



Closing the College Access Gap

Supporting Underrepresented Students
on the Path to Postsecondary Education

District Leadership
Forum





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District Leadership Forum

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Executive Summary

Closing the College Access Gap

Insufficient Progress for Underrepresented Students

Low-income and minority students face significant gaps in two- and four-year college attendance. Public school districts have faced long-standing pressure to increase college access for low-income and minority students. Despite some progress, however, it may take several more decades before underrepresented students attend college at rates equal to their white and higher-income counterparts.

Sizable disparities in postsecondary degree attainment have grown or remained unchanged. While the college access gap has diminished somewhat, degree attainment by race and income has not shown similar improvement as underrepresented students disproportionately enroll in open-access and for-profit institutions that are unlikely to support them to graduation.

Obstacles to College Enrollment Extend Far Beyond Academic Preparation

There is considerable evidence that even academically qualified low-income and minority students do not enroll in college or attain a degree. Some question whether underrepresented students simply hold college aspirations misaligned with their academic skills. However, research indicates that a significant number of academically qualified low-income and minority students ultimately do not enroll in college at all, even those admissible to the most selective four-year institutions.

There are myriad causes of these trends that we explore through this study. Feelings of non-belonging, insufficient adult support, misinformation about college options, and financial constraints all significantly undermine underrepresented students' postsecondary aspirations and plans. The good news is, a sizable difference in students' educational trajectory can be made even at this relatively late stage in their educational career.

Supporting Smart College Choices a Critical, and Growing, Necessity

Navigating to a smart postsecondary choice is becoming harder. The number of postsecondary options has increased dramatically in the last decade, largely in the for-profit higher education sector. At the same time, access is declining at institutions that best serve underrepresented students in successfully achieving upward socioeconomic mobility, mainly due to decreases in public funding for higher education.

Equitable college access is a moral imperative. Given the importance of a postsecondary degree in the labor market, the support of underrepresented students on the path to college will only grow in importance as our nation becomes more diverse due to changing racial, ethnic, and economic demographics.

Increasing College-Going Identity for Low-Income and Minority Students

Create a culture of high expectations. Low-income and minority students often face lower expectations of college attendance for themselves, from their parents, or from teachers. Students may feel they do not belong in college or believe college is inaccessible and/or unaffordable. Parents may underestimate their child's chances of success based on their own experiences with the education system. School administrators may fail to appreciate the unique barriers for students from diverse backgrounds and assume lower motivation or believe inclusion means lowering standards for others. District-wide policies and processes must reinforce college-going expectations for underrepresented students.

Build student confidence through advanced course work. Participation in AP, IB, and dual enrollment courses is shown to increase students' confidence in their ability to complete college-level work and positively impact college enrollment. Still, more than half a million low-income students and students of color with demonstrated potential are "missing" from college-level courses. Among adults, low confidence in underrepresented students' ability to succeed and students' own reservations or doubts about advanced courses result in implicit and explicit barriers to advanced-course participation that must be removed.

Supporting Optimal College Selection and Successful Matriculation

Ensure college choice focuses on the likelihood of success. Often the first in their family to attend college, underrepresented students are more likely to lack information about college options and to rely solely on overburdened school counselors for adult guidance. As a result, students consider a limited number of potential colleges based on insufficient information and have no clear way to discern whether any given school will best support them to succeed. Both technology-based college matching tools and college advising processes used district-wide should acutely focus students and families on institutions that will support their postsecondary success.

Remove barriers to application and matriculation. Not only do underrepresented students tend to have fewer supports to help overcome the logistical hurdles associated with college application and matriculation, but they also often face a greater number of administrative and financial barriers to college. As a result, underrepresented students who have been admitted to college fail to matriculate in the fall after high school graduation. Through organized events, targeted counseling processes, and behavioral nudges, districts can better support low-income and minority students in their progress toward successful college enrollment.



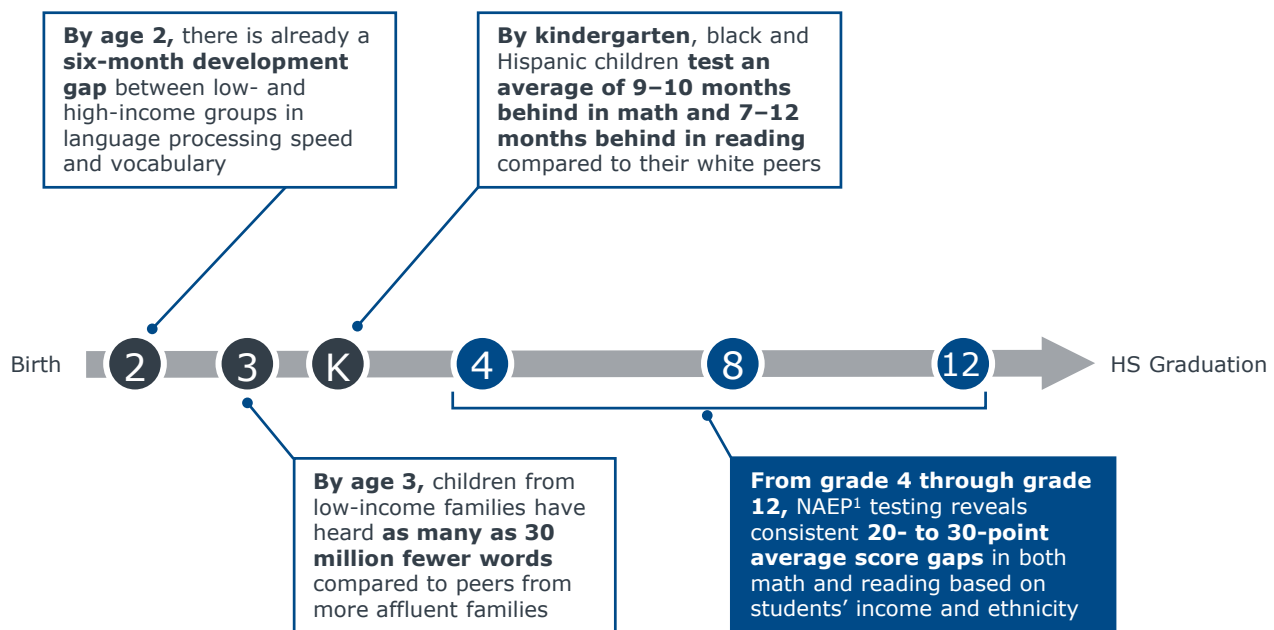
Defining the College Access Challenge

INTRODUCTION

Playing Catch-Up from an Early Age

Inequities Begin Early and Persist Throughout K–12

The achievement gap between minority and low-income students and their white and wealthier peers ranks as one of the top concerns among superintendents nationwide. This widespread concern is unsurprising given the long-standing and multifaceted nature of the challenge. Measures of gaps in achievement range from language processing and vocabulary development to grades and standardized test scores throughout a student's K–12 lifetime.



The range of potential solutions is perhaps wider than the measures of the problem they are designed to address. Researchers and practitioners could begin interventions as early as prenatal nutrition because, as the timeline above illustrates, gaps in achievement manifest early and persist throughout a student's educational career. Moreover, many suggest that it is more accurately an entrenched "opportunity gap" impacting the outcomes of low-income and minority student groups.

Sources: Hart B and Risley T (1995), "Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children," Paul H. Brookes Publishing; Fernald A, Marchman V, and Weisleder A, "SES differences in language processing skill and vocabulary are evident at 18 months," *Developmental science* 16.2 (2013): 234–248; Friedman-Krauss A, Barnett S, and Nores M, "How Much Can High-Quality Universal Pre-K Reduce Achievement Gaps?" Center for American Progress, April 2016, cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/01115656/NIEER-AchievementGaps-report.pdf; National Center for Education Statistics reports (various); see "Condition of Education" reports, data from 1989–2017 available at nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/; EAB interviews and analysis.

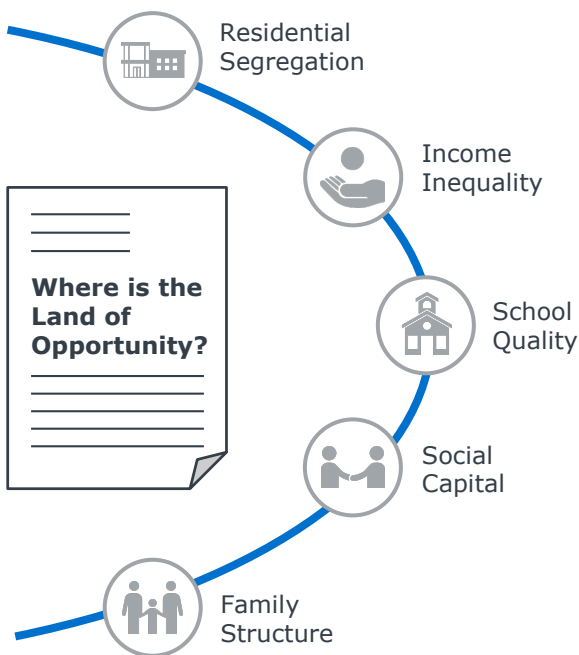
1) National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Achievement-Gap Roots Run Deep Within Society

Socioeconomic Opportunity Gap at the Core of the Problem

A 2014 study conducted by the Equality of Opportunity Project outlined several challenges faced by low-income and minority students that are deeply rooted in our broader society. Inequities in residential segregation, household income, and family structure are evident, striking, and often growing. Systemic issues related to wealth, income, and race impact school funding and quality, and ultimately, student outcomes.

Research Outlines Major Causes of Persistent Opportunity Gaps...



Inequities Evident Across Multiple Measures

60%

Black and Hispanic median household incomes are, on average, **60% of those of white households**

46%

of Hispanic public school students attend high-poverty schools¹, compared to **8% of white public school students**

54%

of black children live with a single parent, compared to **18% of white children**

1) High-poverty schools are defined as public schools where more than 75.0% of the students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.


Sources: Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, National Center for Education Statistics. nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clb.asp; "Demographic trends and economic well-being," Pew Research Center, June 2016, www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/1-demographic-trends-and-economic-well-being/; Chetty et al., "Where is the Land of Opportunity?" The Equality of Opportunity Project, June 2014, www.equality-of-opportunity.org/assets/documents/mobility_geo.pdf; EAB interviews and analysis.

No Shortage of Potential Remedies

Complex Causes Call for Comprehensive Approach

There is no shortage of potential interventions designed to address these challenges, both within and outside of school walls. A superintendent's unenviable but necessary job is to try and address all of these problems simultaneously. EAB research will continue to focus on these issues at our members' behest but will approach these challenges discretely, in order to address each facet comprehensively.

Superintendents Confronted with a Host of Potential Interventions¹

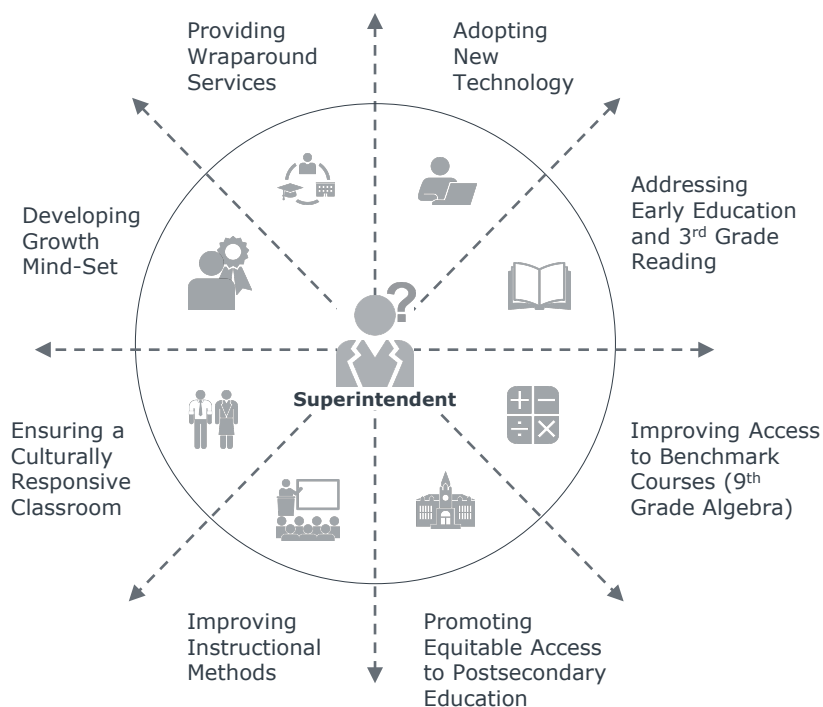


Difficult to Address Everything

"Superintendents face a number of problems, many of which are **persisting and intractable**. ...

"Addressing these multiple and diverse issues while simultaneously managing schools is often described as **trying to build the plane while it is in flight**."

Björk, Kowalski, and Browne-Ferrigno, *The School District Superintendent in the United States of America*, 2014



While early interventions that many practitioners focus on are critical for the long-term success of at-risk students, there is a sizable number of students already nearing the end of their K-12 education that remain inadequately supported. Actionable strategies that target capable, at-risk students later in their education and bridge the chasm between K-12 and higher education have been proven to yield a significant, measurable impact on student outcomes. As long-term change is under way, it is imperative that educators support transitions to postsecondary education for traditionally underrepresented low-income and minority students.

1) As identified by The American School Superintendent, 2010 Decennial Survey.

Source: Björk L, Kowalski T, and Browne-Ferrigno T, "The School District Superintendent in the United States of America," University of Dayton, Department of Educational Leadership, 2014, ecommons.udayton.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1011&context=eda_fac_pub; EAB interviews and analysis.

By Some Measures, College Access Improving

College-Going Rates Improving Across the Board

Closing the college access gap has been a focus for many years as “college for all” became a major movement with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. NCLB sought to expose gaps in student preparedness for college and the workforce, and to hold schools accountable for academic progress. This legislation most notably set the expectation that all students should strive toward college enrollment as their postsecondary plan and that all educators should work to support that singular goal.

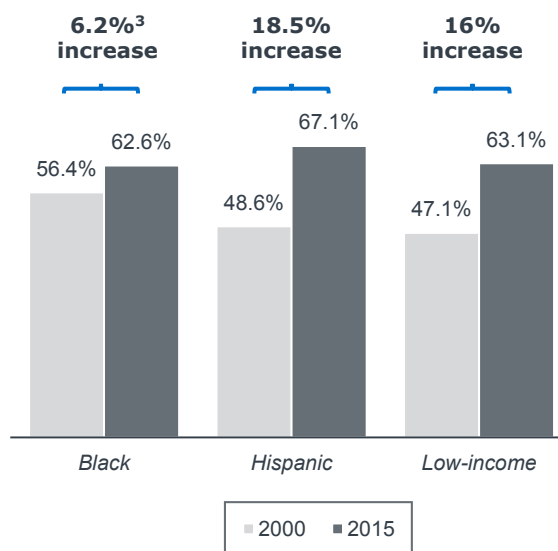
“College for All” a Major Movement Since Passage of NCLB¹

“[NCLB will] instill the expectation among staff and faculty that **college preparation will be a goal for every student. In turn, students will work harder**, internalize the expectation and consequently work toward college enrollment as a personal goal.”

Pathways to College Network, 2004

In Many Ways, the Policy Has Worked

% of Recent High School Completers Enrolled in 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges, by Race and Income²



High school graduation rates hit an all-time high for all student groups in 2016. Better still, a look at the college enrollment rates for traditionally underrepresented black, Hispanic, and low-income students indicates that all groups have seen significant increases in college enrollment in the last 15 years. By some measures, it would seem that a focus on increasing college access has yielded significant positive improvements.

1) No Child Left Behind (2002).

2) Low-income refers to the bottom 20% of all family incomes; high-income refers to the top 20% of all family incomes.

3) All cited numbers are percentage-point increases from 2000 to 2015.

Sources: “College Readiness for All and the No Child Left Behind Act: Mutually Supportive Visions and Complementary Goals,” prepared by Educational Policy Institute for the Pathways to College Network, 2004, www.educationalpolicy.org/pdf/pathways.pdf; “Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges, by race/ethnicity: 1960 through 2015,” National Center for Education Statistics. nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_302.20.asp; EAB interviews and analysis.

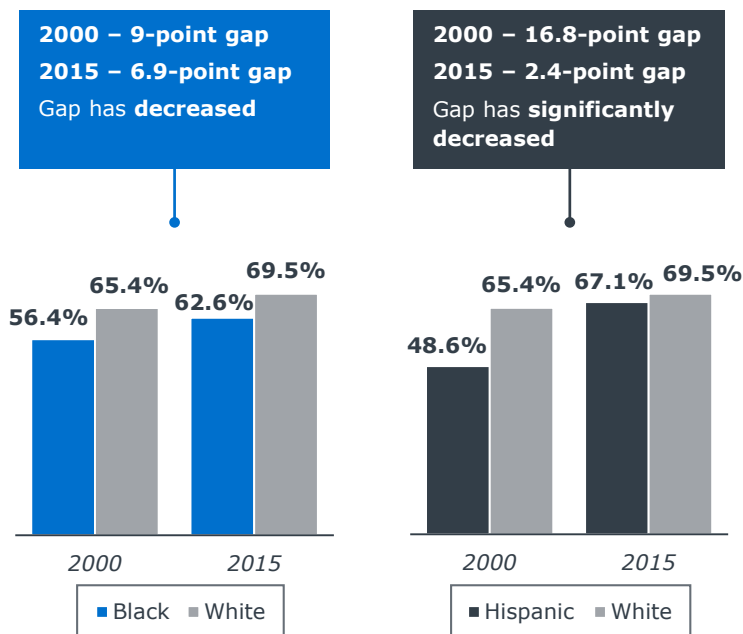
Despite Significant Success, Gaps Still Exist

Enrollment Data Shows There Is Still Work to Be Done

Comparing college enrollment rates between underrepresented groups and others, however, reveals that significant gaps in access persist. Encouragingly, there has been a dramatic increase in the college-going rates of Hispanic students in the last 15 years. The college enrollment gap between black and white students has also decreased, albeit by a smaller margin.

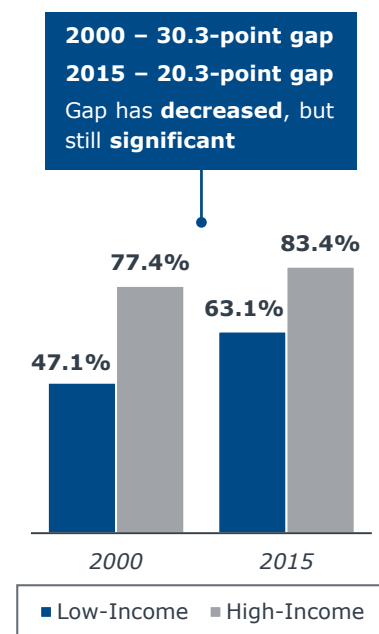
College Enrollment by Race

% of Recent High School Completers
Enrolled in 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges



College Enrollment by Income¹

% of Recent High School Completers
Enrolled in 2-Year and 4-Year Colleges



The data on the right, however, demonstrates that the gap in college access between low- and high-income students has remained stubbornly large. Despite the significant progress made in getting at-risk students to college, it may take several more decades before underrepresented students attend college at rates equal to their white and higher-income counterparts.

1) Low-income refers to the bottom 20% of all family incomes; high-income refers to the top 20% of all family incomes.

Sources: "Percentage of recent high school completers enrolled in 2- and 4-year colleges, by race/ethnicity: 1960 through 2015," National Center for Education Statistics, nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/digest/d16/tables/dt16_302.20.asp; EAB interviews and analysis.

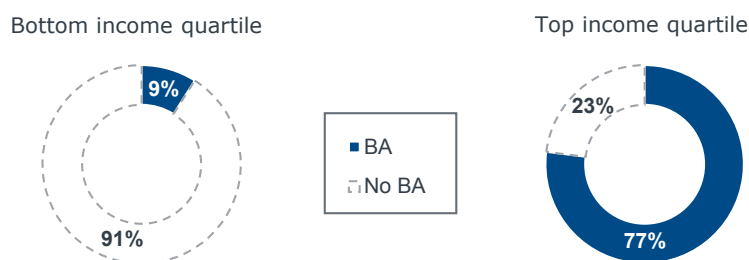
Most of Success in Quantity, Not Quality

Higher Enrollment Does Not Translate to Degree Attainment

While the college access gap has diminished, degree attainment by race and income has not shown similar improvement, raising a troubling concern. Are students being encouraged to go to college, only to drop out after accumulating debt and no marketable credential? The data below paints a bleak picture: only 9% of students from the lowest income quartile attain a bachelor's degree by age 24, compared to 77% of those in the top income quartile.

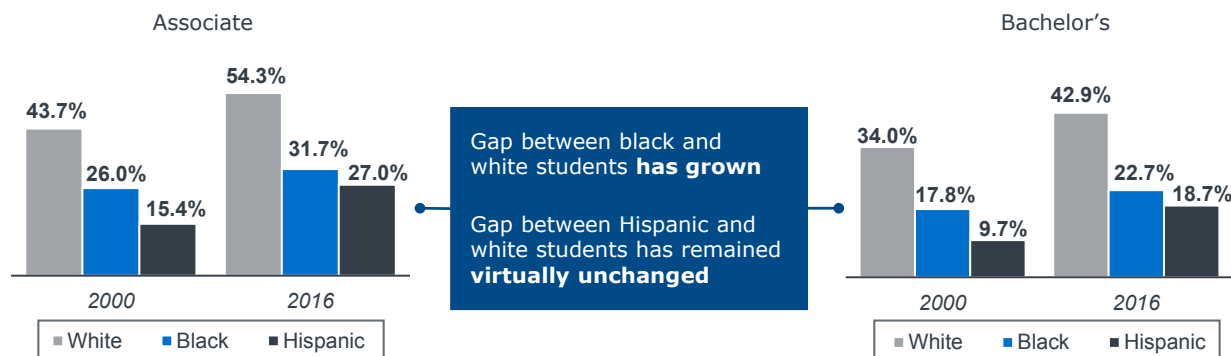
Low-Income Students Less Likely to Graduate from College Than Wealthier Peers

Bachelor's Degree Attainment by Age 24 for Dependent Family Members, by Family Income Quartile



Racial Minorities Also Far Less Likely to Obtain a Degree

% of 25- to 29-Year-Olds with Selected Levels of Educational Attainment



Open-access community colleges have been particularly touted as a path for minority students to obtain a postsecondary credential, evidenced by the notable increase in overall rates of associate degree attainment for black and Hispanic students. But while the trend in postsecondary outcomes across racial groups is encouraging, it is also important to note that the gaps in two- and four-year postsecondary degree attainment have either grown or remained steady in the last 16 years.

Sources: "Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the United States," The Pell Institute, 2015; "Percentage of persons 25 to 29 years old with selected levels of educational attainment, by race/ethnicity and sex: Selected years, 1920 through 2016," National Center for Education Statistics, nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/digest/d16/tables/dt16_104.20.asp; EAB interviews and analysis.

Are Students Up to the Challenge?

Some Question if Underrepresented Students Should Go to College

Naturally, persistent enrollment and completion gaps raise the question of whether underrepresented students are really prepared for postsecondary education. Educators worry about pushing more low-income and minority students onto a college-going path that they are not equipped to complete. Schools must overcome a host of entrenched beliefs about which students are “college material” or whether issues related to poverty can even be remedied. These beliefs may exist in the broader community or be present among teachers and administrators as well.

Many Adults Attribute Access Gap to Ability, Believe It Cannot Be Addressed



“We can’t fix socioeconomics”

Skepticism that schools can overcome the effects of students’ background on academic performance



“College isn’t for everyone”

Notion that postsecondary education is not for everyone and some kids would be better off without it



“It’s always been like this”

Complacency with the status quo and lack of strong drive to change “traditional” student outcomes

”

“Some students come in with strikes already against them because their socioeconomics is such that they’re not prepared for college.”

Superintendent, CA

”

“There was a belief that these minority students could drop out, and should drop out in some cases, because then we will have the next generation of poultry workers.”

Superintendent, VA

”

“Because of our experiences traditionally, we’re just not as intentional as we need to be with kids from poverty. If we aren’t intentional, why do we expect children with no experiences from home would prepare for college by themselves? They’re not going to.”

Superintendent, PA

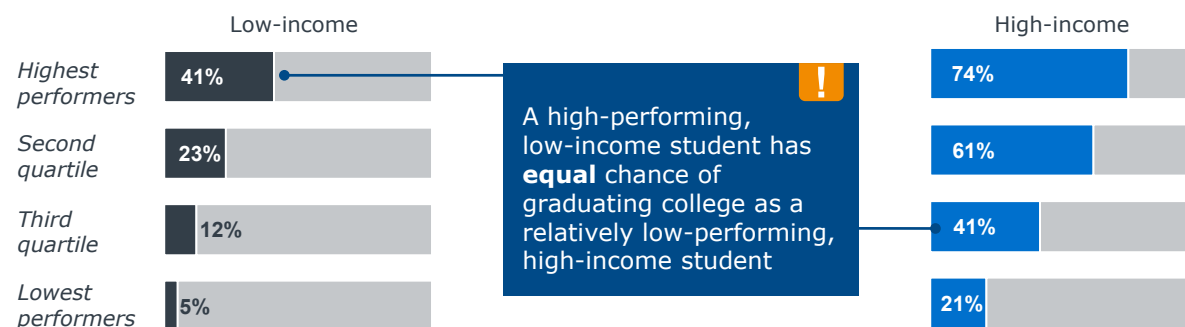
Ability Alone Does Not Account for Success

Significant Disparity Between Graduation Rates of Equally Capable Students

Research suggests that the concerns of many educators and community stakeholders are unfounded. The data below is from the Education Longitudinal Study conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics. The study controlled for academic ability by grouping students together by performance on a composite of national and international standardized exam questions. Students took the exam in 10th grade and researchers then followed them through their postsecondary careers, finding a troubling pattern in outcomes.

Degree Attainment Strongly Correlated with Income

BA Completion Rate by Socioeconomic Group¹, Ranked in Four Groups of Test Scores²



Family Income More Important Than Academic Ability

"Some...may wonder whether the poor children were simply overconfident, with aspirations outstripping their academic skills. Maybe the low-income children weren't completing college because they were not able.

"...[R]esults show that the hypothesis is wrong: **educational achievement does not explain the gap in bachelor's degree attainment.**"

"For the Poor, the Graduation Gap Is Even Wider Than the Enrollment Gap," *The New York Times*, 2015

Top high-income performers graduated from college at a rate more than 34 percentage points above their low-income peers of equal academic ability. The highest-performing low-income students completed college at a rate comparable to the third ability quartile of high-income students. Income appears to provide a distinct advantage even for high-income academic under-performers, who graduated at a rate comparable to the second-highest ability quartile of low-income students. In fact, the available research clearly suggests that in postsecondary degree attainment, income is a more significant factor than students' academic preparation.

