

FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM MANUAL PART 2

SECTION 5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 5. COACHING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS	20
A. OVERVIEW OF ROLE OF A COACH SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL	20
B. COORDINATING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	21
C. MIDDLE SCHOOL GOALS & STEPS – USING THE ONLINE PLATFORM	22
D. MONITORING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	22
E. GENERAL EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES	25
F. ADVOCACY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	26
G. MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL SELECTION PROCESS	28
H. CONNECTIONS TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	29
I. CONNECTION TO WEEKLY, IN-HOME TUTORING	29

SECTION 5. COACHING MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS



This section summarizes the role of the Coach working with students in middle school. The Coach should also review the educational advocacy materials developed by Parent Network on the Fair Futures website under “Middle and High School Education.”

A. OVERVIEW OF ROLE OF A COACH SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

At a high level, the role of the coach supporting middle school students is the same as a coach supporting students in high school and beyond, with some nuances. For example, instead of connecting the young person to an internship or job training program, they may instead connect them to an extracurricular activity in line with their interests. One other key difference is that the coach will provide individualized assistance to all 8th graders with the high school selection process so they can enter a quality, best-fit high school.

OVERALL, THE ROLE OF A COACH SUPPORTING A MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT IS TO:

- ☐ Build a trusting relationship with the young person and their parent(s)/family.
- ☐ Build a collaborative, supportive relationship with the other key adults in their life, including the Guidance Counselor, key school staff, etc.
- ☐ Provide weekly, ongoing emotional support and continue to build the relationship by engaging in fun, recreational activities with the young person.
- ☐ Assist the young person with any goals they have.
- ☐ Monitor the student’s academic performance and visit their school at least once per semester (ideally with their parent(s) to meet with key school staff, discuss performance, needs, etc.
- ☐ Provide educational support (and advocacy, when needed) to help the student obtain any services they need to succeed in school, such as an IEP, 504 Plan, a tutor, a school transfer, etc.
- ☐ Attend the annual IEP meeting (if applicable) along with the parent(s) to ensure they are receiving the services and accommodations outlined in their plan.
- ☐ Work with the student and family to refer the student to quality tutoring, if needed, and follow up with tutors regarding the student’s performance, needs, and any concerns.
- ☐ Provide individualized assistance with the high school selection processes to all 8th grade students and their families so the student can enter a best-fit, quality high school.
- ☐ Help young people explore their potential career and academic interests through conversations, tools, and assessments.
- ☐ Partner with the student and family to help the student connect to afterschool and summer extracurricular/career development opportunities in line with their interests. These could include sports, arts, leadership, and/or academic enrichment programs, as well as the Summer Youth Employment Program, if eligible.
- ☐ Expose young people to post-secondary opportunities that will be available to them following high school; start having exploratory conversations.

Common educational advocacy services provided by the Middle School Education Specialist include:

- **Special education support and advocacy**, including requesting that the school make a referral for evaluations, participating in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, monitoring service implementation, and helping families exercise their due process rights;
- **Disciplinary support and advocacy**;
- **Truancy prevention and support**;
- **Tutoring referrals**;
- **School enrollment and transfers**, including attending best interest determinations and securing transportation when students enter foster care or move between foster care placements;
- **Referrals to other services/supports**, as needed

B. COORDINATING WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Collaborating with stakeholders allows the Coach to create a team of support and advocacy for students.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

It is imperative to engage the student and their family, including both parents, as these are the people that will benefit most from the advocacy. **Parents** should be invited to all school events, and their consent is required for many special education decisions. It is the responsibility of the Coach to contact parents for discussion about issues such as special education services, attendance concerns, behavioral issues in school, and school transfers

COORDINATING WITH CASE PLANNERS:

In addition to direct work with students and families, the Coach should coordinate and collaborate with any other organization staff (e.g., Case Planners) on the student's academic progress and follow up on any needs/concerns.

COORDINATING WITH THE SCHOOL

School staff and community resources are other stakeholders that the Coach will work with. Teachers, counselors, social workers, school psychologists and the school administration all have a direct interest in the student's success, as their success contributes to the overall mission and goals of the school. As a result, the Coach will collaborate with the school and parent(s) to explore options for students to improve and benefit from services offered such as academic intervention services, afterschool programming, special education services, and other supports.

The Coach should schedule school visits (with the parents, ideally) to meet with the student's guidance counselor and/or teachers and services providers, when possible. It is a best practice to visit at least once a semester. Here is a document that summarizes everything you need to know about conducting an effective school visit.

