

Link Community Charter School
High School Preparation Curriculum
Grade 7 and 8 Curriculum

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Core Content and Skills:

1. Student Profile

Students will be able to identify the various components of a transcript, take an active role in compiling their own personal transcripts, and appreciate how academic and personal development achievement/performance impacts each of these parts and creates a strong or weak overall profile.

1.1. Report Card:

Required Topics:

- (a) Facilitate an appreciation of the role and importance of each section of the report card including grades, comments, absence/tardiness record, and personal development rankings.
- (b) Teach students to analyze and understand the relationship between effort ratings and grades and the control/power students have in creating positive changes.
- (c) Provide opportunities for students to take an active role in compiling their transcripts and ensuring that all pieces are available (i.e. 6th grade report card and standardized testing results; 7th grade report card and standardized testing results).
- (d) Provide opportunities for students to establish short-term goals based on their analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of their existing transcripts.

1.2. Standardized Testing:

Required Topics:

- (a) Give students an understanding of the purpose of standardized testing and its role in providing information about relative strengths and weaknesses.
- (b) Encourage students to take standardized testing seriously but with the understanding that these kinds of test results make up only one part of the profile that is sent to high schools.

1.3. Recommendations:

Required Topics:

- (a) Help students understand the importance of a strong, positive recommendation and how it can serve to reinforce strengths and counter weaker parts of the overall transcript.
- (b) Teach and reinforce the appropriate way to request recommendations from teachers and other adults.

- (c) Teach students to analyze and identify the ingredients of a strong recommendation and understand how their actions, academic performance, and involvement in school and community activities can impact whether or not they receive strong recommendations.

2. Entrance Test Preparation

Students will understand the role that entrance tests play in the high school placement process and be able to confidently anticipate and answer questions in each of the sections that comprise the tests.

2.1. COOP Test Preparation:

Required Topics:

- (a) Teach and allow students to apply and practice strategies specific to answering questions in each of the seven test areas.
- (b) Administer diagnostic or pre-tests in each of the seven test areas and compile individual student and class profiles of strengths and needs.
- (c) Administer at least one complete mock COOP test under exam conditions and compare results to initial pre-test profiles.
- (d) Teach, model and reinforce general standardized test-taking tips and strategies.

2.2. SSAT Test Preparation:

Required Topics:

- (a) Teach and allow students to apply and practice strategies specific to answering questions in each of the four test areas and the essay section.
- (b) Administer diagnostic or pre-tests in each of the four test areas and compile individual student and class profiles of strengths and needs.
- (c) Administer at least one complete mock SSAT test under exam conditions and compare results to initial pre-test profiles.
- (d) Teach, model and reinforce general standardized test-taking tips and strategies.

3. Applications

Students will be able to complete a persuasive high-quality application that meets all admissions requirements and honestly presents their best qualities.

3.1 Completing the Application

Required Topics:

- (a) Teach and develop effective means of managing and meeting important application deadlines. (e.g. personal timelines; calendars;)
- (b) Teach students to analyze and identify the characteristics of a strong application. For example:
 - Thoroughness - no short answer question or section should go unanswered
 - Persuasiveness - composition of thoughtful, interesting answers that honestly represent students in the best possible light
 - Neatness - the importance of drafting and revising before writing the final copy on the application and proofreading for spelling and punctuation errors; scratch outs are not acceptable)
- (c) Educate students about the role that their parents/guardians play in completing the application and their responsibilities with regard to meeting deadlines and writing complete, honest and supportive answers in the parent questionnaire.

3.2 Essay

Required Topics:

- (a) Provide opportunities and guide students in using the writing process and applying the school-wide essay writing rubric standards to their essay composition.
- (b) Guide students in selecting (from the given choices) or composing an appropriate topic for their essay -one that allows them to write passionately and persuasively about an important issue or event in their lives.

- (c) Teach students to understand how the audience of their essay –an admissions committee at one of their high school choices- impacts the form and content of their essay.

3.3 Sample Graded Writing Assignments

Required Topics:

- (a) Guide students in selecting one of their best assignments that carries a strong grade and positive teacher comments as a writing sample to include in the application.
- (b) If students do not have pieces to choose from, provide opportunities for them to request a graded essay from their English or History teachers **well in advance** of the application due date.

4. Scholarship Opportunities

Students will be able to appreciate the importance of applying for scholarships and be adequately equipped and prepared to thoroughly complete the registration process.

4.1 Complete the Registration/Application Process

Required Topics:

- (a) Teach students to understand the difference between academic and financial scholarships and the importance of pursuing these opportunities as another source of financial aid.
- (b) Review the scholarship application requirements carefully and provide opportunities for students to make plans to fulfill them. Sometimes an interview is required and/or letters of recommendation; guide students through the process of completing registration forms and stress importance of paying fees on time.
- (c) If required, help prepare students for the scholarship interview/exam????

5. Interviews

Students will be able to confidently and appropriately conduct themselves in an admissions interview.

5.1 Preparation before the interview

Required Topics:

- (a) Provide opportunities for students to do research about the schools they plan to visit and to develop at least 3 questions to ask based on the information they gather during their interviews.
- (b) Review appropriate dress/appearance and the following list of tasks to complete before and on the day of the interview: confirm date, time of your appointment and that you have accurate directions; get a good night's rest prior to the interview day; eat a nutritious breakfast in the morning of the interview; arrive at least 15 minutes earlier than your appointment.
- (c) Provide opportunities for students to anticipate, compose and practice answering questions likely to be asked during the interview.

5.2 During the interview

Required Topics:

- (a) Teach, model and provided opportunities for students to practice appropriate greeting etiquette; eye-contact; posture; tone and clarity of voice to be used throughout the interview.
- (b) Teach, model and provided opportunities for students to compose and practice answering admissions questions.(answers to questions should be clear, concise, complete, correct and carefully chosen (think before you speak-choose your words thoughtfully and wisely).
- (c) Guide students through the process of researching, composing and practicing the asking of at least three questions that they could ask the admissions officer at their interview.

5.3 After the interview

Required Topics:

- (a) Teach and provide opportunities for students to practice how to appropriately thank the admissions officer and make an exit. (final statements and expression of interest in the institution; verbal thank you and hand shake)
- (b) Teach the appropriate form of a thank you letter or card and provide opportunities for students to practice writing thank you notes addressed to an admissions officer audience.

6. Thank You Letters

Students will be able to compose timely, sincere and well-written thank you letters to follow up their interviews.

6.1 Purpose of the thank you letter

Required Topics:

- (a) Teach students about the importance and purpose of following up their interviews with writing thank you letter/cards. (creates a positive impression and helps to make your interview more memorable for admissions officer); courteous, caring gesture; provides another opportunity to highlight strengths and express interest in application.

6.2 Composition of the thank you letter

Required Topics:

- (a) Teach and guide students through the writing process of composing a thoughtful, well-written thank you letter. (content should include a thank you; follow-up on something mentioned during the interview; positive statement highlighting attributes and what student could bring to the school)
- (b) Reinforce the importance of neatness and presentation and provide opportunities for drafting and revising before writing a final copy and proofreading for spelling, punctuation and legible script.

7. Middle School to High School Transition

Students will be able to articulate, understand and normalize their feelings, concerns, and opinions about graduating middle school and beginning high school. Students will also be able to use different coping strategies to help them anticipate the mix of emotions and practical concerns involved with this process of transition and separation.