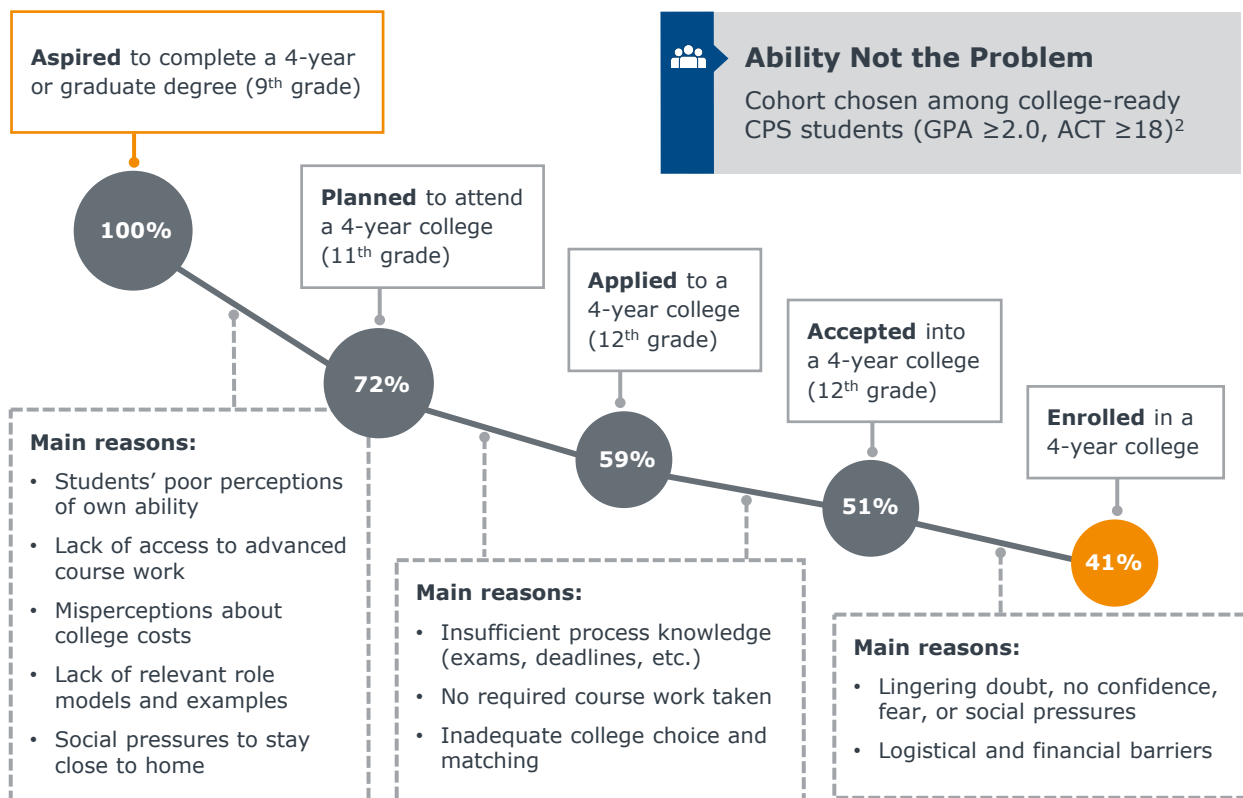
1) Low-income refers to the bottom family income quartile; high-income refers to the top family income quartile.
2) As measured by standardized NAEP and PISA mathematics and reading assessment questions administered as part of the study.

Sources: "For the Poor, the Graduation Gap Is Even Wider Than the Enrollment Gap," *The New York Times*, 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/06/02/upshot/for-the-poor-the-graduation-gap-is-even-wider-than-the-enrollment-gap.html?_r=0&abt=0002&abg=1; EAB interviews and analysis.

A Host of Nonacademic Barriers to College

CPS¹ Study Demonstrates Obstacles to College Extend Beyond Academics

Moving beyond academics, the data below demonstrates the impact of the many non-academic and administrative barriers that underrepresented students disproportionately face on the path to college. A longitudinal study conducted by Chicago Public Schools sought to determine the trajectory of students who aspired to attend college at the beginning of 9th grade. The chosen cohort of students were, on average, higher performers than their peers and demonstrated college aptitude by maintaining at least a 2.0 GPA and scoring 18 or higher on the ACT Exam.



Strikingly, by 11th grade, 28% of college-intending students had already given up on their college aspirations and no longer planned to attend a four-year institution, and only half of those students decided to pursue a two-year or vocational degree instead. Ultimately, just 41% of the college-intending cohort enrolled in a four-year institution. Significant declines at every stage result from a host of academic and nonacademic barriers that underrepresented students face during the college-going process.

1) Chicago Public Schools.

2) n=5,194 CPS students. Sample is 47% black, 31% Hispanic, and 13% white.

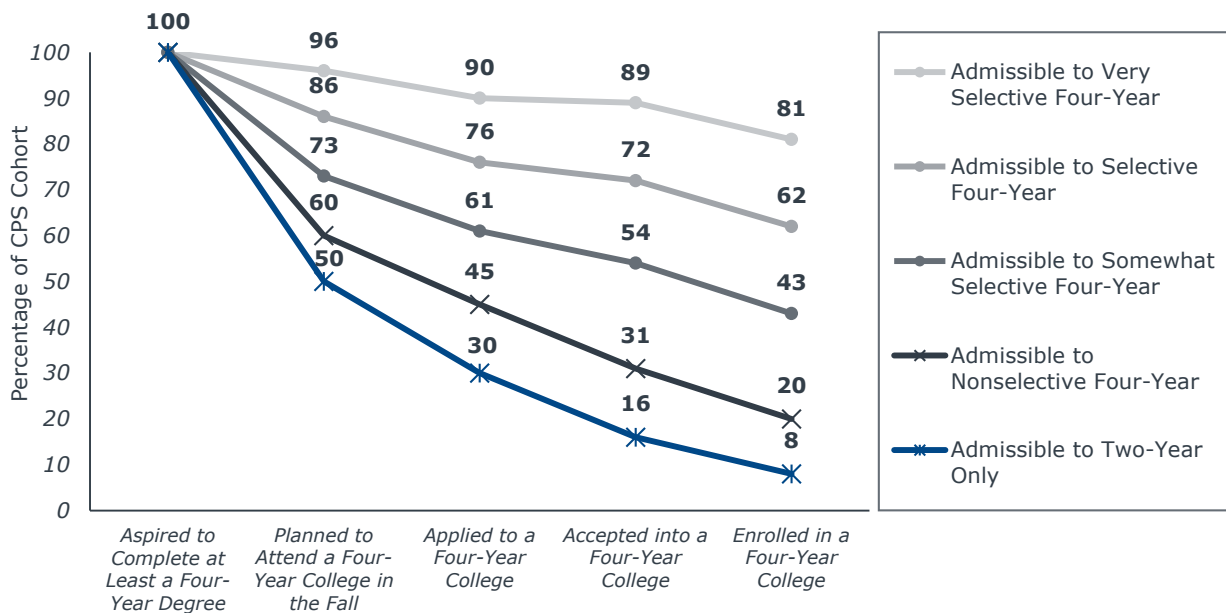
Sources: "From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College," Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, March 2008, consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/CCSR_Potholes_Report.pdf; EAB interviews and analysis.

Even High-Ability CPS¹ Students' Prospects Decline

Significant Drop-offs Across Different Student Admissibility Tiers²

The decline seen throughout the journey from college aspiration to college enrollment is not just a matter of poor-performing students rightfully recalibrating their expectations. After disaggregating students by their academic qualifications, the observed trend exists regardless of student ability. The decline is most prominent for students admissible to two-year or the least selective four-year institutions, but astoundingly, almost 20% of students admissible at a very selective four-year institution ended up not enrolling in college at all.

Tracking Students by Their Admissibility into Various Schools



Undoubtedly, the challenge at hand is not simply a matter of unqualified students realizing there are more suitable postsecondary alternatives. In the end, all of the students represented in the data above were qualified to continue their education, and a significant number of them failed to do so for reasons unrelated to their academic qualifications. Capable students who do not realize their full potential and enroll in college at all reveal a clear and urgent opportunity for intervention.

1) Chicago Public Schools.

2) Access category is based on GPA and ACT scores. For example, students in lowest category have no ACT scores and a GPA < 2.0, and students in highest category have an ACT of 24+ and an unweighted GPA of 3.5-4.0.

Sources: "From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College," Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago, March 2008, consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/CCSR_Potholes_Report.pdf; EAB interviews and analysis.

College Choice Reinforces Existing Inequity


Quality of Postsecondary Institution Impacts Likelihood to Succeed

Another inequity in college-going that disproportionately affects low-income and minority students is the phenomenon of “undermatching.” Undermatching occurs when a student attends a college or university that is less selective than his or her academic profile suggests he or she is qualified to attend. While a significant percentage of students undermatch, it is significantly more common among low-income students.

Lower-Income Students More Likely to Undermatch...

Rates of Student Undermatch and Substantial Undermatch ¹ by SES ²			
	Average	Higher SES	Lower SES
Undermatch (%)	40.9	34	49.6
Substantial Undermatch (%)	16.1	13.6	22.7

...And Suffer the Consequences



Crossing the Finish Line (2009)

Major longitudinal research of North Carolina graduates finds that **students who undermatch are 6–8% less likely to graduate** than their peers.

Among the chief reasons cited are lower standards, fewer support services, and less challenging environment.

“

“Undermatches encounter a less challenging academic environment, report fewer gains in their learning and development, and have less satisfaction with their institution. Thus, it is not surprising that **undermatches are less likely to complete college.**”

Kevin Fosnacht, “Selectivity and the College Experience,” 2014

This choice of college is not trivial. A longitudinal study of North Carolina graduates is one of several to show that students who undermatch are 6–8% less likely to graduate than their peers who attend an institution better aligned with their academic ability. Simply put, students who attend a less selective school are less likely to graduate than they otherwise would have at a better-matched, more selective institution.

1) Defined as attending institution of one selectivity band lower (undermatch) or two selectivity bands lower (substantial undermatch) than one’s combination of GPA and test scores would suggest. Selectivity bands chosen from Barron’s “Profiles of American Colleges.”
2) Socioeconomic status. “Lower-SES” students are below the median SES as determined by an NCES index of parental income, education, and occupation; “higher-SES” refers to students above the median SES.

Sources: Fosnacht K, “Selectivity and the College Experience: How Undermatching Shapes the College Experience Among High-Achieving Students,” Indiana University, Bloomington, April 2014; Smith J, Matea P, and Howell J, “The Full Extent of Student-College Academic Undermatch,” The College Board, October 2012, drive.google.com/file/d/0B5c--a90k-_zdnRLc3MwTHZTY28/view; Jaschik S, “(Not) Crossing the Finish Line,” Inside Higher Ed, September 2009, www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/09/09/finish; EAB interviews and analysis.

Upward Mobility Is Becoming Less Attainable

Access to Institutions That Best Serve Low-Income Students Getting Worse

Clearly, poor college choices can have a significant impact on students' likelihood of graduating. Conversely, there are institutions nationwide that do an exceptional job of not just educating low-income students but also of getting those students on the path to well-paying careers. A highly publicized study by Raj Chetty and colleagues at the NBER¹ ranked institutions on two dimensions: access for low-income students, and how successful schools are at moving students from the bottom to the top income quintile. Together those two factors determined a school's "mobility ranking."

Institutions with Highest Mobility Rates, from Bottom to Top Quintile

RANK	INSTITUTION
1.	Cal State University – LA
2.	Pace University – New York
3.	SUNY – Stony Brook
4.	Technical Career Institutes
5.	University of Texas – Pan American
6.	CUNY System
7.	Glendale Community College
8.	South Texas College
9.	Cal State Polytechnic – Pomona
10.	University of Texas – El Paso

Not the Usual Suspects

"The colleges that have the highest bottom-to-top-quintile mobility rates – i.e., those that offer both high success rates and low-income access – are typically **mid-tier public institutions.**"

Raj Chetty et al., *Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility*, 2017

Pathways to Success for Low-Income Students Getting More Rare

"Most importantly, the fraction of students from low-income families at the institutions with the highest mobility rates...fell sharply over the 2000s.

"In short, the colleges that offered many low-income students pathways to success are becoming **less accessible over time.**"

Raj Chetty et al., *Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility*, 2017

Institutions with the highest mobility ranking tended to be mid-tier public universities. This study also revealed that, largely due to decreases in public funding for higher education, it is becoming harder for low-income students to access those institutions that serve them best. While higher education funding and admissions are outside of a district's control, educators must make sure that students find and apply to institutions with high success and mobility rates. In fact, helping students successfully navigate the vast postsecondary educational landscape to make a smart postsecondary choice presents another major area of opportunity for district support.

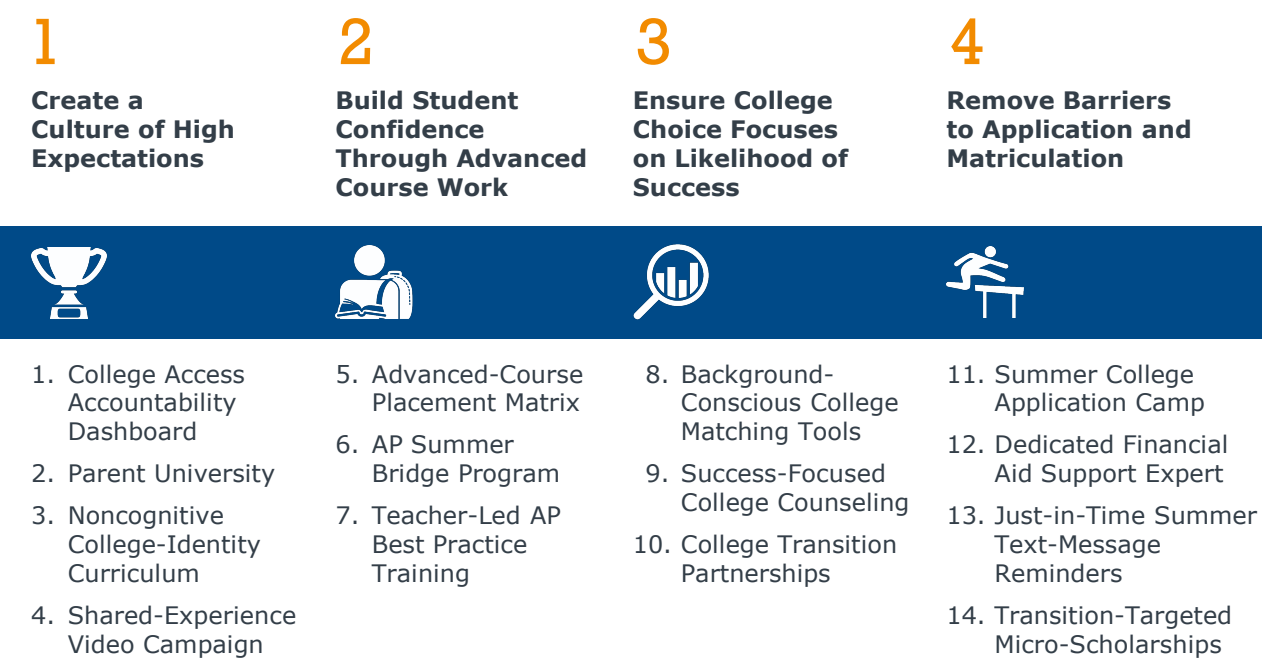
1) National Bureau of Economic Research.

Sources: Chetty et al., *Mobility Report Cards: The Role of Colleges in Intergenerational Mobility*, The Equality of Opportunity Project, July 2017, www.equality-of-opportunity.org/papers/coll_mrc_paper.pdf; "Some Colleges Have More Students from the Top 1 Percent than the Bottom 60. Find Yours," *The New York Times*, January 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.

Closing the College Access Gap

Supporting Underrepresented Students on the Path to Postsecondary Education

The framework below maps out the four main priorities for districts that are working to increase college access. The remainder of this study first looks at strategies institutions are deploying to create a culture of high expectations among at-risk students. Next, the study focuses on how educators are building low-income and minority students’ confidence through increased access to advanced course work. The third chapter examines how educators can help students make college choices based on where students are most likely to succeed. Finally, this study outlines strategies to help students navigate and overcome some of the bureaucratic barriers to college application and matriculation.



The practices presented are based on a series of interviews with more than 100 K–12 leaders representing school districts and organizations nationwide. These practices emerged as innovative and actionable strategies, designed to improve college access for low-income and minority students.



Create a Culture of High Expectations

CHAPTER

1

Practice 1: College Access Accountability Dashboard

Practice 2: Parent University

Practice 3: Noncognitive College-Identity Curriculum

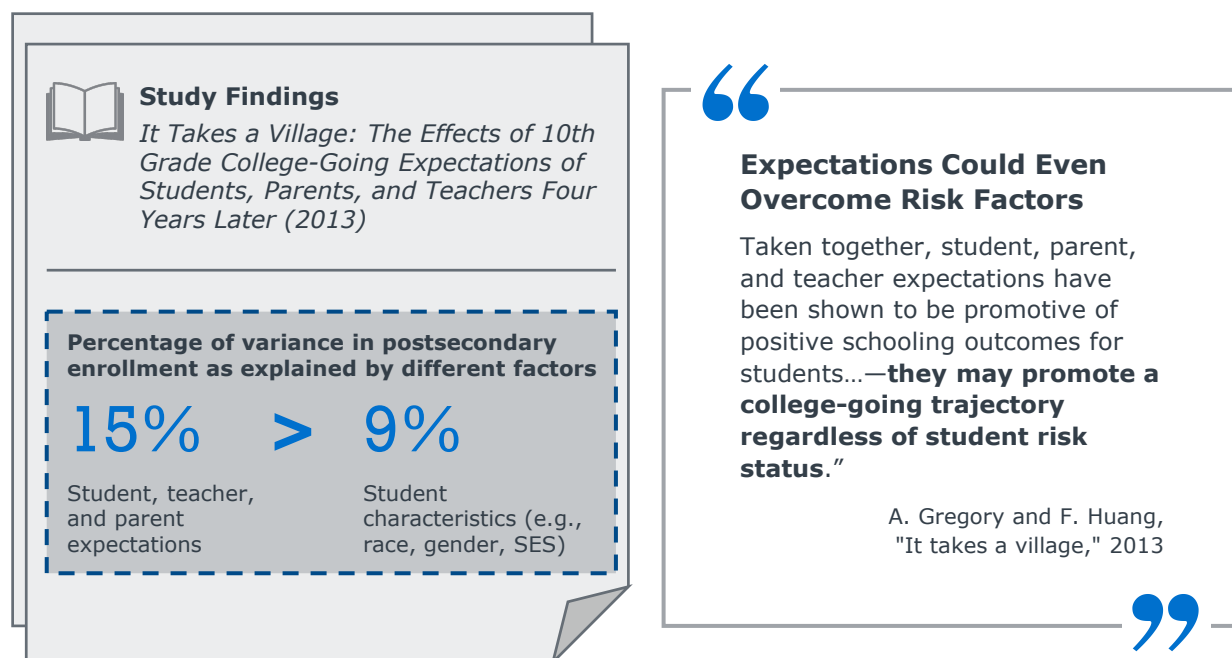
Practice 4: Shared-Experience Video Campaign

Expectations Matter (a Lot)

College-Going Identity a Direct Result of High Expectations

Race, ethnicity, and income all have a significant influence on a student's likelihood to attend and complete college, but expectations of parents, teachers, and students actually explain a greater share of the variance in college attendance than demographic factors. Unfortunately, those expectations are often influenced by larger societal expectations for students. As a result, a culture of low expectations may prevail, essentially becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Parents', Teachers', and Students' Own Aspirations Have Powerful Impact



The good news is that while student characteristics such as race and income are immutable, expectations are not. Raising expectations for student achievement is a critical, albeit difficult, factor that districts must address to impact gaps in college enrollment for underrepresented students.

Teacher Expectations Influenced by Race

Teacher Biases Can Turn into Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

Despite good intentions, teacher expectations can be heavily influenced by race. In a study conducted by the Brookings Institution, teachers were asked to predict whether or not various students would finish high school. The study was conducted with a nationally representative sample of six thousand 10th graders, and researchers subsequently tracked the students for 10 years to see how they fared. Ultimately, black teachers were 40% more likely than their white counterparts to predict that the same black student would graduate from high school.

Teacher Expectations Not the Same for Everyone

Same Student, Different Expectation

40%

Black teachers were 40% more likely than white teachers to predict the same black student would finish high school



Leading to Tangible Differences in Student Outcomes

7%

Black high school students were 7% more likely to finish college if assigned to teachers with higher expectations

29%

Amount of increased interest in pursuing college for low-income black boys¹ paired up with at least one black teacher

“

“Our study offers causal evidence that teacher expectations matter. Negative teacher biases can function like self-fulfilling prophecies that affect college-going.”

“Do Teacher Expectations Matter?” Brookings Institution, 2016

”

Most notably, the researchers found a causal relationship between teacher expectations and students’ eventual outcomes. Black students had a 7% higher likelihood of graduating from high school when assigned to a teacher with higher expectations for their achievement. In short, teachers’ implicit biases have strong and clear implications for students’ college-going aspirations and enrollment.

1) Grades 3–5. Low-income is defined as being eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Sources: Papageorge N and Gershenson S, “Do Teacher Expectations Matter?” Brookings Institution, September 2016, www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2016/09/16/do-teacher-expectations-matter; Gershenson S and Hart C, “The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers,” Institute of Labor Economics, April 2017, releases.jhu.edu/2017/04/05/with-just-one-black-teacher-black-students-more-likely-to-graduate; EAB interviews and analysis.

Parental Expectations a Powerful Influence

But Discrepancy Between Aspiration and Reality Ends Up Hurting Students

Not surprisingly, high parental expectations have also been linked to better academic performance. High parental expectations can even overcome the adverse impact race or income can have on student achievement. Tragically, black and Hispanic parents believe that it is important or very important for their child to attain a college degree at rates that exceed white parents', but the expectation that their child will attain a college degree lags significantly behind.

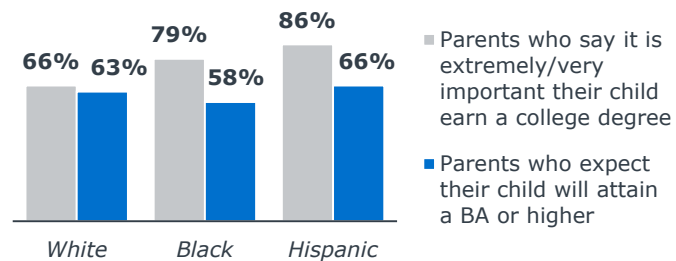
From Expectation to Achievement

"High parental expectations are...linked to student motivation to achieve in school, scholastic and social resilience, and aspirations to attend college.

"Furthermore, **parents' academic expectations mediate the relation between family background and achievement.**"

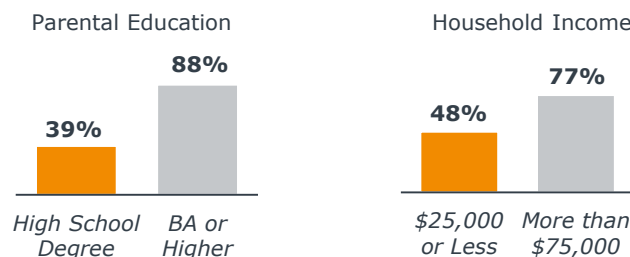
Y. Yamamoto and S. Holloway,
"Parental Expectations and
Children's Academic Performance
in Sociocultural Context," 2010

For Minority Parents, Belief in College Value Not the Same as Belief in College Attainability



Socioeconomic Status Significant Predictor of College Expectations

% of Parents Who Expect Their Child Will Attain a BA or Higher



This expectation gap also exists when comparing parents based on household income and is most pronounced between parents with only a high school diploma and those who have earned at least a bachelor's degree.

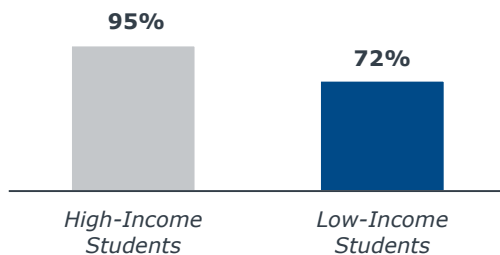
Sources: Stipler R, "Hispanic, Black Parents See College Degree as Key for Children's Success," Pew Research Center, February 2016; "Parental Expectations for Their Children's Academic Attainment," Child Trends Data Bank, October 2015; Yamamoto Y and Holloway S, "Parental Expectations and Children's Academic Performance," *Educational Psychology Review*, March 2010; EAB interviews and analysis.

Student Expectations Shaped by Self-Identity

Perhaps then, it is no surprise that students themselves exhibit a similar pattern. The data below reveals that low-income students demonstrate lower college aspirations compared to their high-income counterparts. And, like their parents, low-income students also hold significantly lower expectations that they will actually attend college.

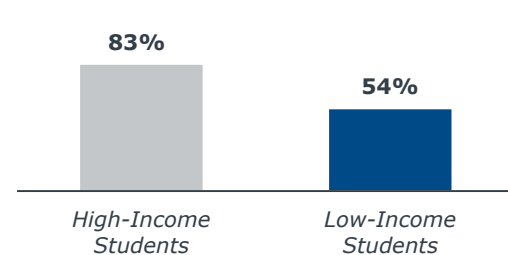
Low-Income¹ Students Less Likely to Desire to Attend College...

% of Students 12 to 18 Years of Age with College Aspiration²



...And Even Less Likely to Expect to Attend College

% of Students 12 to 18 Years of Age Who Expect to Attend College²



Personal Expectations Critical to College-Going

"Results...indicated personal, peer, and parent educational expectations all significantly predicted educational outcomes. ... **Personal educational expectations were the greatest predictor of college attainment**, followed by peer and parent expectations."

A. Sommerfield, *Education as a Collective Accomplishment*, 2015

The findings of these studies about teacher, parent, and student expectations suggest that students ultimately develop college aspirations in very different environments. For many white, middle-class or upper-class students with college-educated parents, college attendance is almost a forgone conclusion: a matter of "where?" not "if." Low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students, on the other hand, confront persistent doubt and skepticism that they will attend college or earn a degree. While difficult to overcome the weight of these entrenched attitudes, it is critical for districts to counter these expectations if they hope to address inequities in college access.