[See Appendix C5: Effective School Visits.](#)

If the student has a special education teacher for multiple periods of the day, it would be ideal for the Coach to meet with them. If there are concerns about how the student is doing in a particular class, it is best to meet with that teacher instead of the guidance counselor, and/or observe the student in that class (after first letting the student know they will be doing an observation).

Before the visit, the Coach should request the student's most recent records (including updated attendance, progress reports, latest report card, and latest IEP, if applicable). The Coach should then get the students' report cards again in November and March (after parent teacher conferences) and at the end of June.

Students in 8th grade should attend any meetings with the Coach, parent(s), and guidance counselor. At these meetings, the Coach should discuss the student's progress as well as any issues occurring in the school. The team can then collaborate on a plan (with knowledge/ approval of the parent, who remains the primary decision-maker) to address any needs including improving attendance, grades, and behavior as well as ensuring that IEP services are being appropriately provided.

Once these initial meetings have occurred and records have been obtained, the Coach should maintain regular contact with school staff and parent(s) to ensure the continued success of the students as well as follow up on progress towards goal achievement. Coaches may want to attend parent-teacher conferences with some families.

COORDINATING WITH EXTERNAL PROVIDERS.

The Coach will also work with community resources including tutoring programs, mental health services, and afterschool programs. Collaborating with these stakeholders allows students and families to receive assistance and services on a broad spectrum that can foster continued success educationally as well as emotionally.

C. MIDDLE SCHOOL GOALS & STEPS – USING THE ONLINE PLATFORM

OVERVIEW

The Coach can use the Online Platform to:



- Track academic performance
- Track educational advocacy services and supports provided
- Enter contact notes
- Document the list of high schools the student selected
- Track tutoring and extracurricular referrals

There are four Middle School Academic Goals in the Online Platform that the Coach should work with middle students on each year.

THE FOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC GOALS INCLUDE:

- [Complete school year promoted](#) and better prepared for high school by monitoring performance, providing educational advocacy, and referring them to tutoring and other services, as needed
- [Help all 8th graders enter a best-fit, quality high school](#) by providing individualized assistance with the high school selection process
- [Connect students to extracurricular activities](#), ideally both afterschool and in the summer;
- [Ensure all students with an IEP or 504 Plan are receiving appropriate special education services or accommodations](#)

Each Goal has a series of **Required** and **Potential Steps** which represent progress towards those Goals. The Coach should check off the Steps in the Online Platform as they are completed.

D. MONITORING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

USING THE ONLINE PLATFORM.

The Coach can use the Online Platform to monitor progress towards the four Middle School Academic Goals and their associated steps.

The **Required Steps** for the “[Complete school year promoted](#)” Goal include:

- ☐ Monitor attendance (monthly, or as frequently as provided)
- ☐ Monitor NYS exam scores when they become available
- ☐ Monitor grade promotion status (in March and in June)
- ☐ Monitor grades (as frequently as provided)
- ☐ Visit the school at least once per semester

The Coach should check off each of these steps as they are completed for every student each year. There is also space to record the attendance rates, grades, and promotion status in the platform.

MONITORING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: ATTENDANCE

Attendance is a key piece of academic data.

There are two particular categories to focus on when monitoring academic performance:

1. Students that have a major drop in attendance from one month to the next
2. Students with less than 90% attendance

Coaches should ensure that they follow up with the family with regards to both categories of students. Coaches should follow up to determine why there was a drop-in attendance and/or what is causing students to miss an excessive amount of school.

EXAMPLES OF ATTENDANCE-RELATED ISSUES AND STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO RESOLVE THEM INCLUDE:

Medical issue: The Coach should work with the family on getting medical documentation to the school in order to excuse the student absences.

Transportation/busing issues: If the student has an IEP that includes transportation or otherwise qualifies for busing, check with the school and family to ensure that busing is being provided and that the bus is arriving on time. If busing is not on the IEP but is needed, follow up with the school and the parent (who must consent to the service) to see if it can be amended to include busing.

Issues with school climate or program: Sometimes a student's attendance drops because of a problem going on in the school, such as bullying, the school's failure to provide mandated special education or English as a New Language services, or the student's need for a different type of school environment entirely. If a student's attendance difficulties do not appear to be related to medical, transportation, or other easily identifiable issues, the Coach will need to discuss any concerns with the student to determine the reason behind their school refusal before coming up with a plan to address those needs.



