

Mid-Year Course Corrections

By Diane Trautman

Regular communication between parents, students, and teachers is always important, but we've reached that mid-point in the school year when honest assessments and corrections are vital to your child's success. Will your child make a smooth transition to the next grade? Will your high school sophomore or junior finish required courses with a grade point average that will qualify her for admission to the college of her choice? Will your son graduate without having to go to summer school?

Parents are frequently caught off-guard by poor grades and performance. Maybe your son has assured you that his grade will rise by the time the next progress report comes out. He might only need to turn in a report that's past due, do well on the next quiz, or study a little more. It sounds reasonable and so we parents get back to the business at hand and assume that our kids have it under control.

Promises are easy, of course. Without any change in attitude or approach, they are likely to be hollow. That's why we should ask our son what specific steps he's going to take to improve, and then follow up to make sure he has actually done them.

Since kids don't think long term, you may need to remind them of the ramifications of bad grades — attending summer school instead of going on a vacation, for example. Even if your sophomore hasn't identified her career choice, she should know that, because this is the critical admissions look-back period, her college choices may be very limited if she doesn't maintain decent grades.

Sometimes there's more to the story than our child will share with us, so a consultation with the teacher is equally important. It may take a little effort on your part, but it's better to get that feedback now so you can take immediate action and avoid a rude awakening during spring open house sessions.

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