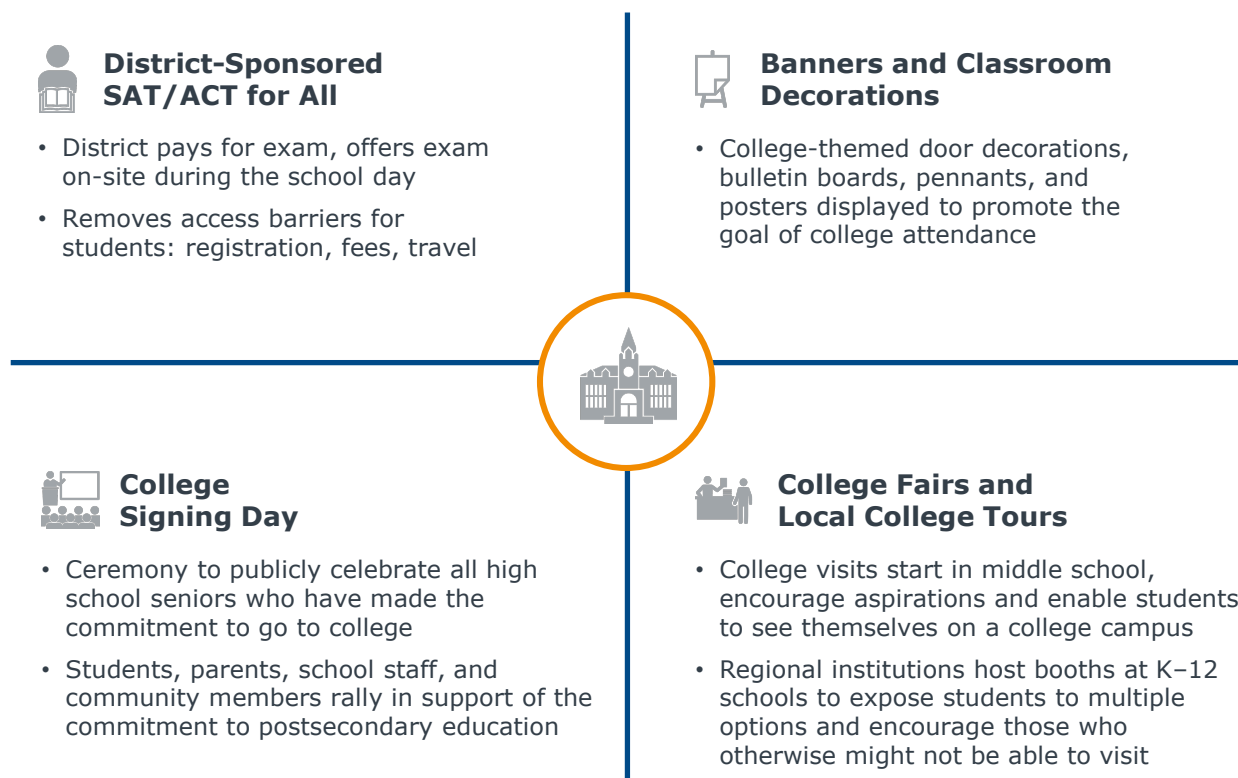
1) Low-income refers to a household income of less than \$18,256; high-income refers to a household income of greater than \$84,016.
2) As measured on the Child Development Supplement (CDS) to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID).

Sources: Elliot W, "Children's college aspirations and expectations," *Children and Youth Services Review*, February 2009, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740908001916; Sommerfield K, "Education as a collective accomplishment," *Social Psychology of Education*, June 2016, link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11218-015-9325-7; EAB interviews and analysis.

Common Strategies to Promote College Identity

Events, Policies, and Physical Space Reinforce the College-Going Message

Districts and schools deploy a whole host of different strategies to build a school-wide college-going culture, and the graphic below outlines common initiatives used nationwide. These approaches have all shown signs of promise, and the high-profile, school-wide nature of many of these strategies helps to create a broad culture where college-going becomes the norm.

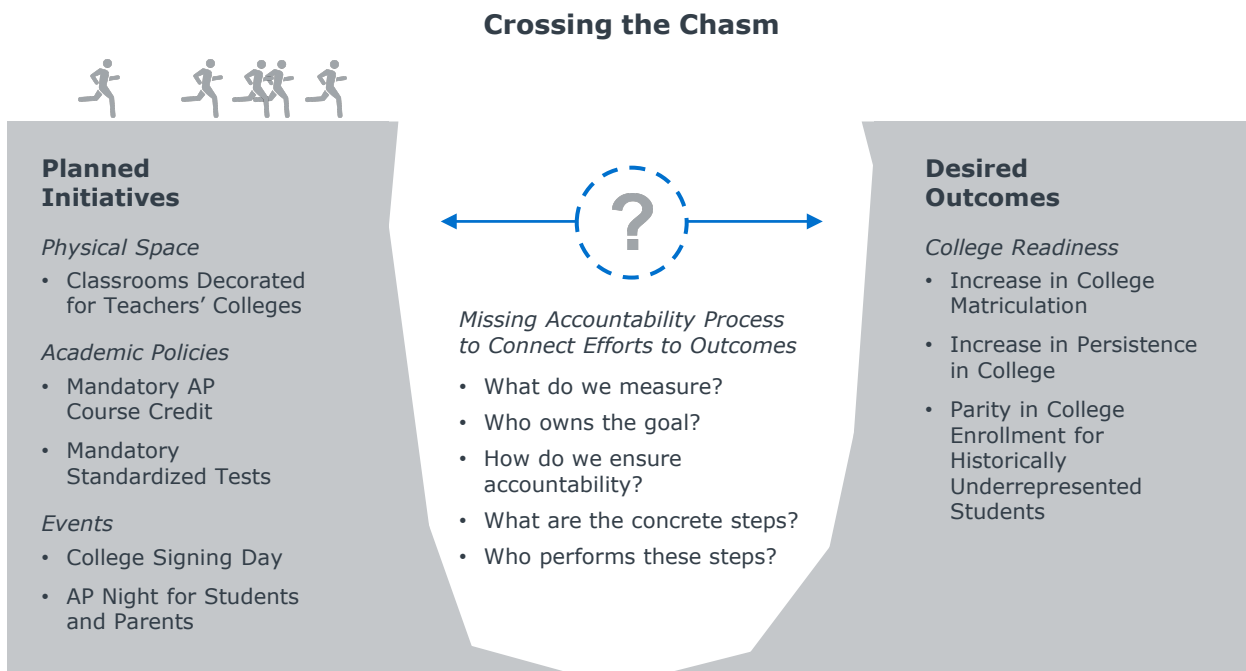


There are undoubtedly many other strategies, large and small, that contribute to a culture of high expectations. The tactics presented in the rest of this chapter highlight innovative approaches to raising expectations for underrepresented students that can supplement those outlined above.

Good Intentions Rarely Achieve Desired Results

Metrics and Accountability Mechanism Needed to Bridge Outcomes Divide

The main challenge to most culture-building efforts is that schools often implement initiatives to foster high expectations for students but stop short of measuring the impact of those strategies on desired outcomes. Districts often set lofty and well-intentioned goals but fail to define interim metrics to assess whether progress is being made. This means that assessment is often done retrospectively, after it is too late to adjust or refine efforts.






There is undoubtedly a lot that districts can do to foster teachers' high expectations for underrepresented students, including culturally responsive classroom training. However, the superintendents we spoke with who had successfully changed school culture invariably attributed their success to holding principals and teachers explicitly accountable for the goals of greater access and opportunity for low-income and minority students.

What Gets Measured Gets Managed

Goals Must Be Quantified, Tactical, and Within a Set Time Frame

One such district that took a data-driven approach to hardwiring higher expectations is **Glenbard High School District #87**. Like many of their peers across the country, district administrators and the school board at Glenbard set lofty aspirations for student achievement, in this case largely sourced from a task force consisting of teachers, parents, students, and community leaders. Districts can also look to statewide mandates or conduct school-specific data analyses to identify gaps and opportunities to improve students' college readiness, as shown in the examples below.

Various Methods of Translating Goals into Metrics

 <p><i>Small Rural District, TN</i></p> <p>State-Level Mandates</p> <p>Integrates Early Postsecondary Opportunities into Statewide ESSA Accountability Model</p> <p>Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 AP Courses or Dual Enrollment for All Students by 2010 • 2 AP Courses and Industry Certification • 2 AP Courses and Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery 	 <p><i>Glenbard HSD #87, IL</i></p> <p>District Stakeholders</p> <p>District and Community Task Force Defines Priorities for Closing Achievement Gap</p> <p>Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of Students Who Pass Their Classes • % of Students Who Earn 20+ ACT or 1030+ SAT Score • % of Students in Algebra II by 11th Grade • % of Student in Physics by 11th Grade • % of Seniors Who Took at Least One AP Exam and Earned a 3 or Higher 	 <p><i>Medium-Sized¹ High School, MA</i></p> <p>School-Level Analysis</p> <p>School Administrator-Initiated Data Analysis of AP Course Enrollment</p> <p>Metric</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every Student Takes an AP or Dual Enrollment Course by Graduation
--	--	---

Glenbard High School District ultimately committed to “ensuring a course sequence that prepares all students for college, the global workforce, and personal success regardless of their academic preparedness upon entering 9th grade.” Framing their goals in this way has been critical to the district’s approach as it explicitly holds everyone accountable to the success of all students and removes the potential to shift responsibility to primary schools or factors outside the district’s control. Administrators then took the next step to create concrete, quantifiable objectives related to those goals, coupled with a robust accountability mechanism. With interim metrics and an accountability structure in place, district officials can effectively work with schools to monitor and report on progress.

1) Size of school about 1,100 students.

Sources: Glenbard High School District #87 School Board, “9 Beliefs and Convictions”; EAB interviews and analysis.

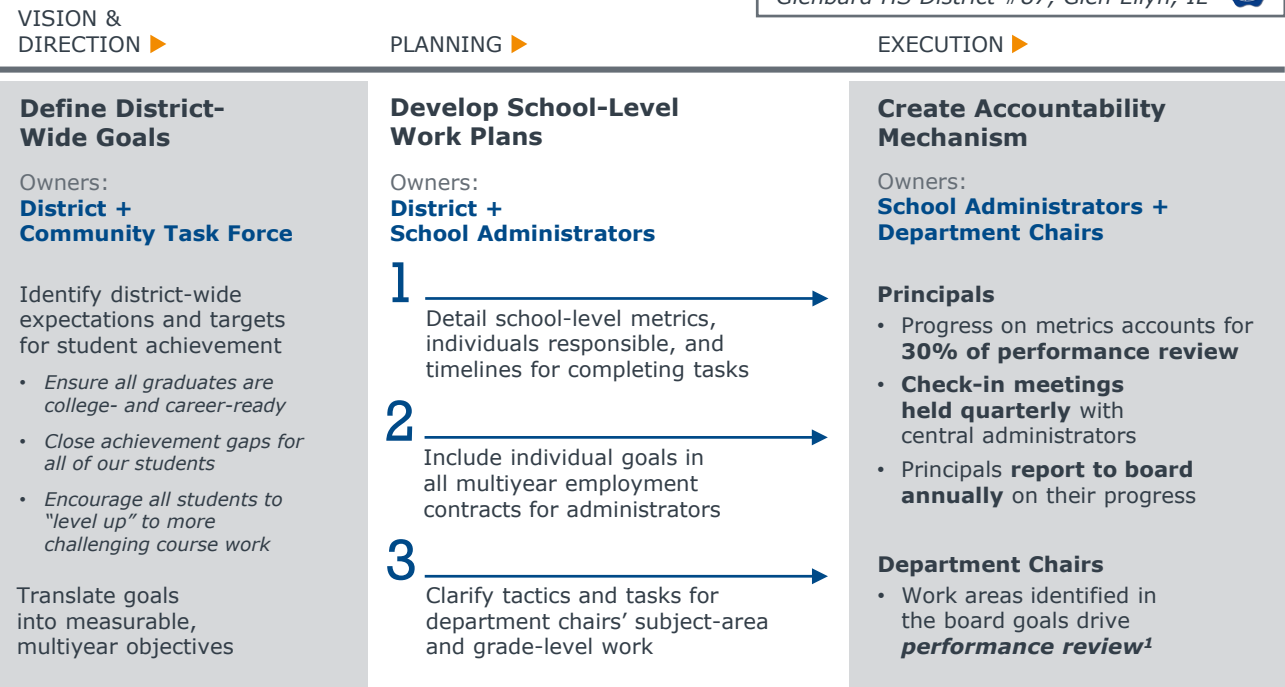
Hardwiring Higher Expectations

Concrete Objectives and Clear Ownership Create Accountability

There is no universal set of metrics that guarantees progress in increasing equity in college access. What matters is the process of managing administrators and staff to execute on those metrics. Glenbard High School District translated the goals of their task force and district officials into actionable, time-bound metrics. District-level goals are cascaded throughout the organization with related individual responsibilities included in superintendent and all multiyear administrator contracts.

Translating Aspirations into Action

Profiled Institution:
Glenbard HS District #87, Glen Ellyn, IL



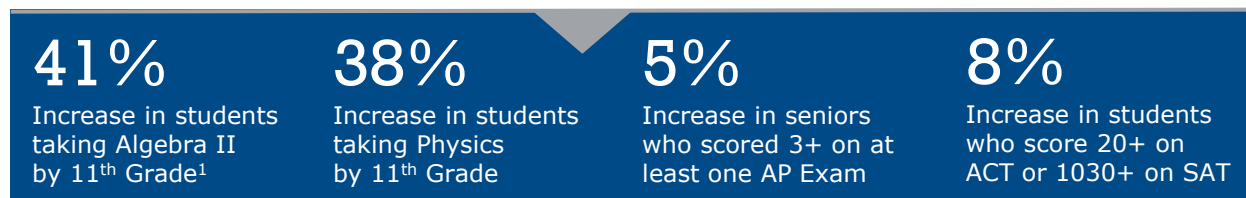
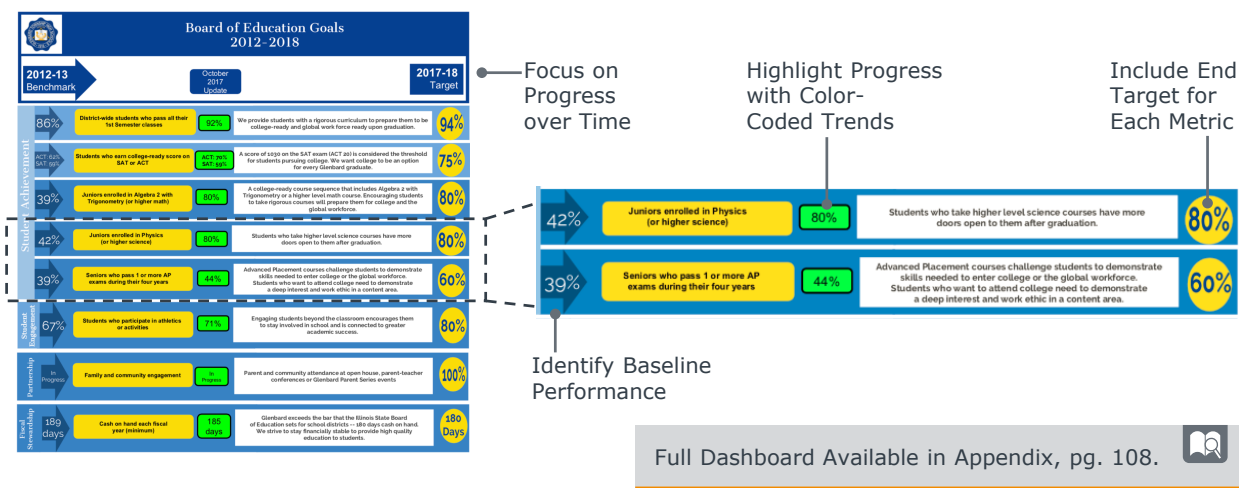
School-level progress against the identified metrics is built into each principal’s annual performance review. Quarterly check-in meetings and three summer planning days with central administrators further support principals’ ongoing work, and principals report annually to the board on their progress. At the most local level, schools structure department chair roles exclusively around advancing these goals, and administrators detail specific tactics and strategies that will be deployed to accomplish subject-area and grade-level work.

Dashboard Focuses on Progress, Not Perfection

Progress Toward Goal Visible at a Glance

Below is the accountability dashboard that Glenbard High School District uses to monitor and publicly report on progress. Notably, the dashboard clearly identifies the district's baseline performance, focuses stakeholders on progress over a five-year period, and indicates end targets for each metric.

Annotated Glenbard Accountability Dashboard



Color-coded trends signal at a glance whether the district is making positive progress, facilitating conversations about effective strategies and necessary adjustments going forward. In implementing this process, Glenbard High School District has seen significant improvement across a broad range of their identified interim metrics.

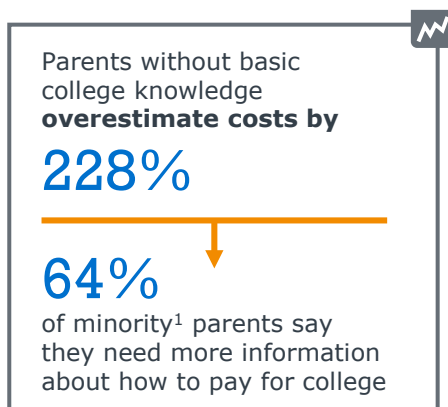
1) All cited numbers are percentage-point increases from 2012 to 2017.

Lack of Parent Knowledge a Barrier to Enrollment

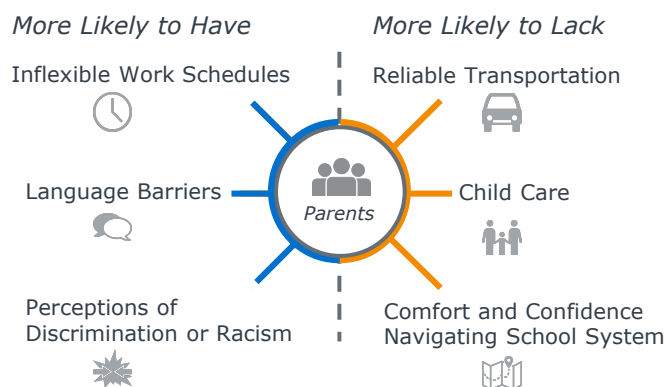
Districts Face Challenges Engaging the Most At-Risk Parents

Many minority parents think it's important for their child to get a postsecondary degree but still have far lower expectations of that aspiration becoming a reality. Financial constraints are a frequently cited barrier to college access for underrepresented students. Although college is undoubtedly a costly investment, parents without basic information about college financing options overestimate the cost of college by more than 200%.

Lack of Accurate Information on Cost a Key Barrier



Schools Face Unique Barriers to Connecting with Low-Income and Minority Parents



Misperception Among Low-Income and Minority Parents Contributes to Roadblocks and Uncertainty Around College-Going

58% of low-income² families rule out colleges on the basis of sticker price alone

57% of working class adults think college will result in debt and low likelihood of a good-paying job

Anxieties and misconceptions about college cost lead more than half of low-income families to rule out college options on the basis of sticker price alone, even when some higher-priced institutions might offer more generous financial aid. Furthermore, many working class individuals remain highly skeptical of the long-term value of a college degree. These parents are often the hardest to engage due to more restrictive schedules and greater feelings of mistrust or discomfort with the school system based on previous experiences.

1) Refers to black and Hispanic parents.
2) Refers to a family income of less than \$60,000.

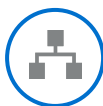
Sources: The Institute for College Access and Success, 2008, "Paving the Way: How Financial Aid Awareness Affects College Access and Success"; The College Board Student Poll, 2012, "A Majority of Students Rule Out Colleges Based on Sticker Price"; Inside Higher Ed, 2017, "Losing the White Working Class, Too"; EAB interviews and analysis.

Turning Parents into Partners

Increased Relevance and Flexible Scheduling Engage Minority Parents

After attempting several ineffective parent engagement strategies, **Fresno Unified School District** developed a centralized set of modules offered through a program called Parent University. As a large urban school district with high concentrations of poverty and diversity, Fresno USD typically reached only the most vocal parents or those with enough background knowledge of the school system to advocate for their child. The modules, derived from the 80-page district handbook, cover topics across the K–12 system, enabling communication of information from all departments in a central format.

Parent University Provides Transparency into Key Aspects Across K–12 System



Centralizes recruitment and delivery of parent engagement initiatives



Transforms lengthy handbook into six-week learning modules



Translates modules into major languages of the district



Scaffolds information on college-going into grade-relevant milestones



Links families to district and community resources to build capacity

Profiled Institution:

Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA



Six Tenets of Successful Parent Engagement

1

Targeted Content

Parents will attend sessions if content tailored to their needs

2

Flexible Scheduling

Sessions available at times convenient for parents

3

Cultural Sensitivity

Meetings conducted in parents' primary language

4

Community Partnerships

Familiar community-based organizations increase parent comfort

5

Personal Outreach

Phone calls and home visits connect with most disengaged parents

6

Content and Strategy Alignment

Content supports strategic goals of individual school departments

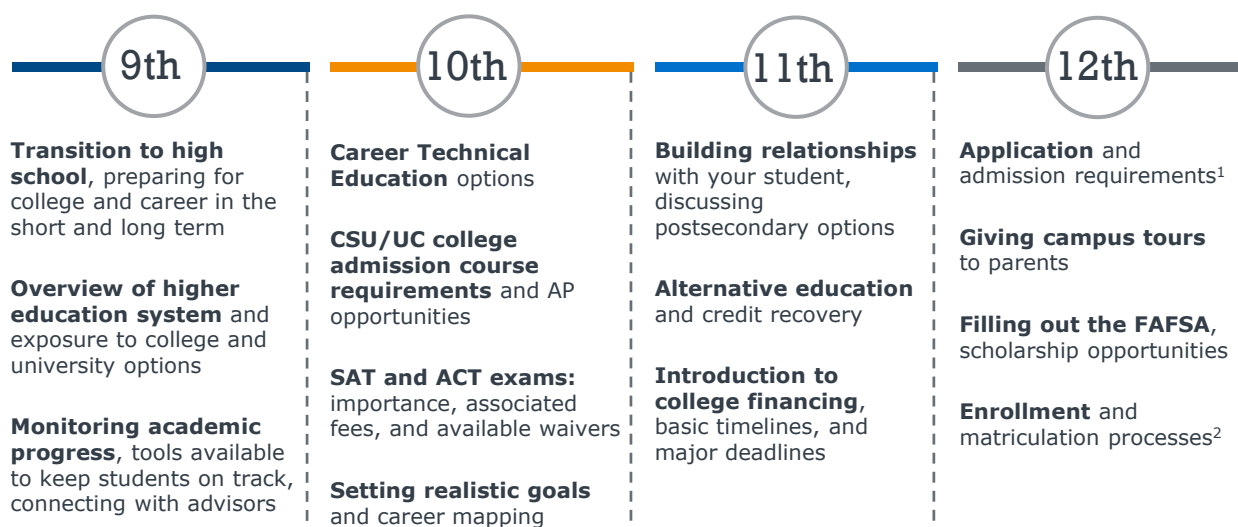
Each module (e.g., early learning, ELL, special education) is delivered in two-hour sessions per week, for six weeks. A unit of 12 staff members develops and maintains the curriculum and actively recruits at-risk families to participate in sessions relevant to their children. The model overcomes common logistical barriers as it allows the district to put a centralized facilitator at the school sites at times most convenient for parents, rather than for the school, while also making child care available. All courses are developed based on input from a group of parent leaders, are measured for effectiveness through pre- and post-assessments, and are delivered in three languages.

Scaffolded Approach to College Knowledge

College Modules Focus Parents on Specific Challenges at Each Grade Level

While many districts may be unable to fully replicate the staffing and support levels found at Fresno USD, Parent University represents a comprehensive, culturally sensitive approach to parent education. Parent University exposes parents early and often to the idea of college, starting in elementary school. Instructors discuss how students should challenge themselves in preparation for college and connect academic options to career pathways. The focus on postsecondary options increases in high school, and modules offered at that time directly support parents in understanding the college-going process.

Targeted College Engagement Modules



More details on the specific Parent University sessions dedicated to college are available in Appendix, pages 109–110.



As students are exposed to college-related information and milestones in school, it is critical that parents are supported and educated in parallel. As outlined above, parents of 9th graders are provided with information to help support their child's transition to high school, receive an overview of the higher education system, and learn about tools that they can use to help keep students on track for college. In 10th grade, topics include college entrance exams and career education, while parents of juniors in high school learn about college financing, in particular, key upcoming timelines and deadlines. The 12th grade modules focus intensely on the logistics of the college-application and matriculation processes, with a special emphasis on FAFSA completion.

1) Separate modules with targeted information for community college, state public institutions, and private institutions.

2) Including expected deposits and fees, placement testing, student orientation.

Parents More Likely to Support College Ambition

Empowering Parents with the Right Tools Gets Students to the Finish Line

As a testament to its success, annual participation in Parent University has doubled over the last two years, reaching more than 38,000 parents. Pre- and post-curriculum assessments demonstrate growth in parent learning across the entire Parent University curriculum, and students of Parent University participants demonstrate faster gains in math and English language arts proficiency on state exams than students of non-participants.

38,000+ 

Parents served through Parent University

24% 

Increase in awareness of available parent learning opportunities

16% 

Average increase in high school parent knowledge after module completion

“

“It's common for parents in our community to feel uneasy about college and even discourage their children from attending due to fear. Fear they're unable to afford college, fear of allowing them to leave home, and even fear of losing the person who connects them to the community.

“Connecting our families to a live experience of where their children will eat, sleep, and study and empowering parents with the resources to pay for college **has allowed them to embrace the pathway towards their child's future.**”

Zuleica Murillo, Executive Director, Community and Family Services

FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

”

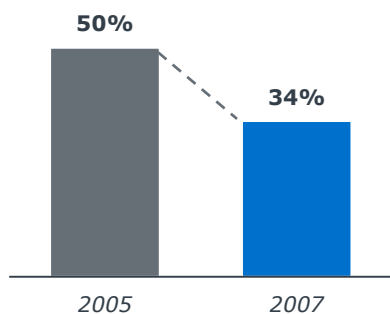
Parent University has also been instrumental in providing targeted and relevant information to demystify the college process and encourage parents to support their students on the path to postsecondary education. The executive director of the Parent University Program emphasized that it is not uncommon to face parents who actively discourage their children from attending college, and Parent University has been instrumental in helping parents overcome some of their primary fears and concerns. The model has been replicated and adapted to meet the needs of diverse districts in California, both large and small, urban and rural.

Higher Ed Preparation Not Just About Academics

Students Not Ready for Nonacademic and Financial Hurdles

Students' expectations for themselves are ultimately the biggest influence on their likelihood to apply to and attend college. To positively inflect student outcomes, **YES Prep Public Schools** developed a nonacademic curriculum to support students' development of a college-going self-image. As a charter school, YES Prep has historically maintained an intense focus on successfully getting all students to be academically eligible for, to apply to, and to enroll in a postsecondary institution.

College Graduation Rate by Year¹
YES Prep Public School Graduates



Pre-2007 College Preparation Program Focused Exclusively on Academics

- ✓ Consistent Rigorous Academic Preparation
(15% Remedial vs. 50% of Texas HS Graduates)
- ✗ Noncognitive Preparation
(e.g., self-concept, support system)
- ✗ Financial Resourcefulness and Resilience
(e.g., financial literacy training, support during FAFSA submission)

“If you see yourself as college material, if you believe that you belong there and you see it as a stepping-stone to something you want to do later in life, you can activate a variety of skills and resources to address the financial and situational barriers. **If you don’t envision yourself in college, if you don’t plan for that to happen, then none of that stuff matters.**”

*Rhiannon Killian, Former Director of College Initiatives
YES Prep Public Schools*

Yet, over time, YES Prep alumni experienced a decline in college persistence and graduation rates. Administrators determined that they had underinvested in addressing the nonacademic barriers that often derail students once they get to college. Feelings of not belonging, self-doubt about their own ability, and lack of knowledge about administrative processes repeatedly derailed students' best intentions and aspirations.

1) Six-year college graduation rate.

Building a Noncognitive College Prep Curriculum

Ensure Students Have a College-Going Identity and Will to Persevere

To address this, YES Prep reevaluated their principles for college preparation to create a structured curriculum to complement their existing college seminar. Yes Prep identified three objectives as part of their college preparatory program that speak to noncognitive fortitude and resilience. School leadership then translated these goals into eight noncognitive skills that students would master through a four-year curriculum.