Any steps taken should then be checked off - or created - in the Online Platform.

MONITORING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: GRADE PROMOTION

The district provides a list of students whose promotion is in doubt to families early each year; many schools send out lists as early as the last week in January. These are the students that are in danger of being retained in their current grade. Schools are also required to inform families if students are at risk of not meeting standards during Fall parent-teacher conferences.

Often times, these students should not be retained but promoted to the next grade level with the appropriate academic supports in place. Once students reach second grade, research shows that grade retention is almost never beneficial to students, and in fact, being retained a grade is by far the greatest single predictor of high school dropout.

Whenever the Coach learns that a student is at risk or promotion may be in doubt, they should collaborate with the family and key adults around developing an effective plan to assist the student. They should also contact the school to ensure that an appropriate plan is put into place for each student to assist in successfully promoting them to the next grade level.

Any student who is at risk of not meeting grade level standards is entitled under NYS regulations to

Academic Intervention Services (AIS).

Schools have discretion as to what form the AIS will take, but it must be targeted to address the area(s) in which the student is struggling.

AIS can include:

- Before school, after school, or Saturday tutoring;
- Small group and/or individual teacher instruction;
- At risk speech, counseling, or SETSS services;
- Remedial small-class instruction

Aside from mandated AIS, Coaches may consider requesting make-up or extra-credit work for the student, including additional homework packets and projects, referring the student for additional tutoring, applying to a summer program for the student that includes academic supports, or referring the student for special education services. If the student already has an IEP, they may need a re-evaluation to determine if additional or more intensive special education services are needed. As always, parental consent is required.

Once these supports are put into place, Coaches should closely monitor the student's progress and follow up with schools in June to determine if the student has been recommended for summer school or if the student was successfully promoted.

If the student was recommended or mandated for summer school, Coaches should contact the family immediately to ensure the student enrolls in summer school, confirm their attendance on the first day, and monitor their attendance throughout the summer. When summer school concludes in August, Coaches should follow up with schools on final promotion decisions and, if a student is retained, consider appealing the holdover decision.

MONITORING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: GRADES

A student's grades are key pieces of academic data. Typically, schools give out elementary and middle school report cards in the fall (November) and spring (March) parent-teacher conferences, as well as at the end of June (and if the student attends summer school, at the end of the summer). There are interim grades as well, but those are the most important junctures.

After reviewing grades, the Coach should complete the following **Steps**:

- ☐ Follow up on any failed classes and the drivers;
- ☐ Inquire what happened if a grade is below 75 or if there was a 10+ point drop in the grade from one period to the next.

Potential Steps the Coach could take if a student has low grades include:

- ☐ Refer students to a tutor, especially if grades are below 75 (or mostly 1s and 2s for those schools with a 1-4 system);
- ☐ Consider afterschool programming or Response To Intervention support;
- ☐ Speak to/meet with the school staff to discuss performance, progress, and any needs;
- ☐ Speak to/meet with the student's family to discuss performance, progress, and any needs;
- ☐ Help young person enroll in summer school;
- ☐ Help student obtain IEP or 504 Plan;
- ☐ Conduct advocacy with DOE/school to help student obtain particular service or accommodation.

MONITORING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: NEW YORK STATE EXAMS

In the Spring each year, students in grades 3 to 8 take the New York State Common Core exams in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Fourth and 8th grade students also take science exams.

Scores range from 1-4 and reflect the following performance:

- 1:** Far below grade level standards
- 2:** Approaching grade level standards
- 3:** At grade level standards
- 4:** Exceeding grade level standards



After NYS Exam scores are released the Coach should enter these in the Online Platform.
If students are receiving low scores, supports should be put into place (see above Potential Steps).

To accomplish the Goal of being promoted each year, the Coach may have to perform educational advocacy and/or connect students to tutors, as needed.

Once the school year is complete, the Coach will close out the Goal and indicate whether it was completed successfully or not. If the student attends summer school, the Goal should be closed out after the final grades/promotion status have been obtained (likely by mid-September).



E. GENERAL EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM ADVOCACY

The Coach offers both **long-term individualized interventions** for students with complex or ongoing educational needs and **targeted short-term supports** to ensure every student has access to a particular service or opportunity.

