



TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS: Grade 8 “Step-Up” Guide

Leading by Example: Academic Excellence, Independence, & Role Models

Stepping up to 8th grade is a proud moment! As the oldest students in the building, 8th graders are the leaders of Saxe Middle School. This comes with exciting new privileges, but also offers a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate maturity, academic independence, and self-advocacy as role models for our community!

1. The Academic Step-Up

- **Higher Rigor:** Classes move at a faster, more analytical pace. Some tests are timed to prepare you for the expectations of high school.
- **Grade Expectations:** Standard rubrics are graded with more detail. Not always receiving an “A” is completely natural and normal as the depth increases—focus on growth, learning, and your own unique journey!
- **Review Independently:** Test preparation becomes much more self-guided this year. Study your notes gradually rather than waiting until the night before.
- **Backpack Privilege:** In 8th grade, you are permitted to carry your backpack to class rather than leaving it in your locker. Pack efficiently and keep it organized!

2. High School Placements & Milestones

- **Day One Counts:** High school placements start early, with teacher recommendations finalized by Spring. Performance in Quarters 1 and 2 matters.
- **Test Performance:** Standardized assessments like NWEA and SBAC matter for Honors placements. Give your best effort!
- **Subject Prerequisites:** Science honors placements may be tied to math levels. Keep this in mind when discussing schedules with your family.
- **The Appeal Process:** If you don't receive your desired placement, the appeal process is highly accessible, and high school options remain fluid. Every path leads to success!

3. Navigating Daily Rhythms

- **Early Schedule:** Like 7th grade, the day starts at 8:00 AM. Lunch is scheduled earlier, so plan your breakfast accordingly.
- **Organized Materials:** Clear out your binders and backpack at the end of every unit. This keeps you organized and ensures your work doesn't pile up.

Pro-Strategies for 8th Grade Success

- **Flexible Organization:** School-provided planners may be available, but you should adopt whatever system works best for you—whether that's a physical planner, Google Calendar, or a digital checklist. Find a tracking routine that prevents missing assignments.
- **Use Time Wisely:** In 8th grade, Workshop is scheduled at the end of the day. When possible, use a few minutes to start homework, review with study groups, or seek direct teacher assistance before going home.
- **Build Academic Alliances:** View your 8th grade teachers as 'professional friends'—they are sympathetic but challenging. Proactively advocate for yourself, ask clarifying questions, and show them that you care about your learning.