YES Prep's Principles of College Prep

- 1 Analyze Personal Strengths and Weaknesses
- 2 Develop a Growth Mind-Set
- 3 Practice Realistic Goal Setting and Planning
- 4 Complete Bulk of College Application Materials
- 5 Receive SAT and ACT Preparation

Profiled Institution:

YES Prep Public Schools, Houston, TX



College Assessment Portfolio Project

Noncognitive Skills to Develop Across Curriculum

- 1 **Self-Concept**
Possesses Confidence, Strong Self-Determination
- 2 **Realistic Self-Appraisal**
Ability to Assess One's Strengths and Weaknesses
- 3 **Understands How to Handle Racism**
Ability to Deal with Systemic Barriers
- 4 **Develop Long-Range Goals**
Understand the Link Between Effort and Success
- 5 **Strong Support Person**
Utilize a Person of Strong Influence for Advice
- 6 **Leadership**
Ability to Organize and Influence Others
- 7 **Community**
Involvement in a Group That Provides Support
- 8 **Nontraditional Knowledge Acquisition**
Ability to Learn Outside of School/Classroom

Students complete work each year to measure and document their progress toward college readiness, and the ongoing project requires students to repeatedly self-assess their own areas of strength and weakness. An internally developed rubric and project design allow students to gather anecdotal evidence of their application of the skills, receive regular coaching from their college counselor, and incorporate this work into all of their classes and with all of their teachers.

Nonacademic Skills Build Across Grade Levels

Substantial Impact on College Success Since Introduction

The college-identity curriculum starts in 9th grade for all students and scaffolds all the way to high school graduation. As outlined below, students start by completing the college aspiration module, and the curriculum becomes increasingly tactical to support the college application and matriculation processes. After implementing this approach to college-identity development, YES Prep has seen a dramatic increase in the college success rates for their students.

College Preparatory Curriculum Goals by Grade

9th

- *College Aspiration Cultivation*
- *Noncognitive Skill Development*

10th

- *College Aspiration Cultivation*
- *Noncognitive Skill Development*

- *Planning for Extracurricular Experiences*

11th

- *SAT/ACT Preparation*
- *College Application Preparation*

12th

- *College Application*
- *Financial Literacy*
- *Study Skills*

Noncognitive College-Identity Curriculum Guide Available in Appendix, pages 111–113.



College Prep Curriculum Impact Highlights



Increase in **First-Year Retention** Between 2007 and 2010



Increase in **Four-Year Retention** Between 2007 and 2010



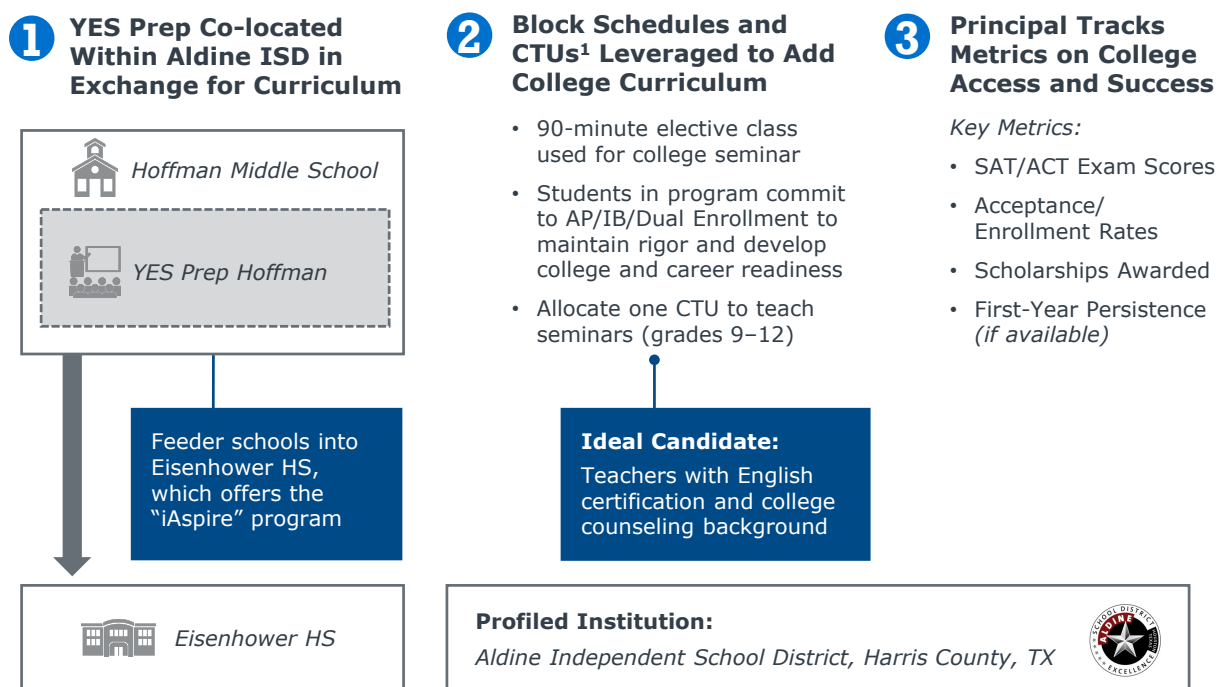
Increase in **Six-Year Graduation Rate** Between 2007 and 2010

Making Charter School Idea Work in a Public HS

Partnership Adds College Seminar to Public HS Advanced Course Work Track

A partnership between YES Prep and **Aldine Independent School District** highlights how the college-identity curriculum can be applied in a public school context. A YES Prep middle school is co-located within Aldine ISD. In addition to another district middle school, YES Prep acts as a feeder middle school into an Aldine ISD High School, where the curriculum is implemented.

Aldine ISD's Partnership with YES Prep



High school administrators leveraged existing block scheduling and allocated classroom teaching units to create space for the college seminar in the traditional schedule. Aldine ISD has found that ideal candidates for teaching the program had an English teaching certification and a college counseling background. This background helps seminar teachers guide students through the college application process, while also allowing them to teach students to write strong college essays. Once implemented, high school administrators track a set of key metrics to ensure the college seminar and curriculum are having the intended effect on college access and success metrics.

1) Classroom teaching unit.

Highlighting Relevant Examples of Success

San Jose State's First-Generation College Student Support Campaign

Low-income, first-generation college students make up more than 25% of undergraduate students at four-year institutions, but only 11% earn a postsecondary degree in six years. As a result, many of EAB's higher education members are focused on improving the experiences and outcomes for those students. One such example is **San Jose State University**, which has developed a practice highly transferable to a K–12 context.

"I Relate" Video Testimonial Campaign Highlights



Students, faculty, staff, and alumni share their own experiences as first-generation college students



Videos feature personal accounts of **challenges faced and resources and support systems** used to address them



Shared with students on campus, **largely through social media**



Stories collected and shared on an ongoing basis with a few new videos released each month



Profiled Institution:

San Jose State University **SJSU** SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY
San Jose, CA



77%

of participants reported feeling more connected to the university

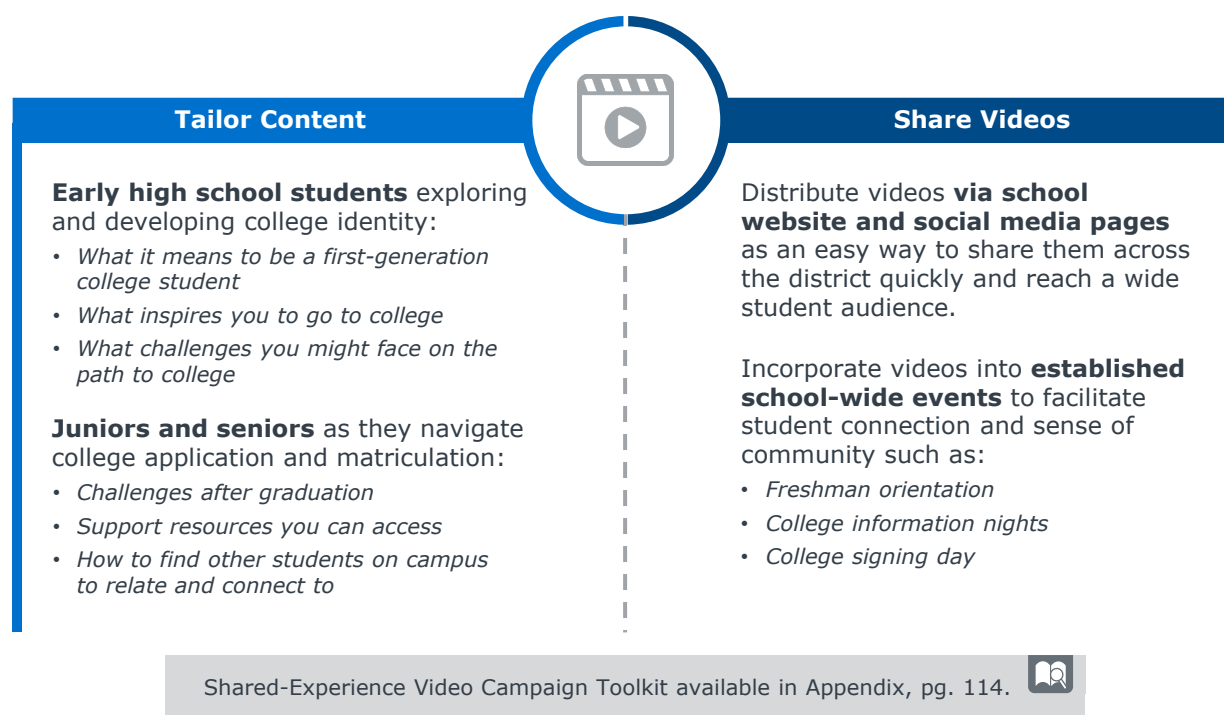
San Jose State University launched a video campaign designed to help first-generation students feel less alone by highlighting tangible and relatable examples of first-generation student success. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni were recruited through existing affinity groups to talk about how they have felt at different times throughout their college experience, the resources they have accessed to overcome obstacles, and how they have ultimately been successful. Stories are collected and shared on an ongoing basis, with a few new videos released on social media each month. The short, individual clips were also compiled into a 30-minute video of powerful testimonials and messages of support.

Reinforcing Positive Messages Early

Applying Postsecondary Principles to a High School Context

A similar practice could supplement and enhance existing K–12 college-prep programming. A video campaign can reinforce positive messages and pass along advice from other first-generation students and district alumni, increasing underrepresented students’ sense of belonging in higher education.

Recommendations for District-Led Video Testimonial Campaign



Administrators should tailor content to reach students at different stages of college-identity development—from those just entering high school learning what it means to go to college to those in the midst of college application and matriculation facing doubts and fears about taking the leap. Social media pages provide an easy way to distribute videos quickly and widely. However, most districts and schools also hold relevant events (e.g., student orientations, college fairs, college signing days) that would provide the opportunity to share the testimonials of others who have faced similar challenges.



Build Student Confidence Through Advanced Course Work

CHAPTER

2

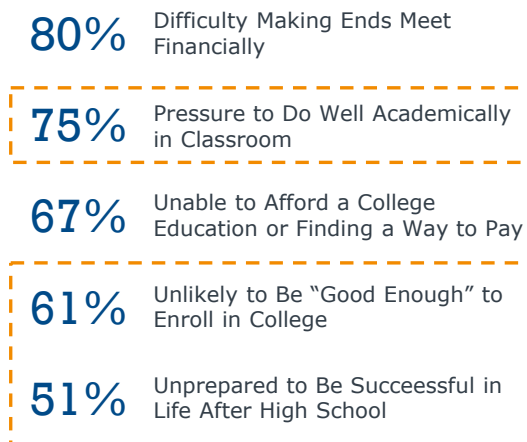
Practice 5: Advanced-Course Placement Matrix
Practice 6: AP Summer Bridge Program
Practice 7: Teacher-Led AP Best Practice Training

College Dreams Often Dashed by Low Confidence

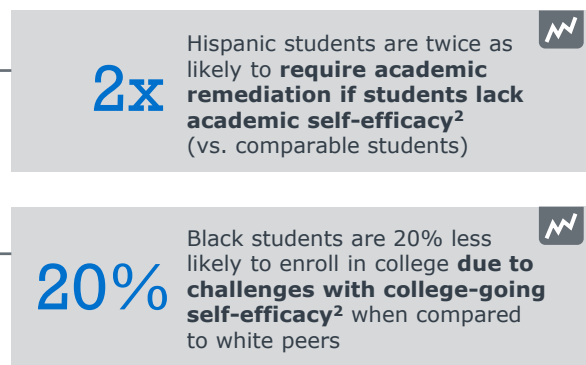
Aspirations Challenged by Students' Doubts About Their Academic Abilities

A district culture that fosters a shared expectation of college attendance is absolutely essential to elevating access for underrepresented students, but is not enough by itself. Data indicates that across racial groups, college is already an aspiration for the vast majority of students. However, one in three black and Hispanic students do not follow through on that goal and enroll in college.

Common College-Related Stressors for High School Students¹...



...Have a More Extreme Impact on Historically Underrepresented Students



In many cases, the gap between aspiration and outcomes for historically underrepresented students can be attributed to a lack of confidence or a lack of academic self-efficacy. The data above highlights the stress that all students feel on the path to college. However, that stress has a more significant impact on the confidence of black and Hispanic students.

1) n=1,512.

2) Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief (conviction) that he or she can successfully achieve at a designated level on a task or a specific goal, i.e., confidence.

Sources: "The State of Our Nation's Youth 2016–2017," Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, 2016, www.horatioalger.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/HA-2016-SONY-FINAL.pdf; Goyer et al., "Self-affirmation facilitates minority middle schoolers' progress along college trajectories," 2017, www.pnas.org/content/114/29/7594.full; EAB interviews and analysis.

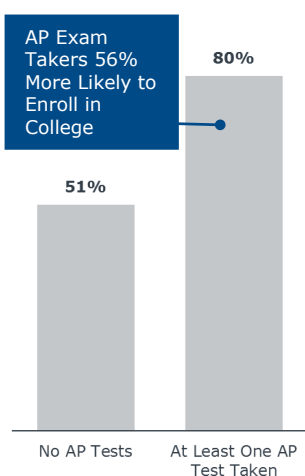
Exposure to AP Courses Predicts Enrollment

Study Skills and Comfort with Rigor Appear More Important Than Score

Participation in AP, IB, and dual enrollment courses while still in high school is shown to positively impact college enrollment. EAB helped a large urban school district analyze the relationship between their AP course participation and college enrollment. Students who completed at least one AP Exam had a 56% higher likelihood of enrolling in college than those who did not.

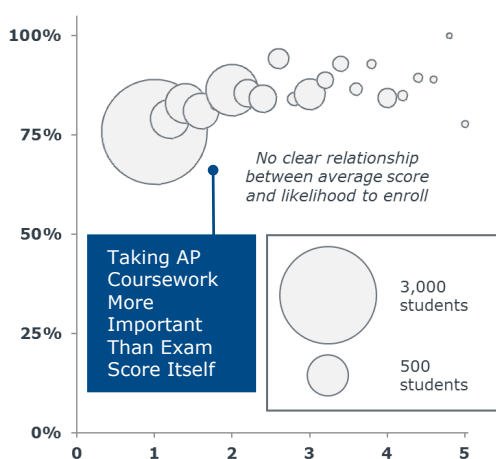
Likelihood to Enroll in College

N = 18,599 HS Graduates



Enrollment Rate by Average AP Score

Average of All AP Tests Taken, N = 5,043 Students



AP Course Benefits Extend Beyond the Academic

50%+ of surveyed AP Exam takers "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that **AP courses positively increased desire to attend college**

8 in 11 first-year students felt confident in their ability to complete that term's course work **due to prior AP, IB, or dual enrollment course work**

These trends hold true regardless of the AP Exam score earned and students' overall GPA, which demonstrates how mere exposure to college-level work can positively affect college-going behavior.

Sources: "Freshmen Enrollment Focus Groups: Executive Summary for Group 6," Western Washington University, February 2008; Cooney, S. et. al., "An Investigation of College Students' Perceptions of Advanced Placement Courses," The College Board, 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

Equal Ability Does Not Mean Equal Access

Even Academically Capable Underrepresented Students Not on College Path

Unfortunately, underrepresented students are left out of advanced courses at an alarming rate. Two-thirds to nearly three-quarters of black and Hispanic students whose scores on the PSAT suggest they have the ability to be successful in AP science or math are still not enrolled. Researchers estimate that there would be more than half a million additional low-income students and students of color in advanced courses if they participated in AP and IB programs at rates equivalent to their peers.

Administrators Overlook Students with Demonstrated Potential

% of Students with PSAT Score Suggesting Success in **AP Math** Who Were Left Out of Program



% of Students with PSAT Score Suggesting Success in **AP Science** Who Were Left Out of Program



Missing from Advanced Courses...

"More than **half a million** low-income students and students of color¹ are "missing" from AP and IB participation — students who would benefit from these advanced opportunities if they participated at the same rate as other students."

Finding America's Missing AP and IB Students,
The Education Trust and Equal Opportunity Schools,
2013

...and from College Exams

"For every **100** poor students² taking a college entrance exam and scoring at a college-ready level, there are nearly **50** poor students who would score college-ready, but do not take the exam."

"ACT for All: The Effect of Mandatory College Entrance Exams on Postsecondary Attainment and Choice,"
Education Finance and Policy, 2017

Even underrepresented students with demonstrated academic ability are frequently left out of the college-going process. They tend not to follow a course sequence that would prepare them for a college environment, they often miss out on college entrance exams, and consequently, they do not enroll in college.

1) Refers to black, Hispanic, and Native American students.

2) Refers to students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch.

Sources: Hyman J, "ACT for All: The Effect of Mandatory College Entrance Exams on Postsecondary Attainment and Choice," *Education Finance and Policy*, June 2017; "Finding America's Missing AP and IB Students," The Education Trust, June 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

Is It Possible to Increase Both Access and Quality?

A Host of Common Objections Reinforces the Status Quo

Overcoming apprehension about increasing access to college-level courses as well as skepticism over whether underrepresented students are really up for the challenge can both be major barriers to advancing equity goals.

Common Concerns: Impact on Those Already in Advanced Course Work

“Our average course grades and test scores might drop if we remove prerequisites.”

“Students who enroll without completing our prerequisites will disengage when faced with the challenges of the course work.”

“How am I supposed to teach so many more students?”



Teachers/Administrators

“If the prerequisites go away, does that make the course easier? What’s the difference between regular and advanced?”

“If more students are in the advanced classes with my child, won’t that disrupt or hurt my kid’s ability to succeed?”



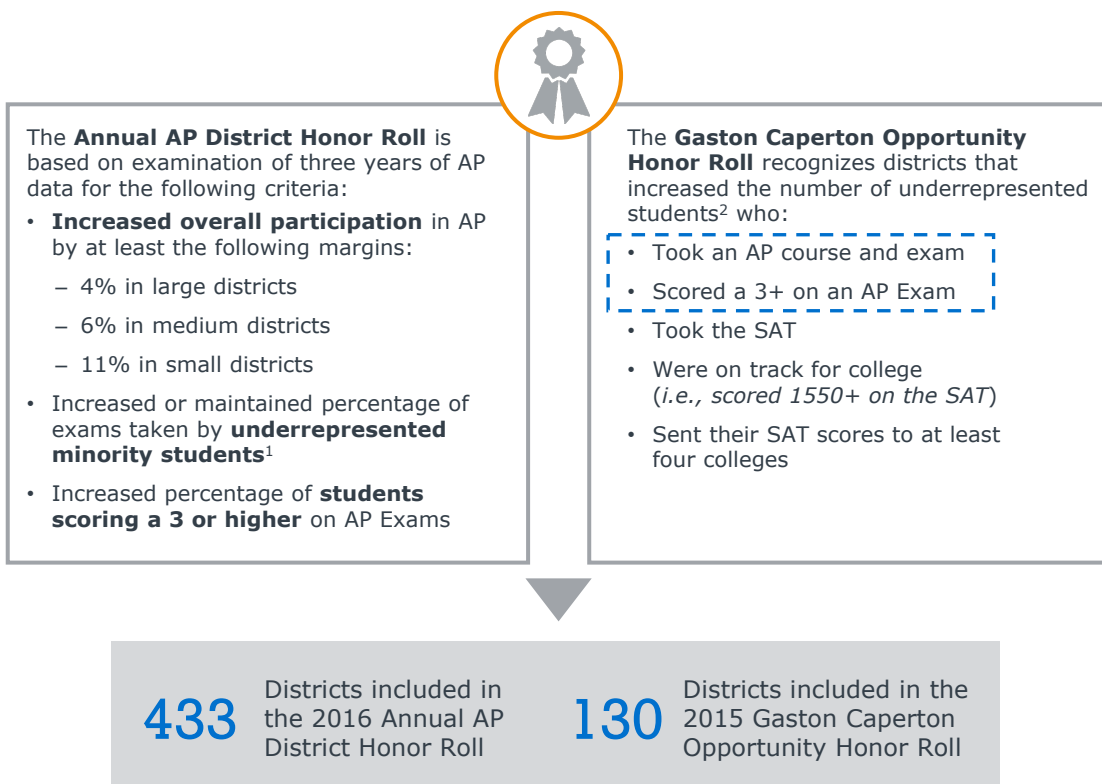
Parents

Teachers often worry that grades and test scores will decline or that they are not prepared to teach larger classes. Parents are concerned that increasing access to advanced courses will sacrifice rigor and disrupt the students already enrolled. This resistance results in implicit and explicit barriers to AP course participation for many capable low-income and minority students.

District Examples Show Dual Goal Is Achievable

Over 500 Districts Recognized for Improving AP Course Access and Success

This trade-off between access and quality is a false dichotomy. From 2015 to 2016 alone, more than 500 school districts nationwide received recognition from the College Board for increasing access to and equity in AP courses while maintaining or improving AP Exam performance.



This chapter begins by looking closely at how many successful districts have increased AP course access while maintaining student success. Profiled practices then highlight how innovative institutions have built upon those foundations to institutionalize equity goals and support students and teachers in a changed classroom.

1) Black, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students.

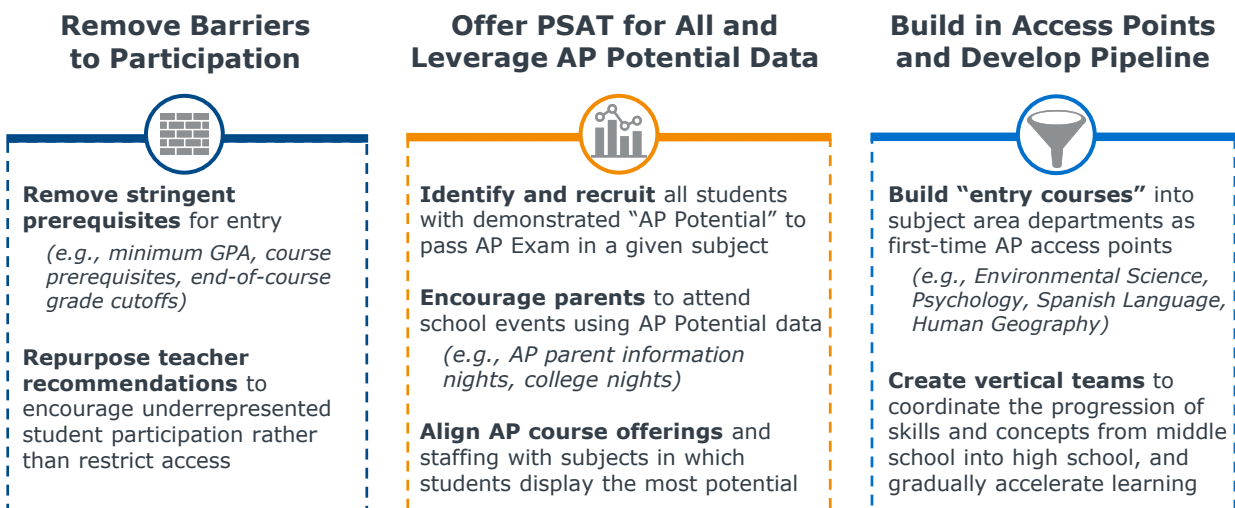
2) Black, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, and low-income and first-generation students of all races/ethnicities.

Sources: The College Board, 2016, "7th Annual AP District Honor Roll," secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-district-honor-roll-7th-annual.pdf; The College Board, 2015, "Gaston Caperton Opportunity Honor Roll," lp.collegeboard.org/gaston-caperton-opportunity-honor-roll; EAB interviews and analysis.

How Should Districts Begin Expanding Access?

Common Initiatives for Broadening Access to Advanced Courses

Removing institutional barriers to AP courses, such as strict prerequisite grades and teacher recommendations, is the most widespread strategy districts use to encourage broader AP participation. Many districts also leverage AP Potential, a free tool from the College Board that assesses students' likelihood of success in specific AP courses based on PSAT data.



Organization in Brief: Equal Opportunity Schools (EOS)

- Collaborates with school districts to increase equitable enrollment¹ in AP and IB classes while maintaining or increasing the success of these programs
- Selects partner schools and districts from a competitive pool of applicants²
- Gathers context, examines data from students and staff, and creates a set of strategies for engagement and advocacy over multiple years to enroll diverse students in AP and IB classes

As districts expand AP course access to traditionally underrepresented students, many then focus on vertically aligning curricula to strengthen the student pipeline. The strategies outlined on the right tend to be harder to execute as they require coordination across teams and schools. For example, one district created staircase course sequences starting in 6th grade, incorporating regular, honors, and college-level courses into a tight tier system designed to gradually scaffold content to prepare all students for increasing rigor. Finally, many districts around the country have partnered with Equal Opportunity Schools, an organization dedicated to increasing equitable enrollment in college-level course work.

1) Focuses on enrollment of low-income students and students of color (black, Hispanic, and Native American students).

2) To date, EOS has worked with more than 450 schools.

Advanced Courses for Some

Qualified Students Not Placed Despite Commitments to Equitable Access

Far too commonly, overly restrictive course placement policies base scheduling decisions on a single data point such as GPA, a state standardized test, or an end-of-course grade, with a strict cutoff to qualify. Students are typically only encouraged to try more rigorous courses if they are recognized by a teacher or have a parent who feels comfortable navigating the school system to advocate on their behalf. Ultimately, restrictive academic criteria are reinforced by implicit adult biases, limiting advanced-course access.

Common Reasons for Restricted Access to Advanced Course Work



Limited Data Points

Counselors consider only one or two data points to identify qualified students



Too Much Discretion

Teachers and counselors often make placement decisions based on personal opinion



Inconsistent Follow-Through

No accountability to ensure all qualified students get placed in the right classes



"We randomly encourage kids depending on whether they have a relationship with a teacher or their parent knew some other parent whose kid was in AP. We can't do that anymore. There has to be a highly identified system where every kid who has potential to do this gets contacted, is encouraged, is supported. **It shouldn't be by chance that they even get asked in the first place.**"

*Former Superintendent,
Mid-sized urban district*

Orange County Public Schools Removed Many Barriers to Advanced Courses...