A **long-term** or **caseload intervention** is generally defined *as any educational intervention that progresses toward a goal that will require more than one week or 4 contacts to accomplish*. An example of a case that would qualify a long-term intervention would be following up on a student who is being denied IEP services or improperly excluded from the classroom. An example of short-term assistance could include connections to advocacy or referrals to supports, as needed.



Coaches should use **Progress Notes** to formulate action plans for students and document the advocacy steps taken. **Progress Notes** can be submitted in the Online Platform and can be inputted with specific Goals or Steps. Progress Notes for each student can be downloaded from the Online Platform by generating a Report.

SUSPENSION ADVOCACY

A student may receive a **Principal's Suspension** of 1 to 5 days. During a Principal's Suspension, students remain in their school but are removed from their classroom for the duration of the suspension. When a Principal's Suspension occurs, the school must hold a Principal's Suspension conference with the parent to discuss the events that led to the suspension and develop a plan to avoid future suspensions. Coaches should participate in these meetings with families whenever possible, work with schools to develop plans to address student behaviors, and advocate for additional supports when needed.

During a **Superintendent Suspension**, a student may be suspended for more than 5 days (up to 1 year). A Superintendent Suspension is served outside of the student's school at a designated suspension site. A Superintendent Suspension requires a formal hearing.

In the event of a superintendent suspension, the Coach needs to:

- ☐ Obtain a copy of the suspension letter, which will include the date and time of the suspension hearing, the charges, and the location of the suspension site. The parent should receive the suspension letter within 24 hours of the suspension, however, if they do not, request a copy from the school or the suspension office.
- ☐ Obtain the suspension packet from the school. This will include any witness statements, occurrence reports, and other information the school will use as evidence at the hearing.
- ☐ Speak with the student, parent, and/or case planning team to get the student's side of the story.
- ☐ Confirm with the family and suspension site that the student is attending consistently and receiving school work.
- ☐ Contact the school to find out the length of suspension they will be recommending to the hearing office. Try to assess if they might consider a shorter suspension if the student pleads no contest and/or agrees to engage in services.
- ☐ Review the suspension packet. Considering the available evidence and the student's version of the events, think about how to argue for a shorter suspension or dismissal of the charges altogether, where appropriate. Consult with one of the above resources if unsure or would like to obtain representation for the child.
- ☐ Provide the suspension packet to the representation team and meet with all parties so the student can provide their account of the event to the representation team.
- ☐ Attend the hearing with the student, parent, and representation present. *Note: In the event that one or all parties are unable to attend the hearing, it can be adjourned to another date so that representation can be secured before the hearing.*
- ☐ If the student has an IEP, the school will conduct a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) meeting to determine if the infraction was the result of the student's disability. The date of the meeting will be included in the suspension letter. Specialists should participate in the MDR, along with the parent/foster parent and student, when appropriate.



NOTE: If it is determined that the infraction was a result of the student's disability or the school's failure to implement the student's IEP, the student must be reinstated to their school immediately.

F. ADVOCACY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students in care can struggle academically for many reasons including experiencing significant gaps in school attendance and transferring multiple times, as well as mental health and behavioral concerns. Due to these issues, Coaches often find themselves advocating for students to receive academic intervention services to help bring them up to speed and bridge any gaps in their education.

Some students may just need an **afterschool program, Response to Intervention, or 504 accommodation**. In other cases, it may be in the student's best interest to be referred to an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** right away.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

One way to collaborate with school stakeholders on assisting students is to advocate for **Academic Intervention Services (AIS)**.

One form of AIS is **Response to Intervention (RTI)** services. RTI services are to be implemented whenever a student is at risk of not meeting grade level standards. Schools are required to provide RTI services prior to referring students for an Individualized Education Program (IEP). However, if a parent wants to refer their child for special education services, the school district is required to move forward with the evaluation, while also implementing RTI for the student.

Examples of RTI Services include

- Individual and Group Counseling
- Speech Therapy
- Small group instruction
- Before school, after school, or weekend tutoring

The Coach should advocate for students to receive the most appropriate services available. At times, students may need extra assistance to bridge gaps in their education prior to receiving a more comprehensive evaluation or an IEP. This is why it is important to have schools support students with RTI services first before evaluating for an IEP due to a suspected learning disability.

A student may be found ineligible for an IEP. In this case, the school can also offer RTI services in place of Special Education Services. The student may also qualify for a 504 Plan.

