



Hello Parents,  
Welcome to

# Eighth Grade!

Believe it or not, your student is more than halfway to high school graduation

Parents have common questions about achievement and instruction as students move up each grade. This guide will point you to answers as you help your student reach graduation!

**Learn more at [www.skgradguide.com](http://www.skgradguide.com).**

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# WHAT IS MY CHILD LEARNING?

State standards describe what Oregon **students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year.**

Following are a few examples of state standards for EIGHTH GRADE students:

## English Language Arts

(includes reading, writing, language, speaking and listening)

- Quote evidence that most strongly supports what the student thinks a text is saying both directly and indirectly.
- Determine a theme or central idea; analyze the development over the course of the text, including its relationship to characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary.
- Write arguments to support claims with logical reasons and credible evidence, acknowledging and distinguishing the claim from alternate or opposing claims.

## Math

- Solve linear equations and pairs of linear equations. For example,  $y = 2x - 2$  and  $y = -x + 7$ .
- Use functions to illustrate relationships between numbers. A function describes what happens to a number (input) to produce an outcome (output). In  $f(x) = x^2$ , the input is squared to get the output.
- Understand and use the Pythagorean Theorem ( $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ ).

## Science

- Plan an investigation to provide evidence that the change in an object's motion depends on the sum of the forces on the object and its mass.
- Develop & use a model of the earth-sun-moon system to describe the cyclic patterns of lunar phases, eclipses of the sun and moon, and seasons.
- Develop & use a model to describe why mutations to genes on chromosomes may affect proteins and may result in harmful, beneficial, or neutral effects.

## Social Sciences

- Analyze the causes and issues of the Declaration of Independence and American Revolution.
- Study how things changed or stayed the same in U.S. history by looking at key people, the Constitutional Convention, the Age of Jefferson, the Industrial Revolution and more.
- Examine and analyze important U.S. documents, such as the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and others.

There are also standards for physical education, health education, art, English language acquisition (for English language learners) and others.

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GRADUATE?

It may seem strange to think about high school graduation now. But, middle school is when students begin forming thoughts and feelings about their future after high school and in adulthood.

**The best way to set your student up to reach graduation is to make sure he or she is regularly attending school and meeting standards every year.**



Here are the things members of the class of 2017 accomplished in order to receive their diplomas:

1. Earned a total of 24 high school credits in the classes shown here. One credit = one full year of a class (2 semesters) with a passing grade.

**English**, 4 credits

**Social Studies**, 3 credits

**Second Language**,

**Math**, 3 credits

**P.E.**, 1 credit

**Arts or Career-Tech**, 3 credits

**Science**, 3 credits

**Health**, 1 credit

**Other Electives**, 6 credits

2. Demonstrated they have "essential skills" by reaching a set score on state tests or other approved tests (such as PSAT, SAT, ACT or WorkKeys), or by providing work samples.

3. Completed career planning activities.

Learn more about high school graduation requirements at [www.skgradguide.com](http://www.skgradguide.com)

# HOW IS MY CHILD DOING?



Four ways to find out:

## 1 Progress reports

Parents of middle school students will receive a progress report every six weeks. Final semester grades are sent home at the end of each semester – midyear (late in January) and at the end of the school year (June). Salem-Keizer middle schools currently use a letter grade scale (A to F).

## 2 State tests

Every year, Oregon students in grades 3–8 and grade 11 take state tests in reading, writing, math and science. The tests measure students' knowledge of state standards, and give the Oregon Department of Education feedback about how schools are doing.

The state test for English language arts and math is called the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Students take the test in the spring, and results are sent home around the end of summer.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment was first used in our district in 2015, so it is still relatively new. Students will benefit from **encouragement and practice** to help them adjust to the new style of test.

After students have had more experience with the test, parents may choose to look at state test results as one way to gauge their student's progress toward mastering state standards.

## 3 Talk with teachers

A conversation with your student's teachers is a great way to find out how he or she is doing. Email is probably the fastest way to get in touch with teachers, but they are also available for phone conversations after school. Remember - it's important to **attend parent-teacher conferences**. Please take advantage of this opportunity to meet with teachers in person. Parents are also always welcome to visit the school, and to become a volunteer.

## 4 ParentVUE

<http://www.salemkeizer.org/parents/parentvue>

Parents can find their student's current grades, class schedule, attendance, and assignment information through this online tool. Attendance information is updated daily. Please contact your school to activate your ParentVUE account.



[www.skgradguide.com](http://www.skgradguide.com)

# HOW CAN I HELP AT HOME?

As a parent or guardian of a student, **you are the most influential person in your child's future success.**

There are many things you can do to help set your student up for success in school and for life after graduation. Here are a few:

- Make regular school attendance a priority.
- Know about the academic concepts your child is learning in school (see page 2).
- Have a comfortable place set up for homework, and make sure there are enough supplies, like paper and pencils.
- Encourage your student to read every day.
- Encourage writing at home. Write together, and include details.
- Talk with your student about going to college and about different careers.
- Help your student build study habits by reviewing due dates for homework and project schedules. **Check your student's planner or agenda every day.**

Find tips and skill-building exercises at [www.skgradguide.com](http://www.skgradguide.com)

## 2017–18 DATES TO REMEMBER (Middle School)

First day of school, grade 6	Sept. 5
First day of school, grades 7 and 8	Sept. 6
Grading and staff development day	Oct. 12*
Statewide inservice day	Oct. 13*
Veteran's Day holiday	Nov. 10*
Grading and staff development day	Nov. 20*
All day conferences	Nov. 21*
No school	Nov. 22*
Thanksgiving holiday	Nov. 23*, 24*
Winter Break	Dec. 18*–29*
New Year's Day holiday	Jan. 1*
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday	Jan. 15*
Grading day	Jan. 26*
Presidents Day holiday	Feb. 19*
Grading and staff development day	Mar. 9*
All day conferences	Mar. 22*
No school	Mar. 23*
Spring Break	Mar. 26*–30*
Grading and staff development day	Apr. 27*
Memorial Day holiday	May 28*
Last day of school (subject to change if inclement weather or other closure)	June 14

\* No school for all secondary grades

Calendars may change. Confirm closure dates with your school.



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