Analyzed AP participation data



Removed stringent prerequisites



Increased communication with parents and the community



...But Capable Students Were Still Missing the Opportunity to Enroll



4,100+

Qualified students still missing from college-level courses

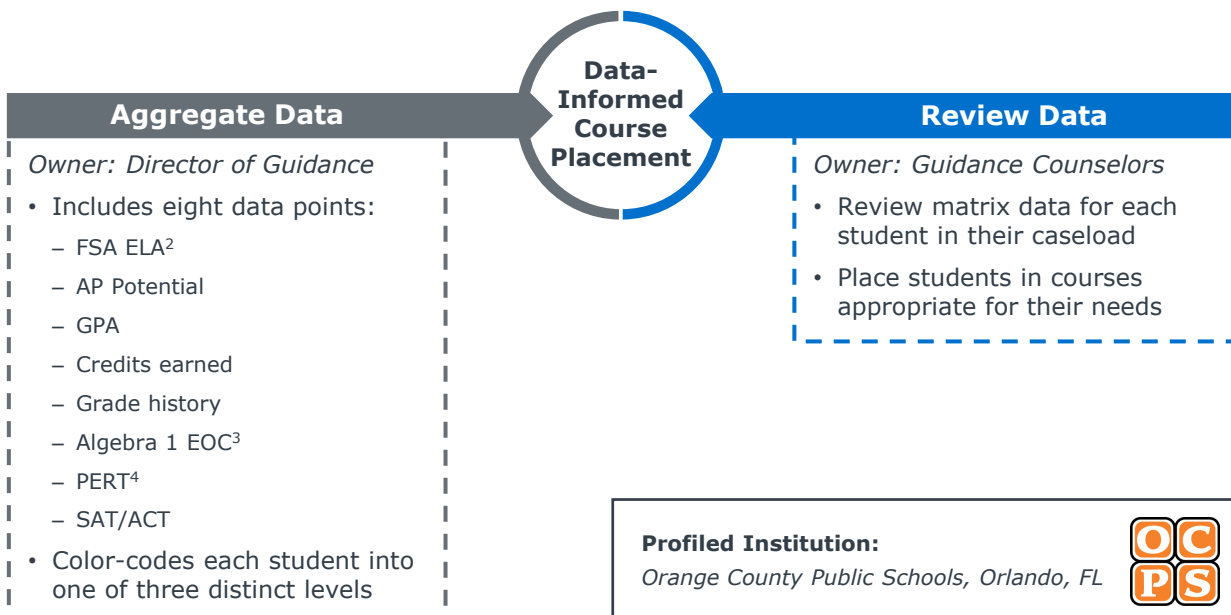
One large urban district, **Orange County Public Schools**, began to analyze their AP participation data and realized that the demographics of those courses did not adequately reflect the diversity of their student body. Administrators put efforts in place to remove traditional prerequisites to AP courses and educate parents on the opportunities available. Although counselors tried to be compliant in expanding access by using some AP Potential and student assessment data, administrators still found that a significant number of capable students were not identified and placed appropriately.

Leveraging Data to Improve Course Placement

Matrix Equips Staff with Objective Data to Inform Course Placement

Orange County Public Schools developed a data-driven way to expand advanced-course access and ensure ongoing commitment to the district's equity goals. The Advanced-Course Placement Matrix combines eight student academic data elements into one report to provide counselors with a framework for course placement. Supporting counselors' use of data helped them consistently identify and encourage students to take courses in which they would be both challenged and successful.

OCPS¹ Data-Driven Approach Allows Counselors to Make More Informed Decisions



Data for the matrix is pulled once per year by the director of guidance from the student information system. With almost 200,000 total students in the district and 20 total high schools, administrators invested in time for counselors to review data for each student in their caseload and make course placements during the summer. Administrators also enacted a policy preventing principals from using counselors for test proctoring to maximize the time counselors have to meet with students who need more encouragement and support.

1) Orange County Public Schools, FL.
 2) Florida Standards Assessment English Language Arts.
 3) End of Course Assessment.
 4) Postsecondary Education Readiness Test.

Advanced-Course Placement Matrix Snapshot

Color-Coded System Simplifies Complex Data Analysis and Decision-Making

Each data element in the matrix receives a score from 0 to 10 points (e.g., an unweighted GPA greater than 3.0 receives 10 points, 2.0 to 2.9 receives 8 points, and less than 2.0 receives 0 points). Student data is entered into the matrix, and the “maximum potential score” generated represents the total possible points that a student could earn based on his or her available data. Students also receive a “student score” indicating the actual amount of points awarded.

Key Features of the Data Matrix

Student Grade	Student Outcome	Student Score	Max Potential	Min For Yellow	Min For Green	EA ELA Test	AP Potential	AP Potential Average	AP Potential Index	GPA	Credits	Grade History	Algebra EOC	PERT	SAT Math	SAT EBRW	ACT Math	ACT Reading	ACT English
11	70	90	52	68	10	4	8	10	10	10	10	8	10						
10	64	80	52	68	10	4	10	8	10	10	10	4	8						
10	54	80	52	68	4	4	4	8	10	10	4	10							
9	56	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	4	10	10	10	8								
12	32	50	39	51	4			0		4	8				8	8			
10	54	80	52	68	10	4	4	8	10	10	10	4	10		8	10			
12	40	70	45.5	59.5	4			0		4	4	4	10	8		10			
11	62	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	8	10	10	10	10								
11	12	40	26	34	4			0		4	4								
10	64	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	10	10	10	10	10								
9	46	50	32.5	42.5	8			10	10	10	8								
9	38	50	32.5	42.5		4	4	10	10	10	10								
11	34	60	39	51	8			0	10	4	4	4	8						
9	48	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	4	8	10	10	4	8							
11	68	80	52	68	10	4	8	10	10	8	8	10							
10	60	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	8	10	10	8	10								
9	18	40	26	34	4			0	10	4									
12	58	70	45.5	59.5	10			10		4	8					8	10	8	
10	66	70	45.5	59.5	10	8	10	10	10	10	10								
11	70	90	58.5	76.5	10	4	8	8	10	4			10	8	8				
9	40	50	32.5	42.5	10			10	10	10	8								
11	44	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	8	0	10	4	8								
11	54	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	8	10	10	4	8								
10	30	50	32.5	42.5	8			0	10	4	8								
11	46	70	45.5	59.5	8	4	4	8	10	4	8								
10	38	60	39	51	10			0	10	4	4	10							
11	58	60	39	51	10			10	10	10	8	10							
10	52	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	4	8	10	8	8								
12	56	60	39	51	10			8		10	10				10	10			
11	50	70	45.5	59.5	10	4	10	8	4	4	10								
11	54	80	52	68	4	4	4	8	10	10	4	10							

Eight Unique Data Elements

- Each data element assigned a score from 0 to 10 points

Scoring

- **Student Score:** actual points awarded to each student
- **Maximum Potential Score:** total points a student can earn based on available data

Color Categorization

Calculated based on Student Score as a percentage of Maximum Potential Score:

- Green: 85% or above
- Yellow: 65–84%
- Red: 64% or below

Data Availability

If no data is available for an element, no points are awarded and the student is not penalized. The student must have at least 2 data points to be assessed.

Full list of placement criteria and weighting available in Appendix, pg. 116.



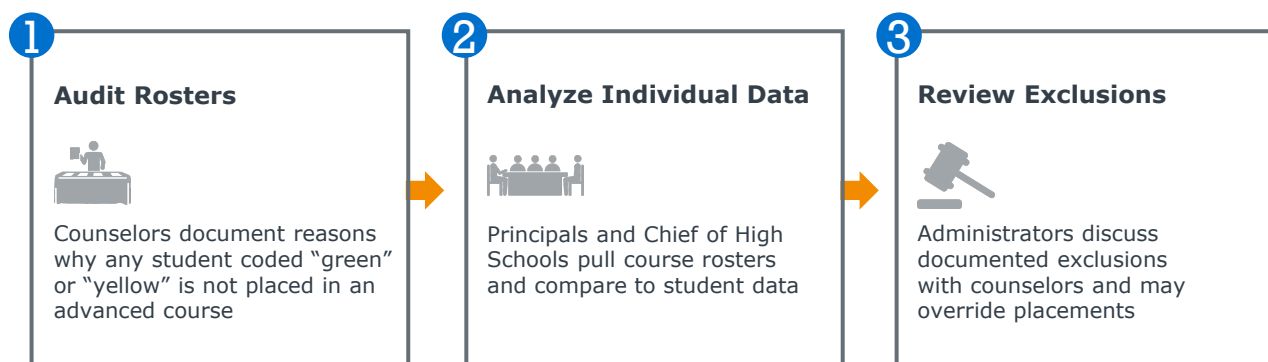
The color categorization (i.e., green, yellow, or red) is relative to each student, calculating his or her “student score” as a percentage of his or her “maximum potential score.” Students identified in the green and yellow ranges are automatically recommended for placement in an appropriate college-level course, including AP, dual enrollment, AICE¹, and IB. If these courses are deemed inappropriate, the student is placed in an honors-level course and the counselor is required to submit an explanation for the change, which can then be subject to an additional review.

Access Is About More Than Just Course Placement

Accountability Mechanism Institutionalizes Desired Outcomes

Despite a district-wide policy that any student coded green or yellow should be automatically placed in appropriate college-level course work, scheduling is still a function of counselors based on their conversations with students. Since the student information system cannot ensure auto-enrollment in a specific course based on student data, creating the data matrix enables administrators to monitor counselors and facilitate professional development that supports district equity goals.

OCPS Administrators Review Course Rosters To Confirm Matrix Implementation



"We believe every capable child belongs in advanced courses. If you're in red and you have high test scores and a low GPA, it doesn't mean you are going into AP immediately. It means you're going into an honors course first, and the following year you're going to be in an AP class."

"Our counselors are trained to have conversations with students and parents. Counselors document the discussion as a measure of accountability. **Saying that a capable student is not in the course because he/she didn't want the course is not an excuse. The accountability allows us to have honest conversations.**"

Jesus Jara, Deputy Superintendent, Orange County Public Schools, FL

The chief of high schools reviews course placements to follow up with principals and counselors about students with demonstrated ability who were not placed in any advanced classes. Underrepresented students often require multiple meetings to overcome one of the most common reasons a mismatch occurs: reluctance from the students themselves. These meetings ideally include an adult who has a trusted relationship with the student and who can convince the student that he or she is capable of success in a college-level course. By understanding the documented reason a student was not enrolled, central administrators can assist with student or parent opposition. Administrators monitor student data again before the end of the first marking period, when students tend to drop AP courses, to evaluate if there are adequate school-level supports in place for struggling students.

Uncovering Hidden Potential

District Sees Major Increase in Advanced-Course Participation and Success

The improved use of data and follow-up support for counselors has allowed Orange County Public Schools to identify and place over 3,000 additional qualified students in appropriate advanced courses. Notably, 85% of the students newly enrolled in advanced courses did not drop down to a lower level and went on to successfully complete the course.

Improved Processes Reduce Missing Students

3,000+ Additional qualified students identified and placed in advanced courses from one year to the next



"We continue to remind schools that we act in the capacity of *in loco parentis* because we don't want 15- and 16-year-olds to make decisions that will negatively impact rest of their lives.

"We talk with each student to let them know 'we believe in you, we are behind you, and we are here to help you because you can do this.'

These conversations motivate them to believe in themselves."

Jesus Jara, Deputy Superintendent
ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FL

+78.9%

AP class participation among black students (2011-12 to 2016-17)

+63.7%

AP class participation among Hispanic students (2011-12 to 2016-17)

+38.5%

AP Exam participation (2011-12 to 2016-17)

+26.5%

AP scores of 3+ (2011-12 to 2016-17)

The data-driven placement efforts have contributed to drastic increases in AP access for black and Hispanic students, along with overall increases in AP Exam participation across the district. More important, Orange County Public Schools has simultaneously experienced a nearly 27% increase in the pass rate on AP Exams.

Expanding Access Not Without Challenges

Rigorous Courses Place New Demands on Underrepresented Students

Expanding access to advanced courses means many low-income and minority students will be taking on the rigor of college-level work for the first time. As those students are confronted with a faster pace of instruction and more advanced content, they face a number of barriers to success compared to students who have historically been enrolled in advanced classes.

Success Not Guaranteed, and Underrepresented Students Are Often the Most Underprepared

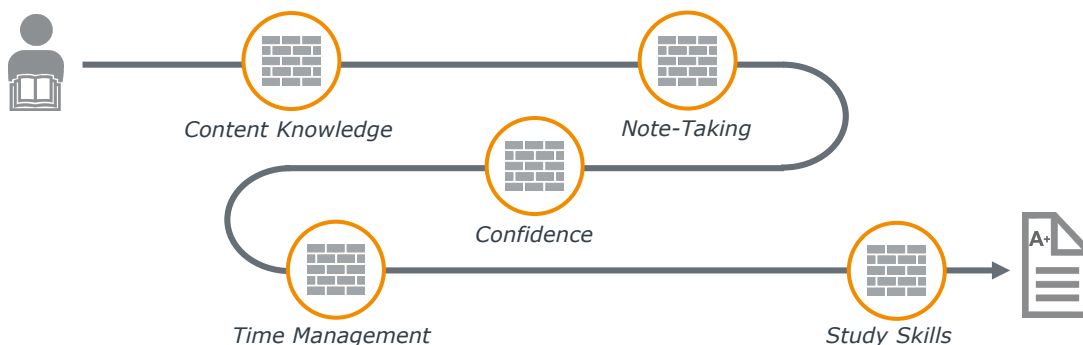
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“Lots of these new test takers are from socioeconomic backgrounds where college is far from a given—the **level of preparation entering the AP classes is not the same as their colleagues** who have always been on what we might call an advanced placement track.”

Jeff Livingston, Senior Vice President
McGraw-Hill Education

”

Multiple Roadblocks for Students Experiencing College-Level Classes for the First Time



Underrepresented students may quickly fall behind if they do not have a solid foundation of basic content knowledge, and they may not have the academic skills needed to successfully complete assignments and study for exams. Once enrolled, low-income and minority students often face lower levels of parental support at home for help with assignments, as well as fewer resources to invest in private tutoring—both common support systems that wealthier students often take for granted.

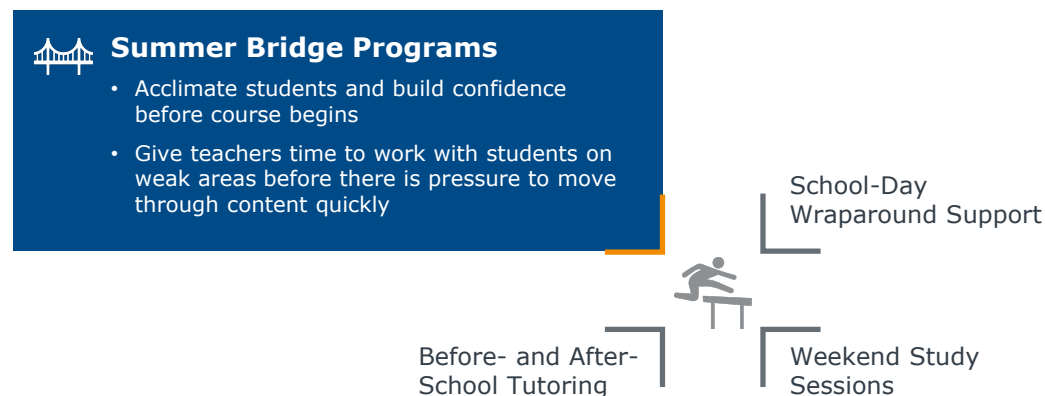
Sources: Fox Business, 2012, “Why 50% of Students Fail AP Exams and How to Change That,” www.foxbusiness.com/features/2012/04/25/why-50-students-fail-ap-exams-and-how-to-change-that.html; EAB interviews and analysis.

Preventing Roadblocks Before They Arise

Investing During the Summer Reaches At-Risk Students Before They Falter

Districts invest in a variety of different methods to support students taking advanced courses, often making several different options available throughout the school year. School-day wraparound support builds an enrichment period into students' schedules or offers a voluntary study hall that students can go to for assistance. Before- and after-school tutoring provides extra individual time with teachers as needed. Weekend study sessions typically provide review and practice leading up to the AP Exam.

Summer Bridge a Way to Identify and Address Issues Early



Providing the Foundations in a Relaxed Environment

“The goal was to provide our students with an **opportunity to get ahead and develop the confidence to handle the rigors of an AP course.** One of the best ways we thought to do this was **in a nonthreatening environment** where they are not being graded. It’s really an enrichment opportunity to explore the content, the teaching style of the teacher who will be leading the course, and to really build confidence.”

Craig Parkinson, Principal, Phoenixville High School, PA

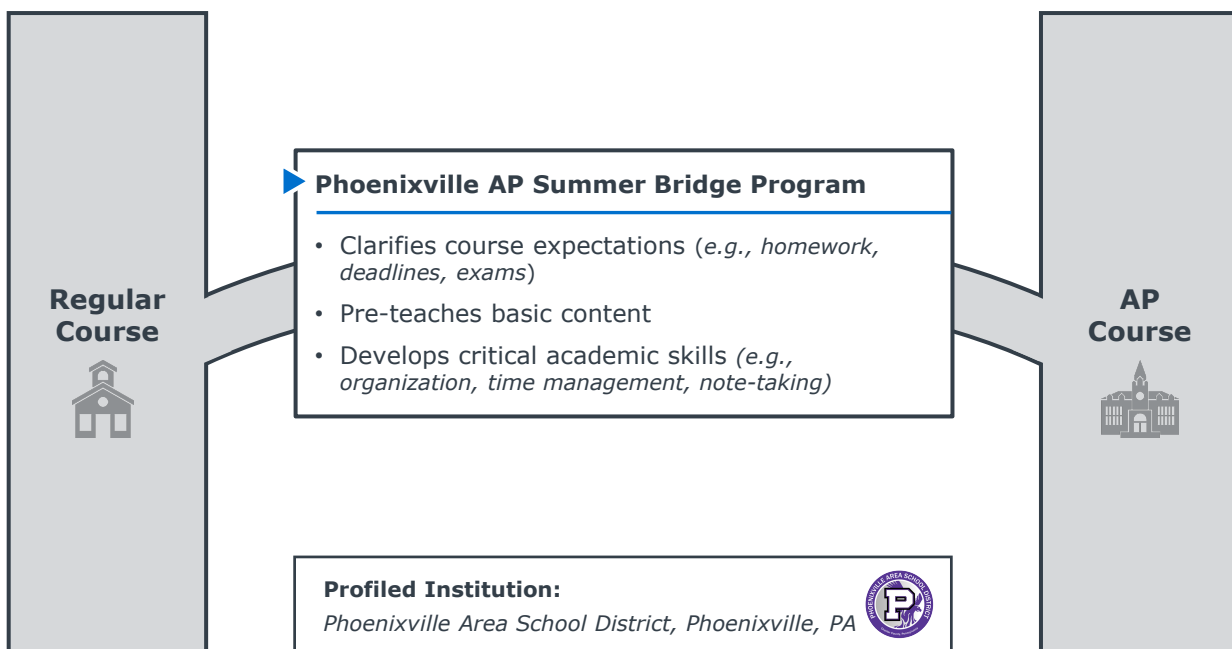
All of these programs are important and effective supports that can be extended to students across the entire duration of an advanced course. However, they also require students to balance extra help with other obligations during the school year. Summer bridge programs offer the unique ability to reach students before the pressure and pace of the AP course begin. A summer program gives students a head start in a more comfortable environment, before students are being graded and can fall behind.

Preparing Students for the Challenge Ahead

Summer Programming Equips Students with the Tools to Thrive

To bridge the gap between what is required in a regular class and in an AP class, **Phoenixville Area School District** created AP summer bridge classes that expose students to the key elements of a real AP class, with only a small portion of the content. The courses serve as a bridge between what students are familiar with and what is expected of them in the new setting.

AP Summer Bridge Alleviates Student Apprehension and Develops Baseline Skills







Demystifying course expectations reduces student apprehension and increases confidence. Teachers are able to assess gaps in foundational knowledge and review content without the pressure of moving through the material quickly. Most important, students learn and practice critical academic skills such as note-taking, time management, and good study habits, which so frequently make the difference between success and failure in a course.

Designing a Program for Underrepresented Students

Easy Access, Targeted Recruiting Key to Reaching Students Most in Need

While this program would be useful to most students and is open to anyone, it is intentionally designed to support those students who are likely to need it most. Student recruitment is aggressively geared toward enrolling at-risk students, facilitated by phone calls or home visits with parents as needed. Further, sessions are provided at multiple times during the summer to ensure that students can attend amid other obligations.

Summer Bridge Program Implementation

PROGRAM LOGISTICS		STUDENT RECRUITMENT	ONLINE PORTAL
			
Multiple Sessions Available	Relevant Content	Targeted Personalized Recruitment	Maximized Access
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2-week sessions held throughout the summer<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Monday through Thursday– 2 hours/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Content specific to each AP class• Taught by teacher who teaches the class during the year• Average of 4–5 different AP bridge classes per summer• Require a minimum of 8–10 students to offer a bridge for a particular course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advertise sign-up aggressively during course scheduling with counselors• Calls or home visits with parents made as needed to get most at-risk students to attend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers some recorded videos and all supporting content covered during the Summer Bridge• Provides alternative for students who cannot attend due to personal or family obligations

Teaching specific subject matter allows students to better understand what the class will cover and to get ahead, and recruiting the regular course teacher to teach the summer bridge allows students to build rapport with their instructor. Teachers also gain a better understanding of students’ specific needs and can more effectively tailor course content and instructional methods accordingly during the school year. Finally, the most impressive component of the Phoenixville Summer Bridge Program is that it offers students the option of accessing all of the content virtually. Administrators we spoke to stressed that the online component particularly supports AP access for underrepresented students, who are more likely to face logistical barriers to attending summer programming in person.

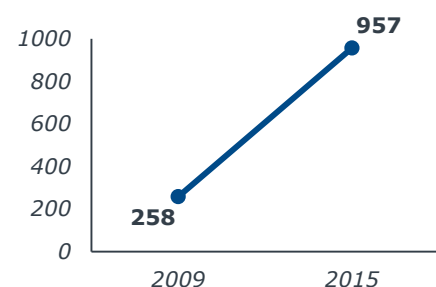
Summer Support Leads to Student Success

AP Summer Bridge Participants Pass AP Exams at Higher Rates Than Peers

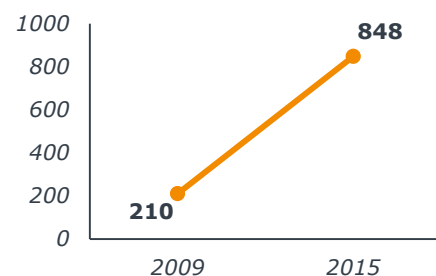
As is common in districts undertaking similar initiatives, administrators at Phoenixville Area School District have implemented multiple strategies aimed at increasing access to and success in AP courses. The data to the left outlines Phoenixville Area High School's overall success in increasing AP enrollments and administered exams, and the Summer Bridge Program has been an instrumental part of their overall strategy.

AP Expansion in Phoenixville High School, 2009–2015

Enrolled AP Seats¹



AP Exams Administered



Impact of Summer Bridge Program on AP Exam Pass Rates

80%

Of students who enroll in AP Human Geography typically attend the Summer Bridge

+4.5%

AP Exam pass rate² for Bridge participants versus nonparticipants

Supporting Student Success

"Kids are kids, and if you build them up with confidence **and you provide the necessary supports, you are going to see a high success rate**—and that's really what we've done here."

Craig Parkinson, Principal, Phoenixville High School, PA

The data on the right highlights the measurable success of the summer bridge model itself. The vast majority of students taking AP Human Geography, a common entry point into the AP program, take the summer bridge as well. Subsequently, AP Bridge participants score a 3 or better on the AP Exam at a rate of about 5% higher than those who do not participate. Given that attendees are new to AP, and often at-risk students, these outcomes underscore the value of the summer bridge model.

1) 1,101 total students in Phoenixville Area High School.

2) 2016 data, pass rate refers to students scoring a 3 or higher on the AP Exam.

Increased Access Changes Classroom Composition

Larger, More Diverse Classes Create New Instructional Challenges

Ensuring students new to AP courses have the tools to succeed is vital, but teacher opposition can be one of the major barriers to successfully increasing access. Expanding AP enrollment can be a political battle, as AP teachers are sometimes the hardest to convince of the importance of the undertaking. Some teachers worry pass rates will plummet as more students enroll, while others are wary of “stealing” students from colleagues by promoting their class at the expense of other options.

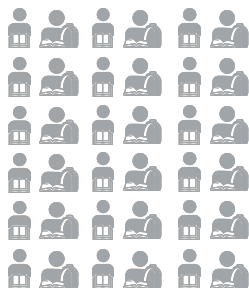
Expanded Access to Advanced Courses Alters Student Composition

“Traditional” AP Classroom



- Higher average GPA
- Students with strong college identity
- Students familiar with class expectations and rigor

Expanded AP Classroom



- Lower average GPA
- Students unsure about value of class and college plans
- Students unclear of course expectations and difficulty

Teachers Need to Adapt Teaching Methods to Accommodate Diversity



Challenges for Advanced Course Teachers

- Diverse student body requires new, differentiated teaching methods
- More students in need of support in and outside of class
- Less available time per student

It is important to recognize teachers’ concerns: increasing access does create a more diverse classroom, which brings about significant instructional challenges. Baseline knowledge and skills can vary more widely. Students may have varying levels of college-going identity, leading to different levels of confidence in the value of AP courses and students’ own ability to complete them successfully. A new classroom requires teachers to devote more individualized time and instruction to each student, while potentially having less time to do so.

Popular Training Programs an Incomplete Answer

Typical Approach Expensive and Rigid

Many districts turn to a variety of external training programs to support AP teachers with expanded access. Training programs such as the summer institutes offered through the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) or the College Board are an invaluable resource in ensuring teachers develop strong AP content knowledge and instructional techniques. Some of the most commonly cited AP teacher development programs and resources are highlighted below.

Districts Looking to Outside Partners for Solutions...



...But Popular Choices Not Sufficient for Success

Common Issues with Widely Used Training Programs



Expensive to Scale

Districts unable to continuously send teachers to training without incurring massive costs



Standardized

Teaching methods and advice not tailored to district, school, and classes' specific needs



Rigid

Outside programs usually not flexible enough to accommodate schedule changes and shifting priorities

Despite their potential, these external professional development programs do suffer some limitations. While some districts leverage federal grants or other supplementary funding sources, sending all AP teachers every year or several times a year for AP training is expensive. Even more important, however, is the standardized and rigid nature of these programs. External providers may try to tailor content to a district's specific context, but ultimately, a district's own teachers can potentially provide the best district-, school-, and even student-specific advice.

1) National Math and Science Initiative.

Leveraging Internal Exemplars

Teachers Who Excel with Diverse Classes Tapped to Train Colleagues

In 2011, in **Orange County Public Schools**, a group of AP Biology teachers across the district decided to create an informal forum for exchanging ideas on how best to teach their subject. Six years later, the district now actively and formally supports this training model grounded in the school community to yield maximum results for teachers and students.

District Finds Success Stories Amongst Its Best Teachers

Data-Driven Selection of High-Performing Teachers



Administrators analyze own AP data to identify and support high-performing teachers to lead district-wide AP training



Focusing on Diversity

Teacher choice based on demonstrated improvement with diverse populations



Providing Subject Expertise

Teacher leaders chosen in each AP field to ensure relevance



Supporting Successful Examples

Teacher leaders given additional training to best facilitate discussion with colleagues



Teacher-Led AP Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)



Full-day, subject-specific AP instruction training offered three times a year

Teacher leaders facilitate peer discussions on:

- Creating common assessments
- Differentiating lessons
- Adapting classroom strategies
- Using assessment data to identify individual needs and formulate plans
- Sharing resources to ensure rigorous curriculum

Profiled Institution:

Orange County Public Schools, Orlando, FL



When creating the professional development groups, administrators analyze data to identify which teachers in the district have demonstrated not simply the highest AP Exam grades and scores, but the biggest improvement in outcomes with disadvantaged populations. This approach reaffirms the district’s commitment to expanding opportunities for underrepresented students. Teachers are then given additional training and materials to ensure that they are well supported in teaching their colleagues. Meetings occur three times per calendar year and focus primarily on creating an inclusive classroom environment and differentiating instruction.

