

What is Freshman Focus?

Freshman Focus is a comprehensive freshman transition program for all first time (non-repeating) 9th graders. Each freshman is assigned to a Freshman Focus Family consisting of principal, counselor, and 4 teachers in the areas of math, science, English and geography. With Freshman Focus, students are given the information, tools, resources, and strategies they'll need to successfully navigate the challenges of high school. Tailored to meet the needs of your school, Freshman Focus isn't just adding a program. It's changing the culture.

Why and how was the Freshman Focus created?

In a large school system, students can easily fall between the cracks when transitioning from middle to high school which can lead to many problems. With FF, freshmen take their core classes in a common area and have easy access to their counselor and principal. Their electives are taken outside the Freshman Focus area.

How does Freshman Focus support their students and parents?

Parents and guardians are encouraged to become or remain involved in their child's education. We provide a wide array of support in the form of parent contacts by teachers, principal and counselor, web-based parent portal where parents can check grades and attendance on a daily basis, FF Orientation prior to the beginning of school, and weekly grade checks by their counselor and principal. Students are also provided an academic planner to help them organize vital information and create good work habits that they will use for the rest of their lives. Also, all freshmen take a study skills class where students are provided information on test taking strategies, time management, setting goals, and career information.

Helping Your Child Transition to High School

The move from middle school to high school can be both exciting and frightening for your teenager and you. Just the age difference and maturity level between a 14-year-old freshman and an 18-year-old senior can be intimidating for some students. It is our intent to help alleviate some of the fears associated with the transition to high school by having freshmen enrolled in Freshman Focus at Marshall County High School. (see above)

As your teenager's counselor, I would like to offer the following tips to help make a smooth transition to high school:

1. Take advantage of the high school orientation opportunities held at the end of your child's 8th grade year. At this time, administrators will discuss important information about high school, invite parents to tour the campus and answer all questions about the registration process and enrollment in Marshall County High School.

2. Continue to listen intently and cherish conversations with your teen, especially those that occur the first weeks of high school. Sometimes your son/daughter is seeking advice but often times it is just to have someone to listen to their concerns. Please feel welcome to address these concerns with your teenager's principal, Mr. Stacey Bradley or Mrs. Elaine Hogancamp, Freshman Counselor.
3. Don't minimize your child's feelings as they experience the highs and lows of high school. Try to remember how you felt in high school. Their feelings are very real and should be responded to in an understanding way.
4. Encourage your child to be his or her own advocate. High school is the time to begin stepping back and letting your teenager deal with problems, whether it's scheduling issues, a difficult teacher or a broken locker.
5. Help your teen get organized and encourage them to make good grades. Your son/daughter will have the opportunity to earn 8 credits every year in high school. Most of the freshmen are on the A/B schedule. This means that the students take 4 classes on A day and 4 different classes on B day. Alternating between A and B day classes. All 8 classes are year long. Sometimes block core teachers (ex, English and Geography or Math and Science) may modify their schedule by meeting 45 minutes each during a 90 minute block. (see sample schedule) Talk to your teen about their A and B classes and what is expected in each. Grades will be checked on a weekly basis and students with failing grades will be pulled from their elective classes to receive additional help to pass core classes.
6. Allow adequate time for homework but encourage extra-curricular involvement. Teens should be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities plus have assigned household chores to foster and develop time management skills and fundamental work habits. High school is also a great time to begin volunteering for a local organization. It allows your teen to get involved in the community and looks great on a resume or job application.
7. Encourage your teen to make a 4 year plan. Grades, behavior and attendance are essential to your child being successful in high school. All freshmen complete an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) through Career Cruising in their Study Skills class. Parents are encouraged to log-in and participate in the planning process. The ILP enables the student, parents or guardians, teachers, and counselors to work together to develop a course of study that meets the student's needs and goals. Plans can change from year to year but thinking about the future will encourage your child to understand the importance of making the best of their freshman year.

Sample Schedule

	A Day	B Day
1	Algebra 1	Earth/Space Science
2	Geography	English 1
3	Study Skills	Health/PE
4.	Elective	Elective

The schedule above lists 4 classes each day. Students alternate between A day and B day classes. Study skills, Health/PE and elective classes are always 90 minute long classes. Core classes such as Algebra and Earth/Space or Geography and English can either be on a modified block (meeting every day for 45 minutes each) or on alternating days (meeting 90 minutes). Elective courses are the only courses incoming freshmen will have that may have upperclassmen in them. Lunch is scheduled during third block class. There are 4 lunch periods.