504 PLANS

A student may have a disability that does not necessitate special education services. **This can occur when the student has a medical or mental health diagnosis that requires accommodation**, but their grades and academic progress are on track. **Accommodations** could include testing accommodations, extended time to complete homework or classwork, schedule breaks, or large print books or materials. In these instances, a 504 plan can ensure that the student receives needed accommodations and serves as a preventive measure to inhibit future academic issues.

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL PROCESS

Only the parent or the school can refer a student for a special education evaluation. The Coach should recommend (or request) that a parent or school refer a student for a Special Education Evaluation if it is believed that the student has a learning or other disability that interferes with their ability to progress in school.

To refer a student for a Special Education Evaluation, the parent or school must submit a referral letter to the school-based support team at their school. If the student attends a charter or private school, the letter should go to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) where the school is located.

Whenever possible, the Coach should write the referral letter on behalf of the parent and have the parent sign the letter. *School districts are required to accept referrals from a student's parent but can decline referral requests from other sources.*

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY AT INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) MEETINGS

Coaches can be powerful advocates for students with disabilities. Students often do not have an effective advocate on their side with regard to IEP development and services. Coaches can ensure an IEP focuses on the best interest of the student and that the student is receiving the services they need to be successful.

Effective advocacy includes working with the student (if age appropriate), family, and any case planning team to determine a course of action that would be in the best interest of the student. Once a plan is developed, Coaches should attend the meeting well informed of their student's needs in order to work with the school IEP team on developing an appropriate IEP. Coaches should be present at all IEP meetings for students along with the parent(s), and any Case Planner.

Upon completion of the IEP meeting, Coaches should follow up with the school and/or CSE to obtain a copy of the finalized IEP, confirm that the services are being implemented, and monitor the student's progress.

Once a student has been found eligible for an IEP, effective advocacy can also include **requesting new evaluations or a re-evaluation, requesting an independent educational evaluation, and requesting mediation or an impartial hearing:**

Requesting new evaluations: If a student is not progressing despite receiving special education services, the Coach can request additional evaluations, such as an assistive technology, auditory processing, speech/language, functional behavioral assessment, or other specialized evaluation, as well as an updated psycho-educational evaluation, to determine if the IEP needs to be amended or additional services need to be provided in order to meet the student's needs. The student's parent would need to consent to the evaluation for it to take place.

Requesting an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): If the student is not demonstrating progress and the evaluation that the school district conducted is not accurate or adequate, a Coach can request an independent evaluation at the school district's expense. The student's parent would need to initiate and consent to an independent evaluation as well.

Requesting an impartial hearing: In the event that the district is not providing the student with appropriate evaluations, programming or services, the parent/guardian can request mediation or an impartial hearing. An effort should be made to work with the teacher, principal, IEP team, and CSE first before pursuing an impartial hearing.

GOALS & STEPS



The Coach should monitor progress toward the Goal: "[Ensure that all students with an IEP or 504 plan are receiving appropriate special education services or accommodations](#)," and its associated steps using the Online Platform.

Required Steps, based on the guidance above, include:

- ☐ Obtain copy of most recent IEP/504 Plan and ensure it is current within the last year
- ☐ Participate in annual IEP meeting and/or 504 meeting; try to ensure the student and student's parent participates in meeting
- ☐ Confirm student is receiving all accommodations and services mandated by 504 or IEP, and is in the right classroom setting

Potential Steps, based on relevance and/or need, include:

- ☐ Renew 504 Plan
- ☐ Obtain copy of most recent psycho-educational evaluation and ensure it is current within the last 3 years (required for students with IEPs but not 504s)
- ☐ Request new accommodation(s), if needed (requires parent's consent)
- ☐ Request that the school conduct a new IEP or 504 evaluation, if needed (requires parent's consent)
- ☐ Request that the school make changes to IEP, if needed (requires parent's consent)
- ☐ Request an independent educational evaluation if student is not demonstrating progress and the school evaluation is not comprehensive (requires parental consent)
- ☐ If needed, work with educational decision-maker to exercise due process rights on behalf of student (e.g., request mediation or an impartial hearing. This should only happen after talking with the student's teachers, principal, IEP team, and case planning team (and when needed, the District Superintendent).

G. MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL SELECTION PROCESS

HISTORICALLY, LOW-INCOME STUDENTS AND STUDENTS OF COLOR HAVE BEEN OVERREPRESENTED IN THE LOWEST PERFORMING SCHOOLS.