1) Orange County Public Schools, FL.

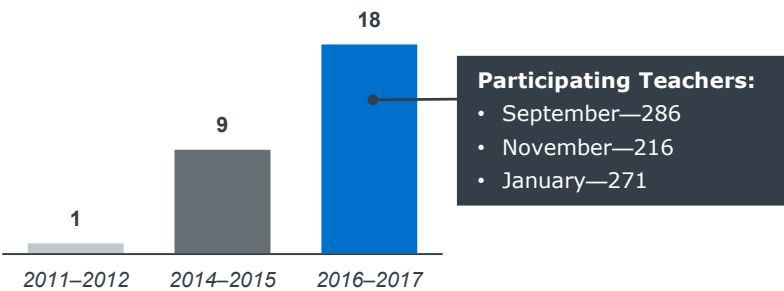
Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Model Grows as Teachers Recognize Value

AP Professional Learning Communities Now Common Practice Across District

This practice grew organically from one AP subject and a small group of teachers in 2011 to 18 different subjects and upwards of 200 teachers at present for each of the three annual sessions. With district support, what started as a small, informal exchange of ideas has grown into a formalized, strong partnership between teachers and administrators in which teachers are empowered and supported to execute district-wide equity goals.

Increase in Number of AP PLCs over the Years



Teachers Eager to Learn from Peers

“Our teachers are eager to work with their colleagues to master their skills. They are extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with local content experts from the district. Teachers are grateful that the principal and district are investing in their practice to improve student outcomes...**there is a high level of excitement for student success.**”

*Jesus Jara, Deputy Superintendent,
Orange County Public Schools, FL*

PLCs Feed into Wider District Success

2011–2012 to 2016–2017

+78.9%

AP class participation among black students

+63.7%

AP class participation among Hispanic students

+38.5%

AP Exam participation

+26.5%

AP scores of 3+

The data presented on the right repeats the results highlighted along with the Advanced-Course Placement Matrix profiled earlier in this chapter. Orange County Public Schools administrators emphasized that such impressive outcomes are not attributable to any single intervention but that the professional learning communities were, and continue to be, an important piece of the strategy that has led to the district’s overall success.



Ensure College Choice Focuses on Likelihood of Success

CHAPTER

3

Practice 8: Background-Conscious College Matching Tools

Practice 9: Success-Focused College Counseling

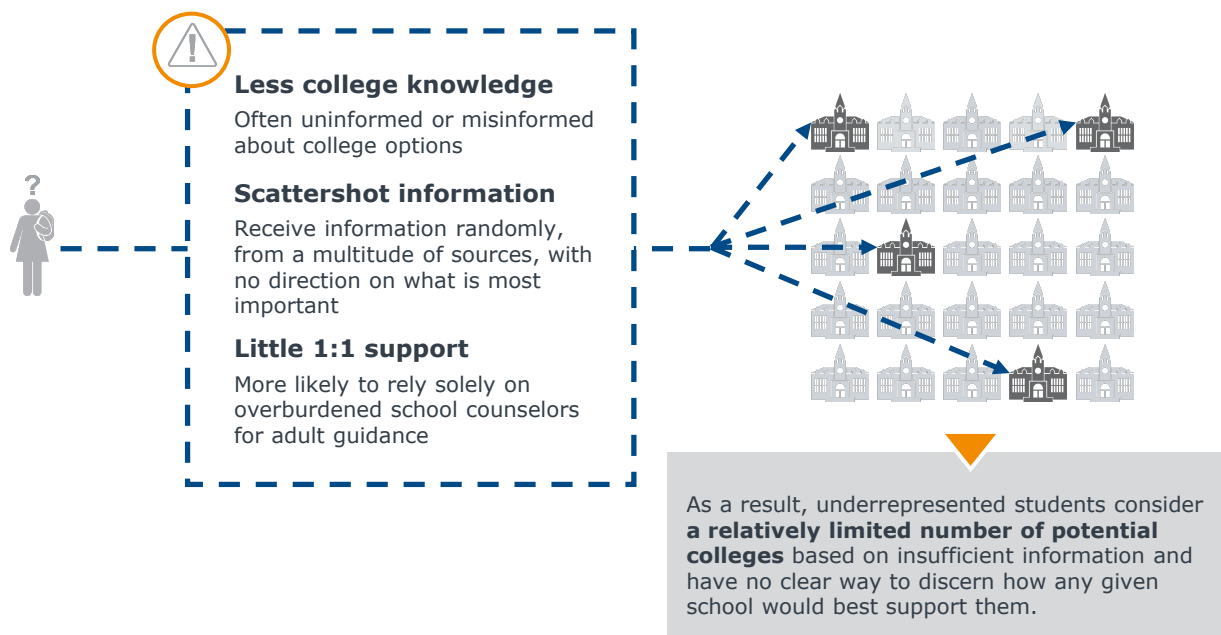
Practice 10: College Transition Partnerships

College Choice Constrained by Student Background

Lower Social Capital Limits Underrepresented Students' College Selection

Choosing a college requires students to narrow down thousands of potential options based on a multitude of criteria. Lower social capital and a lack of adequate college information lead many low-income and minority students to form a list of potential colleges based primarily on those that family members and peers have attended or talked about.

Low-Income and Minority Students Often Face Unique Barriers When Approaching College Selection



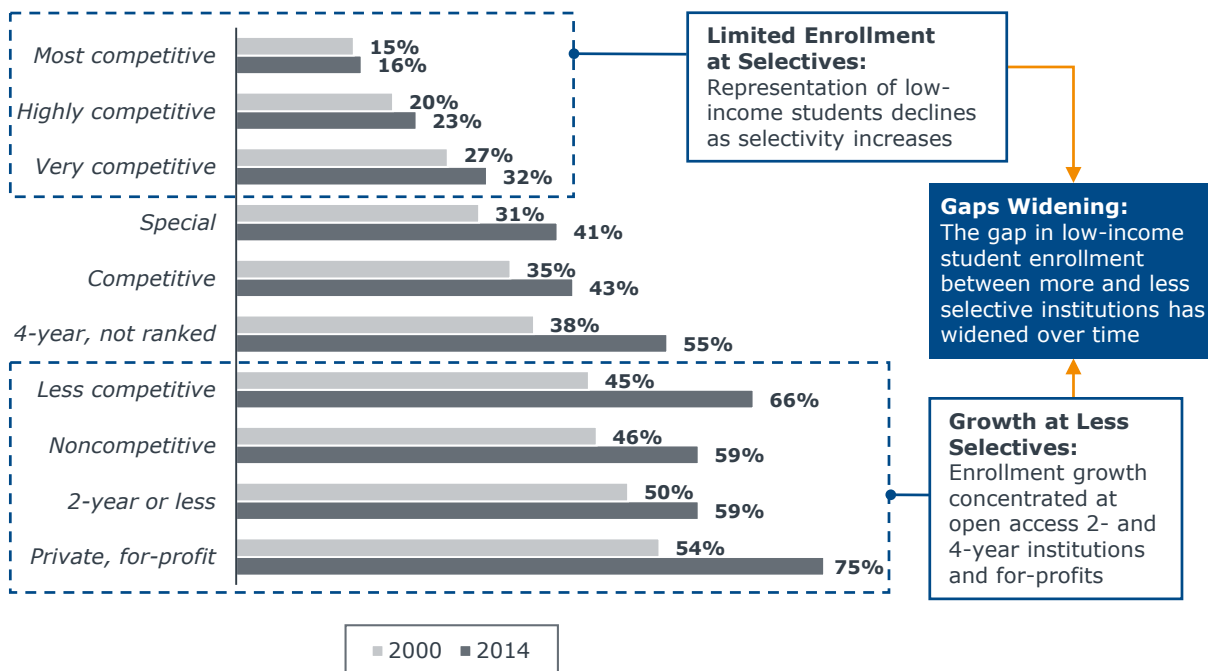
Additionally, school counselors tasked with providing college advice often have very large caseloads among a number of other duties. To aid them, some schools leverage technology solutions to guide students through college exploration. However, self-exploration through these tools tends to primarily support the needs of more affluent students who are likely obtaining additional guidance and support from college-educated parents at home. Thus, underrepresented students often default to the local community college or another nearby institution. At best, these tools may help them gain a better understanding of their general admissibility into a few institutions, but they rarely gain a real understanding of which factors and institutions to prioritize to increase their likelihood of success.

A Widening College Quality Gap

There has been a large increase in college attendance nationwide in the last 10 to 15 years. For low-income students, however, that increase in enrollment has not been evenly distributed across the higher education sector. In that time frame, the share of low-income students enrolled in highly selective institutions has not increased by a substantial margin, a trend that has received significant media attention in recent years.

Most Low-Income Student Enrollment Growth Seen at Least Selective Institutions

Share of Pell and Federal Grant Recipients by Institutional Selectivity, 2000–2014¹



At the same time, the share of low-income students enrolled in less selective and open-access institutions has increased dramatically, especially at for-profit institutions. Over time this has led to a widening gap in low-income student enrollment rates between more selective and less selective institutions.

1) Of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students.

Sources: "Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the US," The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.

For-Profits Capturing Enrollment Growth

Underrepresented Students Disproportionately Attend For-Profit Institutions

From the student perspective, navigating the world of postsecondary options has become only more difficult as the number of postsecondary options has increased dramatically over that same time period. This growth in institutions has largely occurred in the for-profit sector. For-profit institutions tend to spend more heavily on marketing and advertising, and their strategy has led to disproportionately high enrollment of minority and low-income students.

Enrollment Growth at For-Profit Institutions Far Outpaces Nonprofits Since 2000

Institution Type	Total Enrollment (2000)	Total Enrollment (2014)	% Increase in Enrollment
Nonprofit (public and private)	14,862,205	18,651,104	25.4%
For-profit	450,084	1,556,265	245.7%

Low-Income and URM More Likely to Attend For-Profits

- 3x** Low-income¹ students three times as likely to enroll in a for-profit institution
- 2x** Black students twice as likely to enroll in a for-profit institution
- 5x** Low-income¹ students five times as likely to enroll in a for-profit than at the most competitive institutions

Outcomes from For-Profits Often Negative

- 23%** of students at for-profit colleges **graduate within six years**, compared to 63% at public and private nonprofit institutions
- 52%** of students **default on their loans**, compared to 17% at public institutions

Higher minority and low-income student enrollment at for-profit schools may sound like a success, but those numbers tell only half the story. These trends are concerning because selectivity has long been correlated with college success. At-risk students who enroll at less competitive, open-access, and for-profit institutions are less likely to complete their college education and are more likely to default on student loans.

Sources: Total Fall Enrollment in Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions, 1947 through 2025, National Center for Education Statistics; "Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the US," The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2017; NCES, "Graduation rate from first institution attended for first-time, full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students at postsecondary institutions, by race/ethnicity, time to completion, sex, control of institution, and acceptance rate: Selected cohort entry years, 1996 through 2009," 2017, *Digest of Education Statistics* 2016, Table 326.10; "For-profits blamed for many student debt defaults, study claims," *USA Today*, October. 5, 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.

1) Refers to Pell and other Federal Grant recipients.

Selectivity Most Critical to Lower-Income Students

Gap in Performance Between Income Groups Grows as Selectivity Declines

As districts work to help students make the best postsecondary choices, it is imperative that educators review their existing assumptions about what makes a college a good choice for a particular student. Historically, researchers and practitioners have relied on a college's selectivity rating as a proxy for students' likelihood to graduate from that institution. Yet the data below reveals significant differences in outcomes for higher- and low-income students at institutions of the same selectivity.

Student Outcomes by Institutional Selectivity and Household Income

	Higher-Income ¹ Completion Rate	Difference	Low-Income Completion Rate
Most/Highly Selective	91%	1%	90%
Very Selective	85%	9%	76%
Selective	82%	12%	70%
Less/Nonselective	83%	27%	56%

As selectivity decreases, outcome gap between high- and low-income students widens

As selectivity decreases, the gap in graduation rates between high- and low-income students widens. Thus, extreme differences in student outcomes make some less selective institutions a reasonable choice for some students while making those same choices quite risky for other students.

1) "Higher-income" refers to the top household income quartile;
"low-income" refers to the bottom household income quartile.

Sources: "True Merit: Ensuring Our Brightest Students Have Access to Our Best Colleges and Universities," Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, January 2016, www.jkcf.org/assets/1/7/JKCF_True_Merit_Report.pdf; EAB interviews and analysis.

Selectivity Alone Not a Guarantee of Success

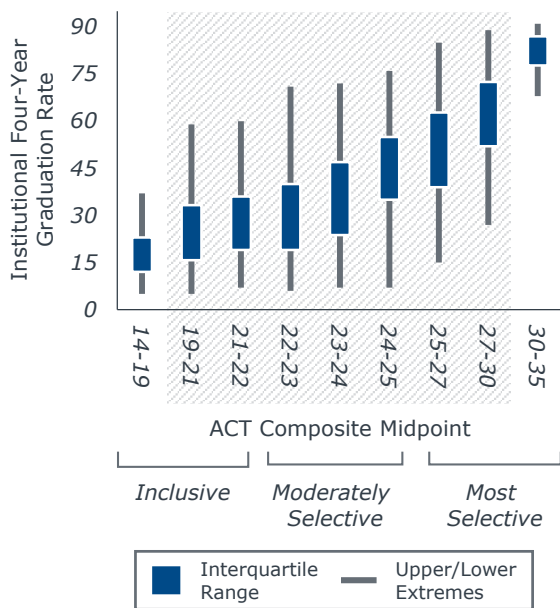
Wide Variation in Outcomes, Even Among Equally Selective Schools

The data below reveals even more clearly that selectivity alone can be an unreliable barometer of college success. The graph depicts the relationship between institutional selectivity, as defined below by the average ACT score of the student body, and student outcomes. In the box-and-whisker diagram presented below, the box represents the second and third quartile range of graduation rates for institutions of a particular selectivity while the lines extend to the first and fourth quartile range of graduation rates.

Four-Year Graduation Rates

25th to 75th Percentiles, by ACT Composite Midpoint¹

Significant Volatility of Outcomes
Across Vast Majority of Schools



Imperative to Consider More Than Just Selectivity

"The most selective colleges...all have graduation rates above 80%, with most above 90%.

"But colleges with average scores around 1100² vary widely in terms of student success, with graduation rates ranging from below 40% to almost 80%.

"Students considering colleges like these will clearly want to **consider more than just selectivity,** including measures of quality as well as cost."

"Can We Fix Undermatching in Higher Ed? Would It Matter if We Did?",
Brookings Institute, 2014

Intuitively, institutions with the lowest average ACT score (i.e., 14–19) also have the lowest graduation rates, and institutions with the highest average ACT score (i.e., 30–35) have the highest graduation rates. However, there is very high variation in student outcomes among moderately selective institutions, ranging from schools with a graduation rate under 10% to ones with a graduation rate nearing 75%, all within the same selectivity band. Students ultimately need to consider more than just selectivity to find a best-fit institution.

1) n=1105.

2) A score of 1100 on the SAT corresponds to about 22 on the ACT.


Sources: Chingos M, "Can We Fix Undermatching in Higher Ed? Would It Matter if We Did?" The Brookings Institute, January 15, 2014, www.brookings.edu/research/can-we-fix-undermatching-in-higher-ed-would-it-matter-if-we-did; EAB Analysis of 2014 IPEDS Data; EAB interviews and analysis.

Overall Success Rates No Guarantee of Success


URM Success Can Vary Among Colleges with Similar Overall Graduation Rates

To make all of this data real at the student level, imagine a first-generation African American student with a 1020 SAT and 3.3 high school GPA trying to decide where to apply and enroll in college. There are four institutions depicted below where this student from Atlanta would be a strong match based on each institution's selectivity profile.


A Tale of Four Georgia Universities




Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA



Morehouse College
Atlanta, GA



Kennesaw State University
Kennesaw, GA



University of North Georgia
Dahlonega, GA

All institutions located within the Greater Atlanta metropolitan region

Selectivity Measures:

Acceptance Rate	59%	66%	59%	75%
SAT 25 th –75 th Percentiles	960–1080	860–1095	1000–1180	820–1020
HS GPA	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2

Similar selectivity profile and student academic level across all institutions

Success Measures:

Six-Year Graduation Rate	53%	50%	43%	52%
URM ¹ Six-Year Graduation Rate	56%	53%	42%	40%

Devil in the Details

Despite similar overall student success outcomes, URM students experience a 16-point spread in graduation rates

All of the institutions presented have similar overall graduation rates. However, when looking specifically at the graduation rate for underrepresented minority students (i.e., the six-year graduation rate for black, Latino, and/or Native American undergraduates), there is a difference of 16 percentage points between those same institutions. This additional and more nuanced level of detail on student outcomes significantly alters the decision of which institution is the better choice for a first-generation minority student.

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics; EdTrust; Eduventures 2016 Student Success Ratings, [/www.eduventures.com/eduventures-2016-retention-ratings](http://www.eduventures.com/eduventures-2016-retention-ratings); The Upshot, "Some Colleges Have More Students From the Top 1 Percent Than the Bottom 60. Find Yours," *The New York Times*, January 18, 2017, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/01/18/upshot/some-colleges-have-more-students-from-the-top-1-percent-than-the-bottom-60.html; EAB interviews and analysis.

1) Refers to the six-year graduation rate for black, Latino, and/or Native American undergraduates.

We Built It. They Still Have Not Come.

Consumer Tools Such as the College Scorecard Are Ubiquitous Yet Underused

Despite the critical necessity for at-risk students to make informed choices, schools largely leave students to develop a list of institutions on their own and then work with them to refine and narrow those options. There are several free, web-based tools that students can turn to for assistance in their college search. However, such a wide range of tools means that consistency and accuracy of information is hard to ensure, and it is highly unlikely that students find and fully consider data that is specific to their background and needs.



Too Many Websites to Choose From

Students can find hundreds of websites that will help them search through lists of institutions. Examples of websites include:

- College Choice
- College Confidential
- College Data
- College Express
- College List
- College Prowler
- College Raptor
- College Scorecard
- Cappex
- Chegg/Zinch
- Kiplinger's
- Niche
- Peterson's
- Prep Scholar
- Princeton Review
- US News



Tools Don't Reach the Right Audience

College search tools most likely to be used by well-resourced students, such as:

- Students attending well-resourced, often private, schools
- Students whose parents had at least some college education
- White and Asian students



Easiest Sites to Find Lack Right Info

Most consumer college search sites focus on nonessential fit characteristics (e.g., rock wall) and sometimes admissibility

Flaws with Even the Best College Search Tools

"[In terms of the College Scorecard], while the information is easy to read, it is hard to interpret. **And nearly one in four community colleges are missing.**"

*Phil Hill and Russ Poulin
WICHE and eLiterate*

There are certainly tools available that do provide reliable information, such as the US Department of Education's College Scorecard. Impact studies of the College Scorecard have shown, however, that the students most likely to access the tool and change their application behavior based on the data are middle- to high-income white and Asian students. Moreover, those students who did use the College Scorecard tool were found to be most influenced by earnings data. Finally, for the websites that at-risk students are most likely to find, information is often focused toward less essential elements of the college-going process, such as amenities and social life.

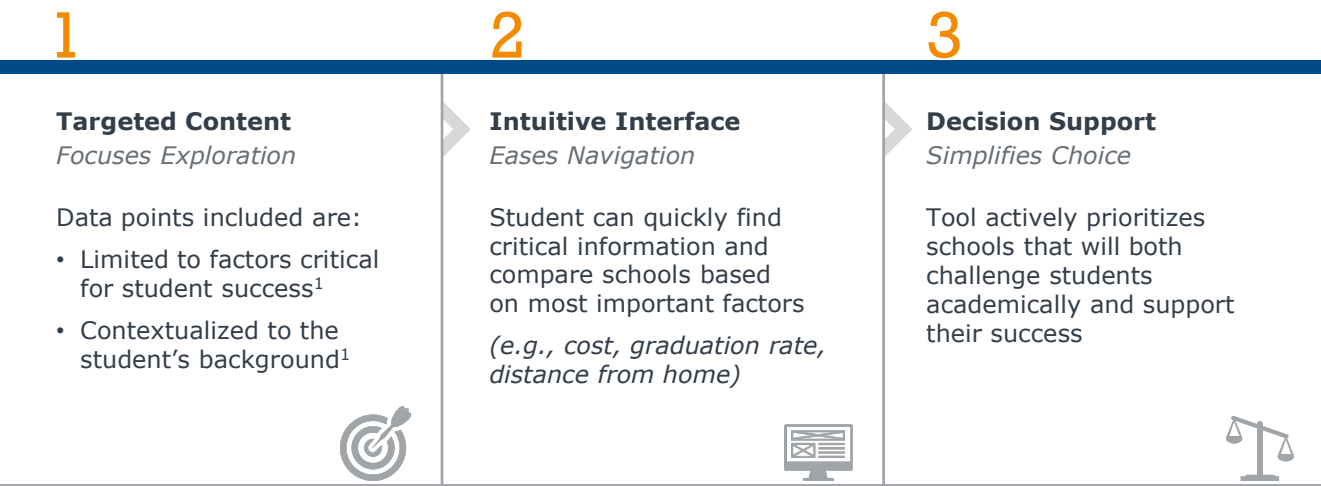
Sources: Smith J and Hurwitz M, "Student Responsiveness to Earnings Data in the College Scorecard," The College Board, April 2016, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2768157; Svrluga S, "Hundreds of colleges missing from Obama's College Scorecard?" The Washington Post, October 15, 2015, www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/10/15/hundreds-of-colleges-missing-from-obamas-college-scorecard/?utm_term=.64671c61a259; EAB interviews and analysis.

Designing a System with Unique Needs in Mind

How to Better Guide College Choice for Low-Income and Minority Students

It is clear that districts and schools need to play a more active role helping students make smart college choices. To this end, the profiled practices that follow reveal how some institutions have worked to better guide at-risk students to postsecondary institutions with the best outcomes. When building or assessing technology platforms that will guide college choice for low-income and minority students, the criteria below highlight features that are key to success.

Ideal Features of a College Exploration Tool for At-Risk Students



First, the tool should limit available search criteria and focus students on factors such as academic rigor, cost, and distance from home, which are most predictive of college persistence and graduation for at-risk students. Data on cost and graduation rates should also be contextualized to highlight institutions with the resources and systems in place to support a student with his or her particular needs. Second, the interface of the tool should enable students to quickly and directly compare schools along those critical success factors. Finally, underrepresented students may not receive much follow-up guidance, so the tool should visually prioritize a list of 8–10 schools.

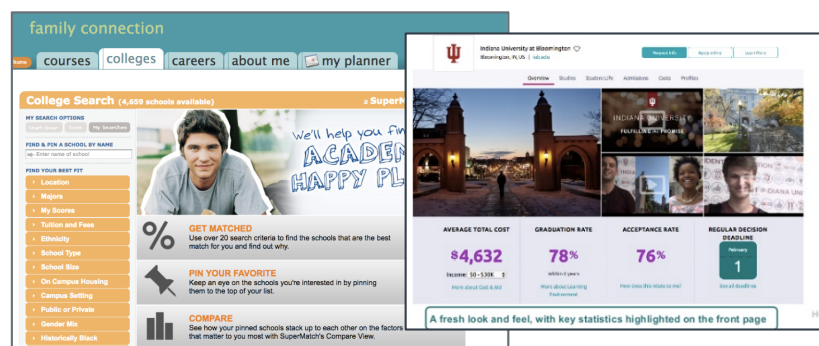
1) For example, highlights minority and Pell-eligible student graduation rates rather than focusing on “nice to haves” such as school size, political affiliation, and sports teams.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Naviance College SuperMatch™

A Wealth of Information, but Unintuitive Navigation for At-Risk Students

Naviance is a college- and career-readiness software developed by Hobsons that is used in the vast majority of districts nationwide. Given the widespread use of Naviance, the most advanced users have implemented some key steps to ensure at-risk students effectively use Naviance in their college search process, as outlined below. As a benefit in college advising, Naviance is well known for its counseling workflow support capabilities such as transcript submission and integration with the Common Application. The tool also features a comprehensive data set on postsecondary institutions.



Profiled Tool:

Naviance,
by Hobsons



Underrepresented Students Need Considerable Support to Discover Superior Postsecondary Options

Typical Practice

Naviance SuperMatch™ offers a vast college database, with **over 20 search criteria available** to find good match schools

Students **self-navigate** tool to build a college list based on **factors that interest them most**



Elevated Practice

- 1 Instruct students to **filter institutions first** by GPA, test scores, and expected financial contribution
- 2 **Then tailor student search further** by location and other criteria of interest (e.g., *school size, campus housing*)
- 3 Direct students to individual **College Profiles** and focus their exploration on **cost data and success rates** in more depth

Naviance was originally designed around a scattergram function that predicts a student's likelihood of admission to institutions based on self-reported data from a district's previous graduates. Over time, Hobsons has expanded and updated the college matching functionality with features such as College SuperMatch™. Unfortunately, the expansive set of college search criteria and the tool's interface ultimately require considerable time and adult intervention to ensure students filter for colleges that are academically challenging and will support their success. Although students can find information on average cost based on family income in the tool, Naviance lacks contextualized persistence or graduation rates, which are critically important for at-risk student groups to consider. Despite those limitations, we have outlined three ways in which counselors already using Naviance can optimize it to better support students in making informed choices.

OneGoal StudentUnion Tool

Incorporates Contextualized Outcomes to Determine College Match

OneGoal is a nonprofit organization that supports low-income and minority students on the path to college. To support their work, OneGoal partnered with a company, **Uptake**, to build the StudentUnion Tool. This publicly available web-based tool is grounded in the same data that OneGoal had historically aggregated into an Excel spreadsheet, designed to best support college selection for their student population. Students first enter an SAT or ACT score, GPA, and race or ethnicity. Based on student credentials, a list of schools populates with a “likelihood of admission” percentage for each one.

Matching results

Test score: 25 GPA: 2.5 Col

Filter results to find great college matches.

Select state(s)

Select campus size(s)

Select selectivity rating(s)

Select likelihood of admission: 0% 100%

Select other characteristics:

Campus housing available

Meal plan available

Universities that offer graduate degrees or certificates

Women's colleges

Historically black (HBCU)

Undocumented friendly

Filter Clear all filters

Search for a specific college, city, or state...

Just right - 427 Stretch - 36 Moonshot - 87 Look carefully - 886

3

Match	Admission	Graduation rate	College/University	City	State
Just right 1	92%	100%	Bethesda University	Anaheim	California
Just right 2	94%	100%	The Baptist College of Florida	Graceville	Florida
Just right	92%	100%	Clarke University	Dubuque	Iowa
Just right	94%	100%	Divine Word College	Epworth	Iowa
Just right	90%	100%	Benedictine College	Atchison	Kansas
Just right	95%	100%	Tabor College	Hillsboro	Kansas
Just right	95%	100%	Maine College of Art	Portland	Maine
Just right	97%	100%	Kuyper College	Grand Rapids	Michigan
Just right	92%	100%	Minneapolis College of Art and Design	Minneapolis	Minnesota
Just right	96%	100%	Oak Hills Christian College	Bemidji	Minnesota
Just right	85%	100%	College of Saint Benedict	Saint Joseph	Minnesota
Just right	84%	100%	Warren Wilson College	Swannanoa	North Carolina

Profiled Organizations:

OneGoal, Chicago, IL

Uptake, Chicago, IL

Highlights of the StudentUnion Tool

Custom platform created by OneGoal in partnership with predictive analytics company Uptake

- 1 Likelihood of admission estimate based on each student's credentials
- 2 Graduation rate contextualized to student's race/ethnicity
- 3 "Match" indicator recommends institutional fit based on academic and success factors
- 4 Customization enabled along select filters (e.g., size, campus housing, women's colleges)

For each school on the list, a graduation rate specific to the student's own race or ethnicity is also provided, and the student's attention is drawn to the related color-coded "match" indicator. Schools with a graduation rate lower than 50% are labeled "look carefully" in red to alert the student of a potentially poor college choice. Schools with at least a 50% graduation rate are categorized into "just right," "stretch," and "moonshot" based on the student's likelihood of admission. Including more robust cost-related information in the tool is a goal of developers, as it currently includes only the percentage of students at an institution receiving Pell or other federal grants.

