



*Thinking about designing a program
for your 8th Grade Parents?*

Here are some ideas!

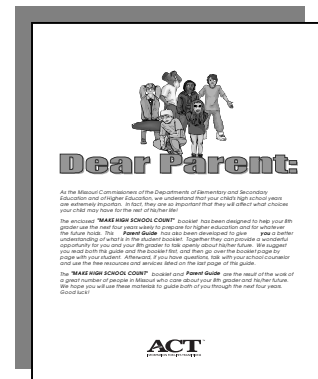
"Make High School Count" is an early awareness program with related printed materials designed to empower 8th grade students and their parents to use the high school years to prepare for higher education.



The Student Booklet Designed for 8th graders, the "Make High School Count" booklet is centered around a set of simple suggestions:

- Keep your options open
- Take the right courses
- Take control--learn to be a good student
- Use time outside of school wisely
- Start thinking about the future
- If college is a goal, learn about financial aid programs
- Get help when it's needed

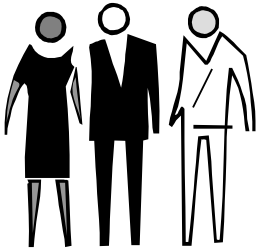
The Parent Guide Parents who are not familiar with the college-going process sometimes need a boost to feel confident helping their students use the booklet. That's why a brief *Parent Guide to "Make High School Count"* has also been developed. The *Parent Guide* overviews the student booklet in simple language and lists helpful phone numbers, web sites, and free publications that can help students and their parents explore college and career information.



The Presentation A free PowerPoint presentation, which highlights the major points contained in the booklet and guide, has been developed to be used in programs for parents.

How do you *BEGIN* to plan your program?

Determine the scope. "Make High School Count" can be adapted for a small or large audience. A simple program at a middle school might involve one counselor using the overhead slides to present "Make High School Count" to parents. Or, a group can work together to develop a full-blown area-wide event that encompasses several school districts. Be realistic. How much time do you have? How much help? What type of resources?

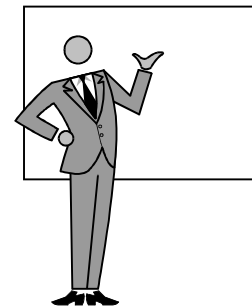


Choose a planning committee. You will need help. You will need ideas. Even the smallest program should have more than one person involved. Draft people who are enthusiastic and who can have fun with the project, if possible. Two or three people can do the initial brainstorming for a large program, and others can be added as you need them.

Choose a site. Where will it be held? In a classroom at your middle school? In a high school auditorium? On a university campus? At a community center? Is there a usage cost? Is there parking? Is it accessible? Is it AVAILABLE?

Choose a date and time. Evening? Weekend? What else is going on at the same time? An hour is enough for a simple, no-frills information session. If you add additional speakers, break-out sessions, exhibits, etc., you will need several hours.

Who will present the information? You need to find the best public speaker available. Will you do it yourself? Will you use a guest speaker? Will you work with others as a team? You might contact a local college admissions or financial aid office for a speaker.



How about a "celebrity" spokesperson? This can be a good idea if there is someone who naturally comes to mind. Most attempts to get sports stars, entertainers, politicians, etc., are more trouble than they're worth and often don't pan out. Think locally. Think of someone personable who might exemplify and speak to the value of a good education.

How will you promote your program? Letters mailed to parents? Flyers sent home with students? Newsletter notices? Posters? Newspaper articles? Radio? Television?

Do you have/need funding? How much will it cost? Is there money in your budget? Can you solicit funds from other sources? Can you write a small grant proposal to some organization? Are there businesses in your area that might find it appealing to have a sponsor's acknowledgment in your program? If necessary, you might consider trying to get sponsorship for:



- postage
- printing
- promotional materials
- refreshments
- door prizes
- transportation

Will you invite exhibitors? You might set up a browsing area before or after your program where participants can get further information. Area post-secondary institutions? The military? Agencies and services related to the topic? Your school district?

Will you offer breakout sessions? Who will present them? Where will they be held? How much time will you allow? Some suggestions for topics:

- Paying for college (use a local college financial aid person)
- College choice and the admission process
- School counselors and the services they provide
- Use of the Internet in college planning (is there a computer lab for hands on?)
- A panel of college students to discuss what they wished they would have done in 8th grade

And finally... Make sure you have some method of evaluating your program so that you'll know how to "tweak" it if you decide to repeat it next year.

Good luck!