The Fair Futures model upholds that in addition to better supporting students in middle school, ALL students and their families should be provided with **individualized assistance with the high school selection process**. High school fit and quality are important drivers of graduation and post-secondary readiness. If a student starts off in a best-fit high school environment, they will be more likely to succeed.

The high school selection process can be extremely challenging and confusing, and students who are system-involved do not get the individualized assistance they need from guidance counselors (due to very high ratios and other factors). As a result, students often end up in local, lower-performing schools.

INDIVIDUALIZED ASSISTANCE TO ALL STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

In the Fair Futures model, the Coach provides guidance to all 8th grade students around the high school selection process and ensures that the final list of schools submitted does not contain any low-performing schools. Coaches can also assist 9th grade students who are unhappy with their high school placement with

School fairs and tours begin in early fall; students receive access to their online applications in October; and they must submit a list of up to 12 high schools by early December. The Coach should assist as much as possible with developing that list and must ensure that all eligible students submit a completed application.

To provide the best guidance possible, the Coach will receive comprehensive training from Parent Network and be equipped with a guide to the high school admissions process (*coming soon!*).

The overall goal is for the Coach to optimize the chances that students will enter best-fit, quality high schools by strategically selecting a list of 12 schools.

To do so, the Coach will be trained and supported on:

- The key metrics of high school quality (e.g., safety, academic outcomes, graduation rates, etc.) and admissions criteria and what constitutes a realistic match based on a student's interests, performance, and preferences;
- How to research high schools based on student's interests, performance, needs, and geographical preference;
- How to navigate potentially challenging conversations with parents and collaborate with guidance counselors.

GOALS & STEPS

For the **"[Help all 8th graders enter a best-fit, quality high school](#)" Goal**, the Required and Potential Steps include:

Required Steps:

- ☐ Meet with the student/family to explain the process and develop preliminary list of schools in line with the student's interests, preferences, and performance
- ☐ Visit at least one high school with student, or coordinate visit with case planner/family to ensure student's attendance
- ☐ Check student's online application as soon as available to ensure demographic information is accurate
- ☐ Review student's application and list of schools before it is submitted
- ☐ Ensure student/family submits completed application by the December deadline
- ☐ Check in with student/family when they receive their offer letter in March

Potential Steps:

- ☐ Attend high school fair with student, or coordinate visit with case planner/family to ensure student's attendance
- ☐ Meet with student's guidance counselor to discuss their application
- ☐ Arrange tutoring for the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) prep in the spring/summer
- ☐ Ensure student signs up for the Specialized High School Admissions Test (SHSAT) with their guidance counselor in September and attends testing date in October
- ☐ Help the student complete their portfolio (if applying to a visual arts school)
- ☐ Help student prepare, sign up for, and attend an audition (if applying to a performing arts school)
- ☐ Schedule school interview and/or assessment (if required)
- ☐ Complete charter school application(s)
- ☐ Monitor student's placement on waitlists
- ☐ Submit timely appeal (if needed)
- ☐ Celebrate acceptance into desired school/program



List all 12 high schools that 8th graders applied to in the second tab of the Goal Worksheet. Once a school is selected, make sure to record it!

H. CONNECTIONS TO EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

As discussed in the Career Development section, career development experiences include extracurricular activities, community service, and youth leadership programs. It is important for students to gain these types of experiences as early as possible, as they help build critical social/emotional skills, self-esteem, and a sense of purpose/belonging. Research also shows that it is especially important for middle school students to stay active after school and during the summer.

The Coach should help students explore their academic/career interests and connect to afterschool and summer programs in line with their interests. This will also entail parent buy-in and collaboration. Coaches can use exploratory tools such as Hats and Ladders (a training will be provided by Fair Futures) to conduct early career exploration.

Keep in mind that applications for summer programs, including scholarships and free programs, become available in January-February and often fill up quickly.

Coaches should track in the Online Platform which students are involved in afterschool and summer activities.

I. CONNECTION TO WEEKLY, IN-HOME TUTORING

A Potential Step of the Goal "[Complete school year promoted](#)" is to "**Refer student to a tutor, as most students can benefit from tutoring**". Quality, 1:1 tutoring is an important part of the Fair Futures middle school model.

If there is not enough capacity to provide ALL students with a tutor, those who have **Promotion in Doubt** or with grades under 75 should be prioritized.



The Coach should track all tutoring sessions attended by the student in the platform.

The Coach should read the progress reports from the Tutor and provide follow-up educational advocacy support with the school, if required.