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ideas42 College Choice Tool

Designed to Direct Students to What Matters Most

Finally, **ideas42** is a nonprofit organization that employs behavioral science to design tools that offer scalable solutions to societal challenges. Ideas42 partnered with the **Youth Policy Institute (YPI)** to develop the College Choice Tool to strengthen YPI's capacity to help low-income students through the college-going process. The tool automatically focuses on the most critical success factors but also includes customizable features to provide students with more agency. Students first enter an ACT or SAT score, high school GPA, preferred distance from home, and their ZIP code.

YPI College Comparison Spreadsheet Data for factors #1 - #6 are from collegereads.org, a website of The Education Trust. Reset Sheet

Step (A): Enter Your Test Scores, GPA and location preference.

1 Standardized Test (Select ACT or SAT): Select ACT or SAT: Enter Your Test Score: Enter Your GPA (on 4.0 scale): How far do you want to be from home? Select preference: Enter Your Zip Code:

I want to include the following types of colleges:
☒ Schools of art, music, and design
☒ Theological seminaries, Bible Colleges, and other specialized faith-related institutions

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	SCORE
	Resources for Students	Academics	Success Rate	Cost	Distance From Home	Campus Feel	Technology	Diversity	Overall Fit
Reach									
College 1	A-	A-	A	A	A	A	B+	C-	86
College 2	B+	A-	A	B	D+	B	B	A-	71
College 3	A+	A+	B+	A+	B-	A	A+	A+	100
College 4	A	A+	A	A-	D+	B	A-	B+	84
Target									
College 5	B+	B	B+	B-	A	C-	B-	B	64
College 6	B-	B+	B	B+	A+	B	B+	A	78
College 7	B-	A	B+	B+	A-	A	A-	A+	87
College 8	C+	B	B+	A-	A+	D	A-	A-	73
Safety									
College 9	B	C	B-	C-	B+	C	B	B+	48
College 10	C	C	D+	B	D+	D+	C-	B	35

Profiled Organizations:

ideas42, Washington, DC

Youth Policy Institute, Los Angeles, CA

Measurable Impact

15-20%

Increase in students applying to selective and out-of-state schools

ideas42

YOUTH POLICY INSTITUTE

Highlights of the College Choice Tool

Created by **ideas42**, a behavioral science nonprofit

Piloted in California with the Youth Policy Institute (**YPI**)

1 Student credentials generate a realistic set of safety, target, and reach schools to consider

2 Limited to 8 data points

- 5 key success factors get most weight first¹
- 3 factors customized by student preference²

3 Fit score simplifies options and pushes students to consider best academic- and success-based fit

The tool then suggests an initial list of reach, target, and safety schools for students to explore. The tool automatically assigns ratings in the five most critical categories, including resources for students, academics, success rate, cost, distance from home. Students are then directed to online resources to self-assess three additional factors of interest. The overall "fit score" takes all of these ratings into account, giving students one simple grade to estimate how well they match with each institution. The tool's most impressive feature is that it is weighted to nudge students toward schools that are more academically challenging relative to their academic ability; those schools also tend to have better financial packages and support systems for underrepresented students.

1) Resources for students, academics, success rate, cost, distance from home.

2) Campus feel and two of the following features: diversity, technology, athletics, campus housing, social life, school size.






Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

No Silver Bullet

Each Tool Presents Opportunities and Limitations

As mentioned, there are multiple websites and platforms designed to support college exploration and choice, and no single tool is perfect. The table below summarizes some of the critical positive and negative features of each tool just reviewed. This table is not meant to serve as a comparison shopping guide, not least because the StudentUnion tool is publicly available and the College Choice Tool is not yet available for widespread use.

Key Takeaways from Profiled College Matching Solutions

	Advantages 	Disadvantages 
 NAVIANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vast, comprehensive data set • Common App integration • Workflow support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing prioritization of success indicators for URM students • Cumbersome navigation
 ONEGOAL <small>COLLEGE GRADUATION. PERIOD.</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes URM-specific outcome measures • Intuitive to navigate • Recommends fit based on academic and success indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited financial data
 ideas ⁴²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited to 8 critical data points • Prioritizes 5 key indicators of success • Simple to navigate • Proactively guides student choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks URM-specific graduation rates at institutions • Limited set of schools included

The purpose of showing this summary and the tools themselves is to highlight the factors particularly important to college selection for low-income and minority students and how different tools reinforce the relative importance of those factors. The hope is that this list of advantages and disadvantages can help educate counselors, students, and their families to be more savvy about what matters in making a postsecondary choice. It is that very message of focusing students on their ultimate postsecondary success that the next institution reinforces throughout the entire college counseling process.

Using Success Data to Influence College Choice

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) almost exclusively serves low-income and minority students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. After noticing that DCPS students were experiencing poor outcomes at certain institutions, the College Prep team began using data to guide college advising. The team first tracked college attendance and completion rates of district graduates through the district's NSC¹ subscription. Initial analyses revealed that a sizable portion of students were attending colleges from which no DCPS student had ever successfully graduated.

Data Reveals Where Students Are Most Likely to Be Successful

National Level



EdTrust Pell Recipient Database

Using publicly available Pell graduation data, DCPS determines likelihood of graduation for colleges attended by district graduates

District-Specific



National Student Clearinghouse

- NSC data allows district to track college graduation rates of DCPS alumni

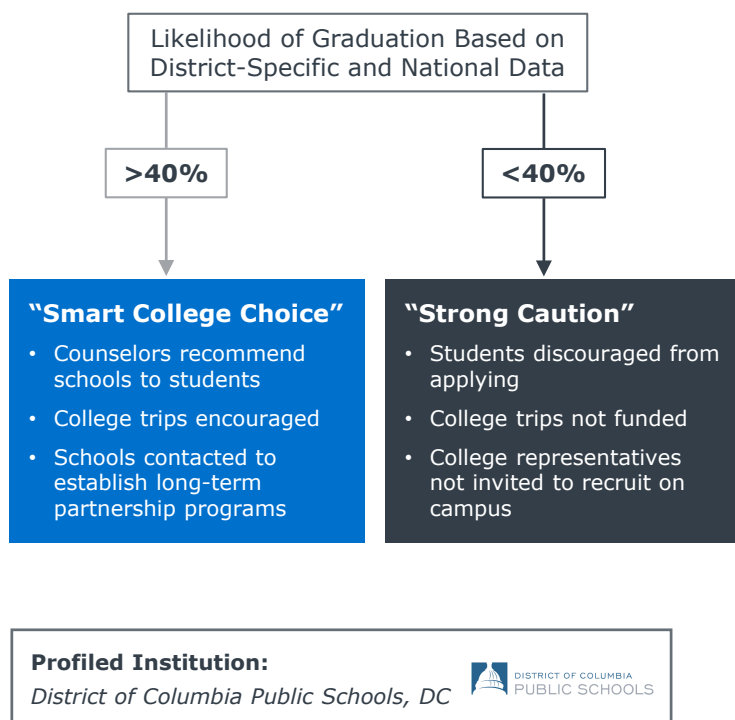
Historic Financial Aid Data

- Financial aid letters from past students help staff assess affordability of each college

My College Fact Finder

- EAB partnership with DCPS to share enrollment data with students and families

District Uses Data to Guide Student Choice to and Away from Colleges



DCPS supplements district-specific outcomes data with publicly available graduation rates for Pell-eligible students through the EdTrust Pell Grant database. National data provides a point of comparison to trends seen at the district level or replaces district data if the sample size of DCPS graduates attending a particular institution is too small to offer meaningful trends. Institutions with a graduation rate over 40% are placed on a "smart college choice" list while institutions with a success rate below 40% are placed on a list labeled "strong caution." DCPS administrators ultimately use these lists to direct students to schools where they are most likely to be successful and to discourage students from attending schools where they may not succeed.

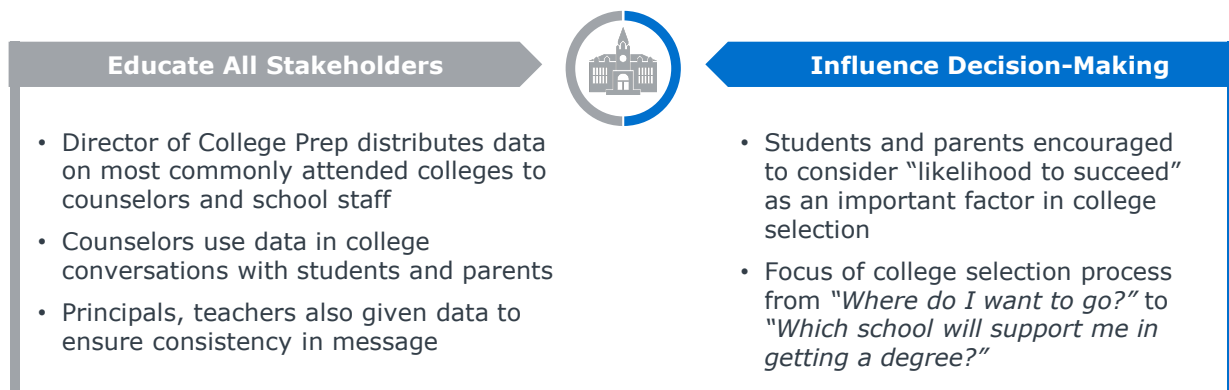
1) National Student Clearinghouse.

Focusing on ‘Likelihood to Succeed’ over Match

Success Data Changes Nature of College-Going Conversation

DCPS¹ employs several tactics to support and nudge students’ college choices, both encouraging smart choices and discouraging suboptimal ones. The critical goal is to focus college counseling on students’ likelihood to succeed and not just on likelihood of admission. The lists of institutions organized by outcomes are shared with counselors, principals, students, and parents. This ensures consistency of message across the district.

Students and Parents Encouraged to Consider College Success Rates



Controlling the Message, Not the Student

“We’re trying to control the message in a discrete and thoughtful way...we’re not telling them where they want to go to school, but we’re helping them make a good decision by giving them information they need.”

Emily Durso, Former Chief of College and Career Education, DCPS¹

In addition to actively encouraging students to attend “smart choice” schools in advising conversations, the district builds partnerships with those schools, funding college visits and inviting those recruiters to campus. The district makes students aware of the trends in outcomes at “strong caution” institutions and will not fund any organized student activities with those schools, such as campus visits.

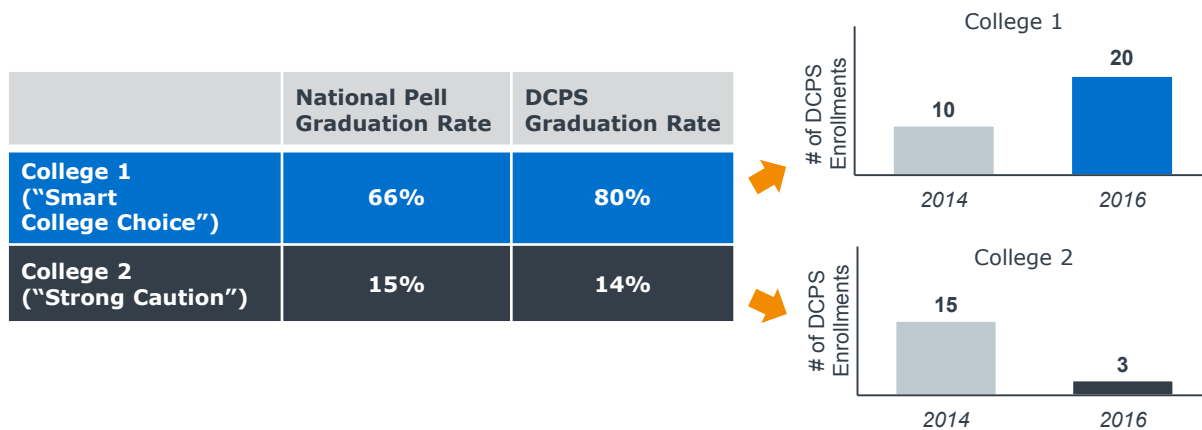
1) District of Columbia Public Schools.

Information Support Alters Application Behavior

Data Prompts Students to Change Application and Enrollment Patterns

Since implementing this data-driven approach, DCPS¹ has seen student behavior significantly affected by the recommendations. The examples represent real postsecondary institutions attended by DCPS graduates that have been anonymized. For example, enrollments doubled at “College 1,” which demonstrated strong graduation rates both for Pell Grant-eligible students nationwide and for DCPS students in particular.

Changes in College Enrollments Among DCPS¹ Graduates



Helping Both Students and Colleges

“Our short-term gain, in terms of enrollment at ‘Smart College Choices’ colleges, has been significant. We’ve also seen colleges who have expanded scholarship programs for DC students and colleges with lower grad rates that have started to put more supports in place—the campaign is not only changing the behavior of students, but colleges too!”

Kimberly Hanauer, Director, College Prep Programs, DCPS¹

At the same time, enrollments at “College 2” have been nearly eliminated after the data analysis revealed dismal graduation rates for district alumni. Administrators stress that this practice is not meant to shame colleges and universities, as schools that are in the “strong caution” category are encouraged to work with DCPS to improve their support systems for students. “Smart choice” schools also work with DCPS to improve or expand scholarships and services to ensure ongoing success. Rather than punishing schools or forcing student choice, the district exercises a form of quality control when advising students on college options to help improve their partnerships with postsecondary institutions and ultimately best serve the needs of their students.

1) District of Columbia Public Schools.

Ensuring Students Are on the Right Postgraduation Path

Milton Hershey School Partners with Schools Committed to Student Success

In many ways, the next practice from **Milton Hershey School (MHS)** logically builds upon the work of DPCS. MHS enters into formal partnerships with postsecondary institutions to ensure adequate support for MHS students. MHS is a unique residential private school, and students must be from families with an income below 200% of the federal poverty line to attend. Funded by a trust established by Milton and Catherine Hershey, MHS pays for the majority of their graduates' college education.

Targeted Partnerships Bridge Secondary and Higher Ed Goals

IDENTIFY SUITABLE INSTITUTIONS



Identify Schools Committed to Student Success

- Staff analyzes data, identifies high-performing 2- and 4-year schools within a 3.5-hour radius of MHS¹
- Data points include:
 - Number of MHS students enrolled at institution
 - MHS-specific and publicly available retention and completion rates
- Counselors review each school's number and level of low-income, first-generation-specific support systems²

Profiled Institution:

Milton Hershey School, PA



ESTABLISH DETAILED PARTNERSHIPS



Institutional Partnership Targets Mutually Desirable Outcomes

Objectives

- Enroll more MHS students in colleges dedicated to student success
- Improve persistence and graduation rates for low-income, first-generation students

Measurable Outcomes

- Increased year 1 to year 2 persistence rates for MHS alumni
- Increased number of students obtaining work-study and on-campus employment
- Increased number of students in campus support programs

MHS tracks long-term data on graduate outcomes, and that commitment has prompted their work to build robust supports for students beyond high school. The process begins with a thorough analysis of both MHS student data on college enrollment and completion and of graduation rates from publicly available sources such as the National Center for Education Statistics' College Navigator. The MHS team then uses university websites, and will call schools as needed, to compile a list of all the support programs available to underrepresented students to develop a complete picture of each school that graduates attend.

1) Milton Hershey School.

2) Support systems may include federal (TRIO), state (Pennsylvania's ACT 101), and institutional (transition and support programs for minority and low-income students).

Commitments on Both Sides Promote Student Success

Once a potential partner has been identified, MHS begins conversations with the institution. If successful, those conversations end in a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Administrators aim to ensure that partner schools are within 50 miles of MHS and strive for a balanced selection of 2- and 4-year, public and private, liberal arts and technical institutions. Although not every district has the resources to support such a robust program, this is one of the best methods for ensuring students will be supported by the systems and programs offered at their college or university.

Key MHS¹ Responsibilities



Support recruitment of students to university via:

- University information in counseling sessions and guide booklets
- Inviting university reps on campus for college/career days, school fairs, info sessions, etc.



Collaborate on persistence and graduation support programs

- Assist with programming design, implementation, and data analysis
- Provide feedback from MHS alumni on program efficacy

Key University Commitments



Waive application, confirmation, housing fees, deposits for all MHS students



Provide information on all financial aid opportunities and timely feedback on status and required documents for financial aid applications



Create extensive transition supports to aid students in adjusting to college life

- Guaranteed work-study and campus employment
- Peer Mentors to assist in transition to college life
- Access to summer and first-year bridge programs
- Track and share data from SSMS²: early warning indicators, progress toward degree, etc.

Above is an outline of some of the key elements of a typical MOU between MHS and a postsecondary institution. Notably, both the school district and college or university have responsibilities they must uphold. Districts may not be able to easily advocate for some of the university responsibilities without significant leverage (i.e., being a relatively large district); however, this example is not meant to provide an exhaustive list of potential partnerships. Rather, this practice illustrates what a potential partnership between a district and university might look like and provides administrators with examples of particularly important postsecondary support systems for low-income and minority students.





1) Milton Hershey School.

2) Student Success Management System.

MOU Process Changes University Behavior

Efforts to enter into formalized partnerships with colleges and universities are relatively new to MHS. The success of these efforts has primarily been measured in harder-to-quantify, yet just as important, documented changes in university behavior. The four examples highlighted below come from sample MHS partnerships and highlight specific ways universities have added critical services to support the success of underrepresented students from MHS.

Partnership Process Helps Student Succeed, Enhances University Supports

	BEFORE	AFTER
 A	Offered a short, no-follow-up summer bridge program for all of its low-income, minority students	MHS identifies an existing longer, more comprehensive, close-contact program at university. ¹ University guarantees spots for MHS students in identified program
 B	Provided multiple staff contacts for students in need, making it difficult for students to navigate support systems	Designates one point person for all student concerns. Contact triages requests as appropriate
 C	Did not offer enough campus jobs and access to housing during break	Develops specialized supports to provide more job opportunities for students, as well as keep a dormitory open during breaks
 D²	Shares a list of clubs and activities on campus with all incoming students	Assists MHS students with paperwork on waiving the fees associated with clubs and activities

These partnerships are ultimately designed to continuously evolve. MHS administrators maintain contact with university staff to encourage a continuous feedback loop. Both the high school and college staff analyze, reflect, and share feedback on the effectiveness of strategies implemented to ensure the partnerships actually support students’ long-term success.

1) Program was originally created for students who had not declared a major. Persistence rates for students in program were higher than rates for students in traditional summer bridge program.
2) Work on MOU currently being finalized.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.



Remove Barriers to Application and Matriculation

CHAPTER

4

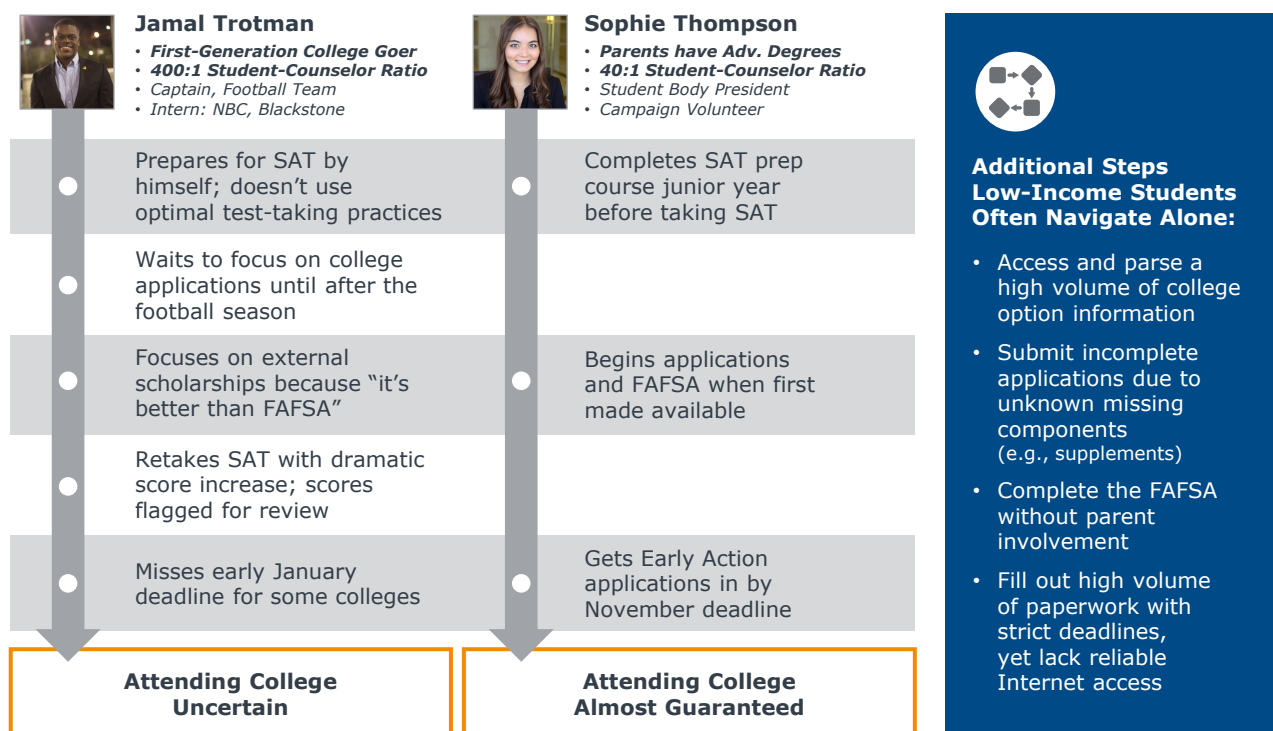
Practice 11: Summer College Application Camp
Practice 12: Dedicated Financial Aid Support Expert
Practice 13: Just-in-Time Summer Text-Message Reminders
Practice 14: Transition-Targeted Microscholarships

Underrepresented Students Face an Uphill Battle

Low-Income and Minority Students Lack Support Systems of Wealthier Peers

It is not uncommon to hear that the college application process itself is a good way to screen out students who are unprepared for college. After all, if a student can not be bothered to fill out applications, write essays, and complete all of the required paperwork, then he or she probably lacks true college aspiration or the skills to persevere once enrolled. Considering those claims from the student perspective, however, it is easy to see how a low-income or first-generation student could stumble along the way.

A Tale of Two College Application Journeys



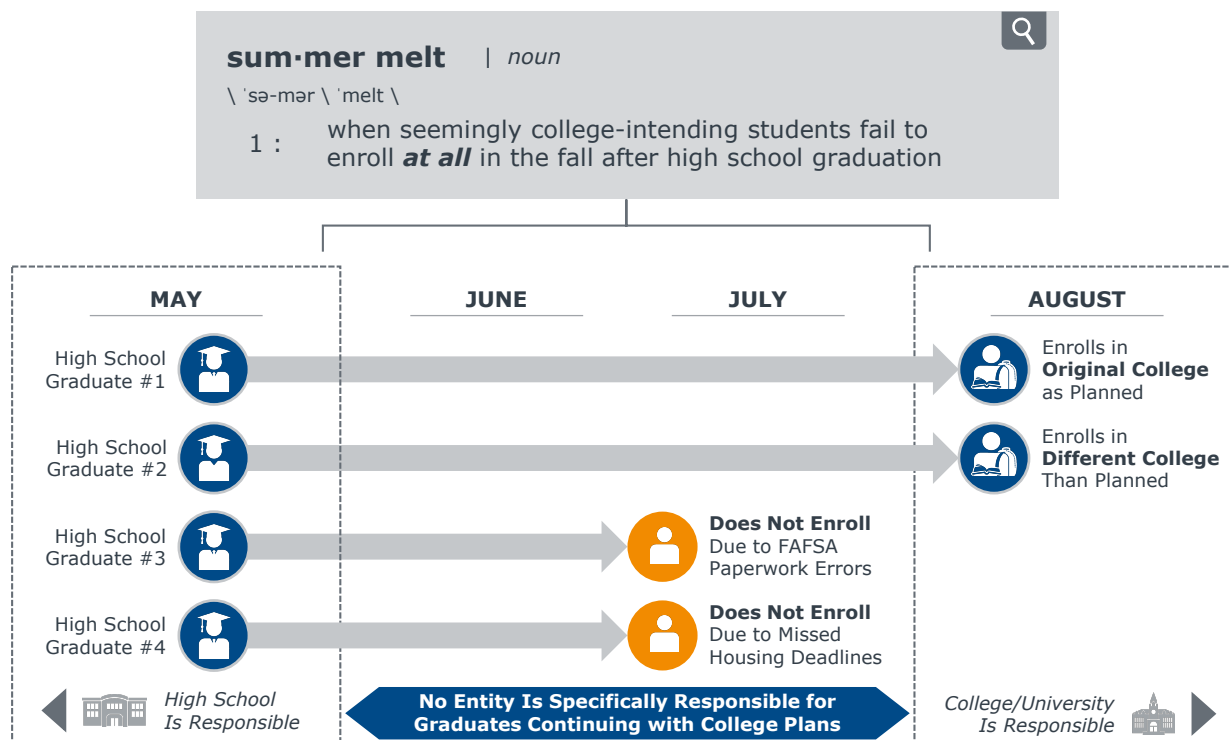
An article in *The Atlantic* profiled the college-going journey of a low-income student, Jamal Trotman, which is juxtaposed above with the experience of "Sophie Thompson," a typical middle-class student. Both students have college aspirations, but Jamal is a first-generation student and Sophie has two college-educated parents. Their college journeys serve to illustrate two main points. First, underrepresented students often face more administrative hurdles and knowledge gaps on the path to college than other students. Second, they face those barriers with far fewer resources at their disposal for support. In the end, Jamal's story had a happy ending: he ended up enrolling at Morehouse College in Atlanta, but that outcome was not guaranteed and is not the case for far too many students like him.

Sources: Disare M, "Why Is the College-Application Process So Complicated?", *The Atlantic*, January 15, 2016.; Page L and Scott-Clayton J, "Improving college access in the United States: Barriers and policy responses," *Economics of Education Review* 51 (2016), 4-22, doi:10.1016/j.econedurev.2016.02.009; EAB interviews and analysis.

College Admission Is Not the Final Step

One in Three Qualified Admitted Students Fail to Matriculate

Some may believe that as long as a student applies to college, he or she will likely get admitted to at least one institution and then ultimately enroll. Successfully supporting underrepresented students, however, requires more than just getting them to submit a college application. Recent research has highlighted a troubling phenomenon called “summer melt.” Data on summer melt reveals that a large number of college-admitted students, particularly low-income students, do not enroll in any college in the fall after high school graduation.



