building strong habits that help them with HS success and career/college goals.

In addition, consider beginning the panel event by letting each HS student introduce themselves and answer the question: *What I Wish I Knew About HS*. Make sure you have previewed and know answers are appropriate. Below is a list of other potential panel questions:

- ☐ What elective classes are available, and which ones do you like the most?
- ☐ How important are grades your freshman/sophomore year?
- ☐ What clubs are available in high school?
- ☐ What surprised you most about starting high school?
- ☐ What study habits ended up helping you the most?
- ☐ What is one thing you wish you would've done differently in your freshman year?
- ☐ What is something that you worried about before high school that turned out fine?
- ☐ What's something you didn't worry about but wish you had paid more attention to?
- ☐ What is your best memory in high school?
- ☐ What do you do if you get behind in a class or you don't understand the assignments?
- ☐ Why is it important to start thinking about career/college early in high school?
- ☐ Have you taken college credit classes in HS? What was your experience?
- ☐ What should students know about building a strong high school resume early on?
- ☐ Is volunteering and student involvement really that important? How can it help you?

Middle School Students Visit High School

Bringing middle school students to the high school campus can ease the anxiety they may feel about starting high school. Visiting helps them learn the layout, see where to get help, and become familiar with available resources. During the visit a stop at the ASPIRE/Career and College Center introduces them to the place they'll go to for college and career support. A visit may also include:

- ☐ General tour of school
- ☐ Visit to Career Technical Education Classes
- ☐ Counseling Center
- ☐ Student Club and Activities Fair

College Campus Visit

Pairing middle school students with high school students during a college campus visit allows them to explore a college environment together with support from someone who has already begun planning for their own future. High school mentors can help younger students notice important details on campus, talk through what college life is like, and reflect on how high school choices connect to future opportunities. Use [Get the Most Out of Your College Visit](#) to identify key questions to ask during the tour and to guide meaningful conversations throughout the visit.

Career and College Research and Activities

Middle and high school students can benefit from exploring college and career options together. Peer mentors can meet individually or in small groups to help younger students think about future pathways. These conversations let students share experiences, compare interests, and consider next steps. The activities and website resources below can further build understanding and encourage meaningful discussions about future plans

One-on-one mentor activities

- ❑ [College Evaluation Chart](#) – Compare and contrast several factors for colleges of interest
- ❑ [Career One Stop](#) – Research careers and postsecondary education options
- ❑ [Building A Career Pathway](#) – Reflect on personal values, interests, and skills
- ❑ [College Comparison Scorecard](#) – Evaluate colleges based on what is most important to student
- ❑ [College Conversations](#) – Reflection prompts for students – written or in conversation
- ❑ [Financial Conversation Starters](#) – Introductory conversations around money and finances.

Group Activities

- ❑ [Career 20 Questions](#) – Think critically about different types of careers
- ❑ [Career Charades](#) – Gain awareness of career opportunities
- ❑ [Why College?](#) – Identify benefits and concerns students have about going to college

ASPIRE Ambassadors and Student Aides (HS)

Peer mentor development is a powerful way to expand a coordinator's capacity and impact. Involving students as volunteers in college and career events, activities, and daily work in the ASPIRE/College and Career Center provides meaningful student leadership opportunities. ASPIRE Ambassadors and Student Aides not only support the center's mission—they also build valuable skills, deepen their understanding of the college and career planning process, and strengthen their own resumes as they learn and grow through hands-on experience. For more ideas of how to incorporate high school students into peer mentor roles:

- ❑ [ASPIRE Ambassadors and Student Aides](#)
- ❑ [Career and College Readiness Student Internship](#)
- ❑ [Strategic Ways to Expand Your Capacity and Reach](#)