What Expectations Need to be Met?

In high school, you're at a critical stage for preparing for your future, whether that involves college, vocational training, or entering the workforce directly after graduation. Here are key expectations you should consider meeting to set yourself up for success:

1. Academic Performance

- Maintain strong grades: Your junior year grades are especially important as they are the last full set of grades reported to colleges before you apply. Aim to excel in your coursework.
- Take challenging courses: Enroll in honors, AP, or IB courses if possible, as they demonstrate your willingness to tackle rigorous academic work.

2. Standardized Tests

- Prepare for and take standardized tests like the SAT or ACT, as these scores are critical components of college applications. Consider taking these tests more than once to improve your scores.

3. College and Career Exploration

- Start researching potential colleges, universities, or vocational programs. Consider factors like programs offered, location, size, and cost.
- Explore careers that interest you through internships, job shadowing, or volunteer experiences to gain insight into what those jobs entail.

4. Extracurricular Involvement

- Engage in extracurricular activities that interest you. Leadership roles or sustained involvement in activities can enhance your college applications and provide valuable skills.

5. College Admissions Materials

- Begin preparing your college application materials:
    - Draft your college essay, focusing on topics that highlight your unique experiences and strengths.
    - Compile a list of achievements, awards, and extracurricular activities.
    - Identify teachers or mentors who can write strong letters of recommendation.

6. Financial Planning

- Familiarize yourself with the financial aid process, including the FAFSA, and start identifying scholarships and grants for which you can apply.

- Discuss with your family about how to finance your education, setting realistic expectations based on your family's financial situation.

7. Soft Skills

- Work on developing soft skills such as time management, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. These skills are crucial for success in both college and the workplace.

8. Personal Development

- Take time to develop personally by reading widely, staying informed about current events, and reflecting on your personal goals and values.

9. Health and Well-Being

- Pay attention to your physical and mental health. High school can be stressful, especially during junior year, so it's important to practice self-care and seek help if you're feeling overwhelmed.

Meeting these expectations will require effort and planning, but by doing so, you will significantly enhance your preparedness for the future. Remember, it's okay to ask for help from teachers, counselors, and family members along the way.