There are a number of reasons why students fail to follow through on their college-going intentions. Research indicates that students are often derailed by confusing administrative processes and strict deadlines that impact key requisites such as financial aid and housing. The ultimate challenge with combating summer melt is that school districts have historically not been well equipped to support students after high school graduation. At the same time, universities are not well-positioned to help students complete college enrollment and matriculation before arriving on campus, so many students fail to successfully make the transition.

Potential for Addressing Summer Melt Significant

District Interventions Increase College Enrollment and Persistence

Summer melt is an alarmingly widespread phenomenon, with an estimated 10 to 40% of students failing to matriculate after being admitted into college. This number, although strikingly large, also presents a highly actionable opportunity to better support at-risk students. Several school districts and nonprofit organizations have demonstrated that different interventions can have a significant impact on reducing summer melt, including peer mentoring, summer counseling, partnerships with local college access organizations, and text-message-nudging campaigns.

Summer Melt a Large Problem...



10–40%

Of college enrollees “melt” during the summer (i.e., fail to matriculate after accepting admission)

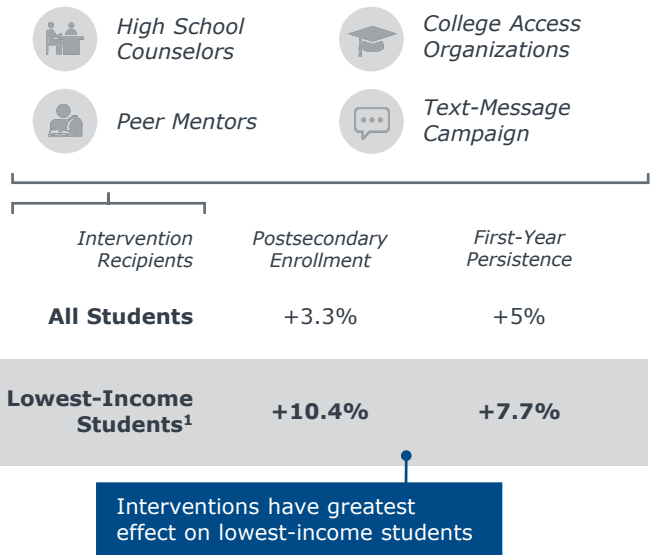


50%

Low-income students are 50% more likely to “melt” during the summer than the average student

...But So Is the Opportunity to Address It

Summer Melt Interventions and Their Effects on College Enrollment and Student Outcomes



This final chapter profiles practices that institutions have implemented to remove a host of nonacademic barriers and successfully support underrepresented students in the college-going process. Practices first target helping students through college application and then focus on supporting students’ successful transition to college.

1) Defined as household incomes that are eligible for federal Pell Grants (i.e., expected family contribution [EFC] is less than \$5,920; typically a household income of \$20,000 or less).

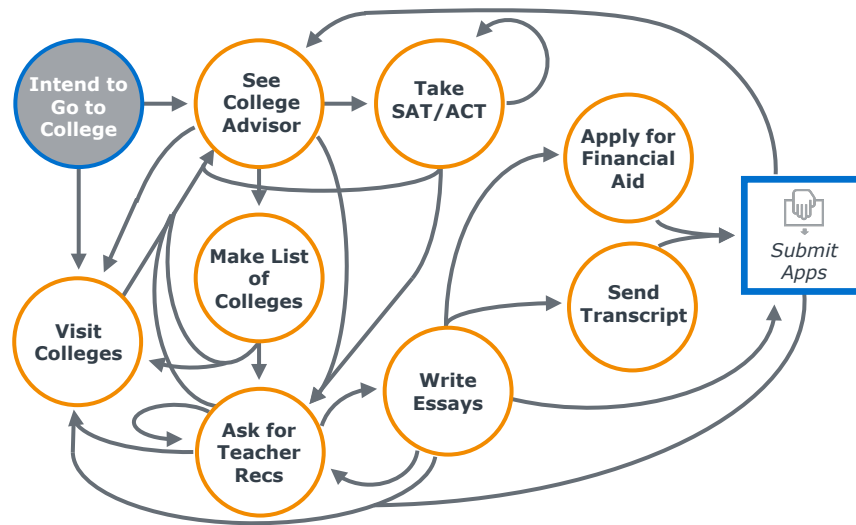
Sources: Castleman B and Page L, “A Trickle or a Torrent? Understanding the Extent of Summer ‘Melt’ Among College-Intending High School Graduates” (2014), *Social Science Quarterly* 95, 1 (2014), 202–220, DOI: 10.1111/ssqu.12032; Summer Melt Handbook, Strategic Data Project, Harvard University, sdp.cepr.harvard.edu/files/cepr-sdp/files/sdp-summer-melt-handbook.pdf; EAB interviews and analysis.

Journey to College Is Fraught with Barriers

Long, Drawn-Out Application Process Hides Many Pitfalls for At-Risk Students

Many people, especially those who work in higher education, imagine college application as a linear process with clearly defined and concrete steps. In reality, the path to college more closely resembles the map depicted below, with the burden resting on students and families to ensure they are aware of all of the steps and successfully complete necessary follow-ups. Unfortunately, many students fail to meet some of the most basic process milestones, derailing even the best of college intentions.

College Applications: A Confusing Process for Anyone



Underrepresented Students Often Challenged in Application Process

30% Of low-income students **take SAT or ACT exams** (vs. 70% of high-income students)

33% FAFSA non-filers are **Pell Grant-eligible** (i.e., low-income)

55% Of low-income students **file FAFSA after standard deadlines**¹

For example, less than one-third of low-income students take the SAT or ACT exams, compared to 70% of high-income students. This means that the vast majority of low-income students do not complete an early and critical step to qualify them for admission at many postsecondary institutions. More than half of low-income students file the FAFSA after standard deadlines, greatly reducing their chances for sufficient financial aid, and one-third of students who do not fill out the FAFSA at all would have been eligible for a federal Pell Grant.

1) Standard deadlines refer to April or later within the aid year.

School Is NOT Out for Summer

Summer Application Camps Prepare Students When They Have More Time

Beechwood High School, St. Paul's School, and Fort Worth ISD¹ offer summer college application camps to allow students to focus on college applications when they have fewer competing academic and extracurricular demands. Intensive group sessions also enable counselors to focus exclusively on college advising duties to ensure depth and consistency in information and support.

Profiled Institutions:



Beechwood High School
Fort Mitchell, Kentucky
Midsized Public HS



St. Paul's School
Baltimore, MD
Independent School



Fort Worth ISD¹
Large Urban School District

Summer College Application Camp

An Intensive Workshop That Consolidates Typical Fall Advising



Summer Sessions Tap Unused Student Capacity

Students and their families have more time to address the college application process during the summer than in the fall



Intensive Format Ensures Depth and Consistency

Students learn about all parts of the application process through group workshops and personal advising



Makes College Real for Students

Camps include visits to a college campus or from admission officers, which transform the abstract into the achievable



(Almost) Complete Applications

Students work through the application during the camp, with most completing the Common Application by the end

The application camps often involve either a trip to a nearby university or college admission representatives visiting the district to help advise students about the application process. This exposure to a college environment is instrumental in transforming college from an abstract concept in students' minds into a real and achievable goal. Across the duration of the entire camp, students fill out the majority of their Common Application, which sets them ahead and enables them to complete all of their applications early in the fall.

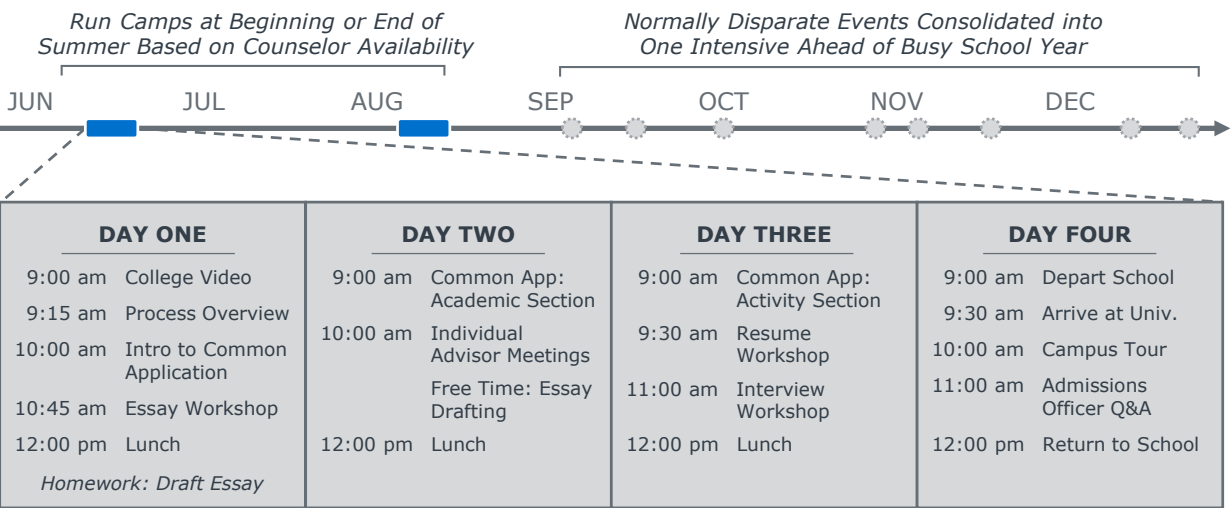
1) Fort Worth Independent School District.

Sessions Help Students Learn and Start Process

Most Difficult Parts of Application Process Covered Before Start of Fall Term

Below is a sample college application camp schedule that highlights some of the key sessions included across the camps at Beechwood High School, St. Paul’s School, and Fort Worth ISD. The camps are normally two to four days long, for a few hours each day. Students first complete introductory group workshops on topics such as conducting a college search, starting the Common Application, and essay writing. Camp attendees also work independently on their own applications, receiving feedback and advice from staff.

Example Application Camp Schedule¹



Camps Increase Application Completion and Enrollment Likelihood

80% Of Common Application completed by end of camp

25% Higher likelihood of enrolling in college after campus visit

As already mentioned, all of these programs conclude with a campus tour at a local institution or a visit from admission representatives. Helping students complete a large portion of this uncertain and unclear process early on with feedback and support and exposing students to a real college environment both increase their likelihood of successfully enrolling in postsecondary education.

Workshops, College Contacts Essential Elements

Longer Camps Allow More Personalized Advising, but More Expensive to Run

As summarized below, the three camps profiled vary slightly in their offerings. The administrative cost to the district to offer a summer application camp is largely dependent on the program components included and involvement of community partners. In all cases, group workshops and college exposure are critical parts of the programming. One-on-one advising brings a number of additional benefits but requires more counselors to be available during the summer, thereby increasing costs.

Application Camp Program Components

	Group Workshops	One-on-One Advising	College Visit or College Reps Coming to High Schools	Student Cost ¹
Beechwood High School <i>Weeklong Session</i> <i>82 Students</i>	✓	✓	✓	\$100 In District \$250 Out of District
St. Paul's School <i>Weeklong Session</i> <i>98 Students</i>	✓	✓	✓	\$150 Per Student
Fort Worth ISD <i>1.5 Day Session</i> <i>350 Students</i>	✓		✓	Free ²

In order to pay for the program, administrators from Beechwood High School and St. Paul's School charge a student fee to attend the camp. While they try to offset that cost for students with demonstrated need, this does pose a potential barrier for low-income student attendance. However, there are ways of helping at-risk students attend free of charge. Partnering with local organizations can offer districts in-kind support or cover what would otherwise be a financial contribution from students. For example, Fort Worth ISD leverages contributions from local nonprofit organizations that do related youth development work (e.g., the Boys and Girls Club) and partners with local colleges and universities to lead information sessions and workshops.

1) Sticker price; student cost is generally subsidized with matching need-based aid across all institutions.

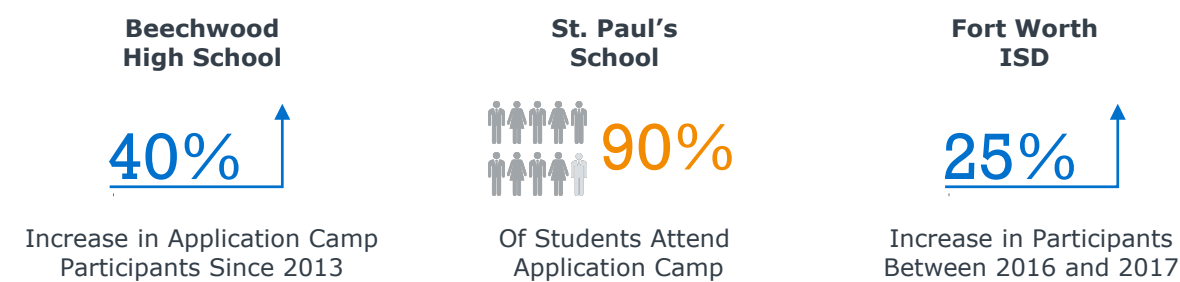
2) Fort Worth ISD partners with local institutions (universities, nonprofit organizations) to cover cost.

Camps Popular and Effective

Summer Preparation Facilitates Earlier College Application Submissions

The biggest indicator of success across all profiled institutions has been the substantial increase in the number of students who attend these entirely voluntary application camps. The director of college counseling at St. Paul’s school stressed that offering the camps and supporting students in completing applications early reduces anxiety around the college-going process and focuses students’ efforts.

Significant Increase in Application Camp Participation



“We have a strategy: ‘Let’s get you an acceptance quickly under your belt.’...**The camp helps us change the whole conversation** from ‘Am I going to college? Will I get in?’ to ‘Hey, I’m going to college. I don’t need to apply to 10 colleges now; I need to apply to my favorites.’”

Jake Talmage, Director of College Counseling, St. Paul’s School, MD

These application camps provide an intensive way to provide application support to underrepresented students, but as previously acknowledged, getting students to submit applications is only half of the battle. The practices profiled next explore how to alleviate the financial constraints and concerns that are often the biggest barrier preventing at-risk students from successfully enrolling in a higher education institution.

Financial Aid Often ‘Maddeningly Complex’

Overly Complicated FAFSA and Aid Processes and Sources Hinder Students

Senator Lamar Alexander famously unveiled the full FAFSA form to emphasize how long and complicated it is. The financial aid system for higher education is a labyrinth that most everyone agrees is too complex. Despite widespread concern, steps to simplify the financial aid process have come slowly and leave the core of the process untouched. As former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan once said about the FAFSA, “You basically have to have a PhD to figure that thing out.”

Federal Aid Process Notoriously Hard to Navigate...



Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) unrolls full FAFSA form to illustrate its length and complexity.

Photo: AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta

...And Hardest for Those It's Meant to Help

Low-Income Students Most Vulnerable

“Lower-income students suffer disproportionately, and may give up or not bother trying—because of **a lack of support, endurance or knowledge** of the system, or all three...”

“Navigating Our Shameful, Maddeningly Complex Student Aid System,”
The New York Times, 2017

Misunderstanding of College Financing Options Widespread

47%

of private loan borrowers borrowed less than they could have in Stafford loans

50%

of prospective students overestimate loan payments by 50%

Low-income students are particularly prone to suffer from the complexity of the FAFSA application, resulting from a lack of support, inadequate knowledge of the system, or inability to obtain documentation that is required to complete the form. In rather tragic irony, the FAFSA can end up being one of the major obstacles to securing funding for precisely the students that it is designed to help. Ultimately, the challenges associated with FAFSA filing are just part of a broader problem. Most students do not fully understand the full range of options for financing higher education or the implication of those options for their future.

Sources: “Mapping Critical Student Decisions Through College,” ideas42, June 2016, www.ideas42.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ideas42-Final-Report-Mapping-Student-Decisions-PUBLIC-6.2.16-v2final-2-1.pdf; Ron Lieber, “Navigating Our Shameful, Maddeningly Complex Student Aid System,” *The New York Times*, March 17, 2017; EAB interviews and analysis.

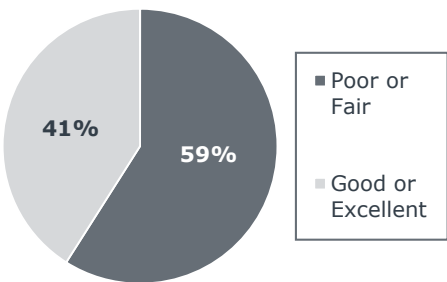
Counselors Providing Insufficient Aid Support

School Counselors Lack Time to Be Effective in Advising

When asked what supports are in place to help students navigate the complex world of financial aid, many districts mention that they hold FAFSA nights at which students and families can complete the application with counselor support. However, the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) has found that the majority of surveyed students find counselors are not giving them adequate advice on matters related to college financing.

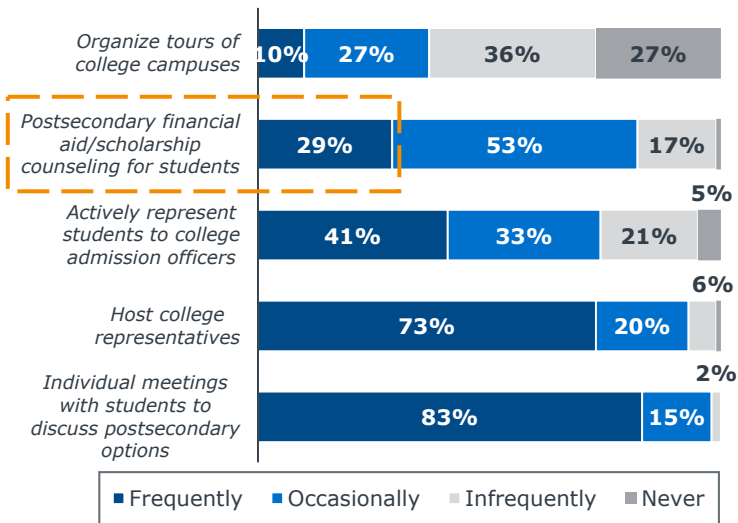
Majority of Students Find Counselor Advice on Financial Aid Inadequate¹

Student Rating of Counselor Ability to Help "Find Ways to Pay for College, Like Financial Aid or Scholarship Programs"



Financial Aid Support Competing for Time with Other Counseling Priorities

Frequency of Counselor Engagement in Activities Related to Postsecondary Admission Counseling



This may be due to the fact that counselors themselves, no matter how competent, do not have the time that our “maddeningly complex” system requires to understand the full range of college financing options. In short, students, families, and counselors alike need more information and assistance to successfully approach college financing.

1) Overall survey topic: “How would you rate your high school guidance counselors in the following areas? Would you say they were excellent, good, fair or poor?; Specific survey question: “Helping you find ways to pay for college like financial aid or scholarship programs?”

Sources: 2015 State of College Admission, Chapter 4, “College Counseling in Secondary Schools,” National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/research/soca_chapter4.pdf; EAB interviews & analysis.

Providing Counselors with Up-to-Date Information

District FAC¹ Collects Financial Aid Information, Educates Counselors

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has put a district-wide financial aid coordinator in place to better support their college counseling processes. Knowing that financial aid is perhaps the most critical component to their students' postsecondary decisions, the coordinator's primary responsibility is to fully understand the financial aid landscape. With a focus on the most frequently attended institutions, the coordinator compiles publicly available data on college costs and aid and then calls institutions to verify the data and ask for any other resources that may be available to DCPS students.



Understand the College Financial Aid Landscape

Examine All Institutional Aid Options

- Compiles publicly available data on financial aid at 80 most attended schools
- Contacts each school with collected data, asks for verification and additional availability of resources
- Collects financial award letters from students
- Creates database of costs at most attended colleges incorporating DC-specific aid



Develop Financial Aid Resources and Tools

Inform Students, Parents, and Staff at Scale

- Develops interactive curriculum on financial aid process
- Creates an "Award Letter Analyzer" tool to make it easy for students to directly compare financial aid from schools
- Compiles and circulates a scholarship newsletter to counselors, staff, and students



Discover New Financial Opportunities

Expand the Pool of Available Funding

- Find and develop new partnerships with external sources of funding
- Connect counselors and eligible students with funding opportunities

Inform, Update Counselors on Key Financial Aid Questions



How to help students make the best financial choices?



How to interpret specific award offers?



How to maximize total financial aid?

Profiled Institution:

District of Columbia Public Schools, DC



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The financial aid coordinator also collects financial aid award letters from students and compiles them into a database to keep track of typical aid packages. A great practice in and of itself, collecting students' award letters has led DCPS to begin development of an award letter analyzer to help families easily interpret financial packages from different schools. The tool is being designed to directly compare up to four colleges on out-of-pocket costs after accounting for all different sources of aid. Additional responsibilities of the financial aid coordinator include providing education about financial aid essentials and developing partnerships with NGOs, foundations, and other organizations to expand funding opportunities for students.


1) Financial Aid Coordinator.

Making Counselors' Time Count

Removing Most Resource-Intensive Financial Aid Tasks from Counselor Plate

The financial aid coordinator directly supports counseling staff as well by absorbing some of the most time-consuming advising tasks so counselors can focus on working with students. The financial aid coordinator is able to monitor students' FAFSA submission progress in real time. This has allowed the coordinator to proactively flag issues for counselors who support families in making corrections before FAFSA applications are rejected.


FAC¹ Supports Counselors on a Number of Time-Consuming Initiatives



Monitor District FAFSA Progress²

Track Applications and Proactively Flag Errors


Coordinator able to track FAFSA submissions at each high school and identify potential issues with income verification or insufficient information



Organize Informational Events

Use Unique Knowledge to Provide Better Value at District-Wide Events

Coordinator facilitates general information events (e.g., scholarship and financial aid information sessions), leveraging his or her role as the most knowledgeable financial aid person in the district



Provide Dedicated 1:1 Support

Take on Most Challenging Cases to Avoid Counselor Bottleneck

Coordinator researches options and dedicates 1:1 time with most difficult financial need cases, such as undocumented students

Financial Aid Support Allows Counselors and Students to Maximize Options



Simplified outreach to schools gives students greater access to financial options



Increases in submitted applications to both colleges and scholarship organizations




Scholarship organizations and NGOs have reported more applications from DCPS students, and students report making more informed choices about where to enroll.

Nudging Students Along the Way to College

Text-Message Campaigns Focus on Delivering Timely Milestone Reminders

As already discussed, the phenomenon of summer melt widely affects high school graduates and disproportionately impacts low-income students. At an average cost of \$7 per student, text-message nudging campaigns offer a scalable solution to support college enrollment. Moreover, 88% of teenagers have access to a cell phone, and they check their phones an average of 74 times per day. Text messages allow districts to prompt students to complete time-sensitive requirements and provide in-the-moment support through a medium students habitually check.

Text-Message-Nudging Process

 Collect Student Information	 Create Message Templates and Schedule	 Deliver Messages and Provide Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor records • Flyers with phone number students can text for assistance • Student surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key nudging milestones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Application deadlines – Financial aid deadlines – Enrollment deposit – Housing deposit – Health insurance – Orientation – Placement tests – Course registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One FTE at the Minnesota Office of Higher Education supports 2,000+ students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – About 10 hours per week spent answering messages

Prominent Text-Messaging Vendors

Hustle
TURN TALK INTO PARTICIPATION

 **SignalVine**

 **StudentVox**

 **mongoose**

 **AdmitHub**

Some of the most common text-messaging vendors are listed above. Districts most frequently administer short surveys to collect student contact information to enable communication and to understand students' postsecondary plans. Administrators then create an automated schedule of text messages to remind students about key application milestones. Research on the "melt" phenomenon most widely focuses on the summer months between high school graduation and college matriculation. However, nudging campaigns are highly effective for supporting students through the entire college application process and most effectively start in the winter of students' senior year in high school.

Key Principles to a Successful Messaging Campaign

Short, Relevant Content Appeals to Student Communication Preferences

Naturally, the success of a text-message-nudging intervention rests on ensuring students actually read the messages and follow through on next steps. The tips that follow outline strategies districts should be mindful of to maximize the impact of a text-message campaign. First, administrators should craft compelling and actionable message content. Identifying the colleges and universities most frequently attended by graduates allows districts to assemble institution-specific tasks, due dates, and web links to increase message relevance and ease of action for students.

Tips for Engaging Students with Text Messages



Personalization

Include relevant student information and the counselor/advisor's name, especially in the first message.



Opt-Out

Let students know that they always have the option to text back STOP or CANCEL to stop receiving messages.



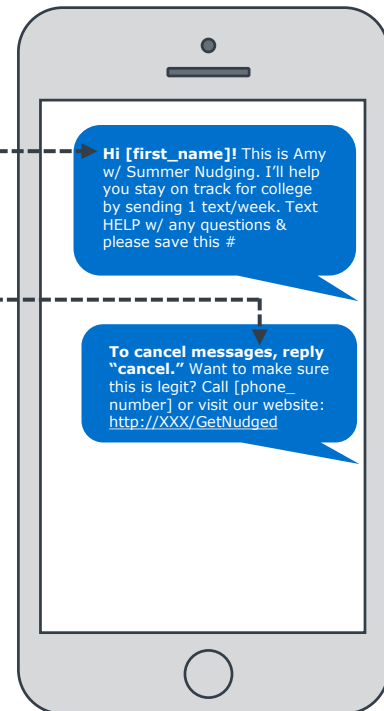
Less Is More

Keep messages short—distilling content down to its main point ensures students can digest information quickly.



Frequency

The recommended number of prescheduled or programmed messages is 2–5 per month.

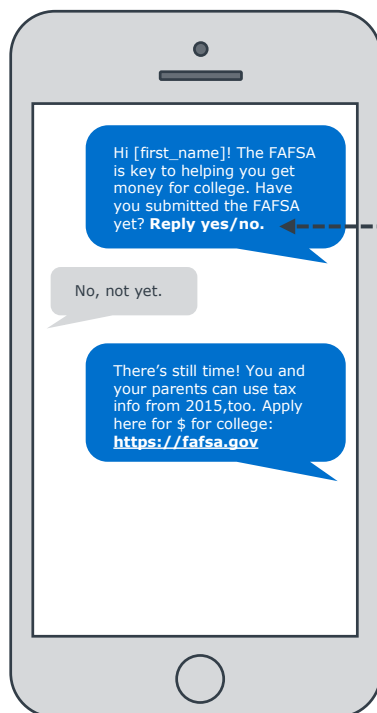


Studies show that the more personalized the message, the higher the response rate. Thus, messages should also be personalized with relevant student information (e.g., student's first name, grade, school) and the counselor or advisor's name, especially in the first message. While there is value in automating messages, students will quickly recognize when a computer is driving the conversation, so administrators should aim to have no more than two to three automated messages in a row.

Key Principles...(cont.)

Actionable Messages 'Just In Time' Increase Likelihood of Step Completion

The most effective interactions occur when messages prompt students with a question and invite a response, even a simple yes or no. Messages that contain questions have a 30 to 40% higher response rate and are a great way to collect basic information on students' progress. Counselors can then provide targeted follow-up assistance to students who need it. Districts that have implemented summer melt interventions find that students most frequently need help processing transcripts, resolving errors on their FAFSA, and interpreting financial aid award letters and tuition bills.



Tips for Engaging Students with Text Messages



Call to Action

Include a short link to a resource, or have the student respond to a simple yes/no question about his or her progress.



Urgency

When possible, create urgency by including dates and sending messages about 3 days prior to deadlines.



Interactive

Staff should monitor and reply to messages the hour after a programmed message is sent.



Prepared Responses

Prepare responses to common or anticipated questions in advance to avoid duplicative or inconsistent work.



Full list of tips available in Appendix, pg. 118.

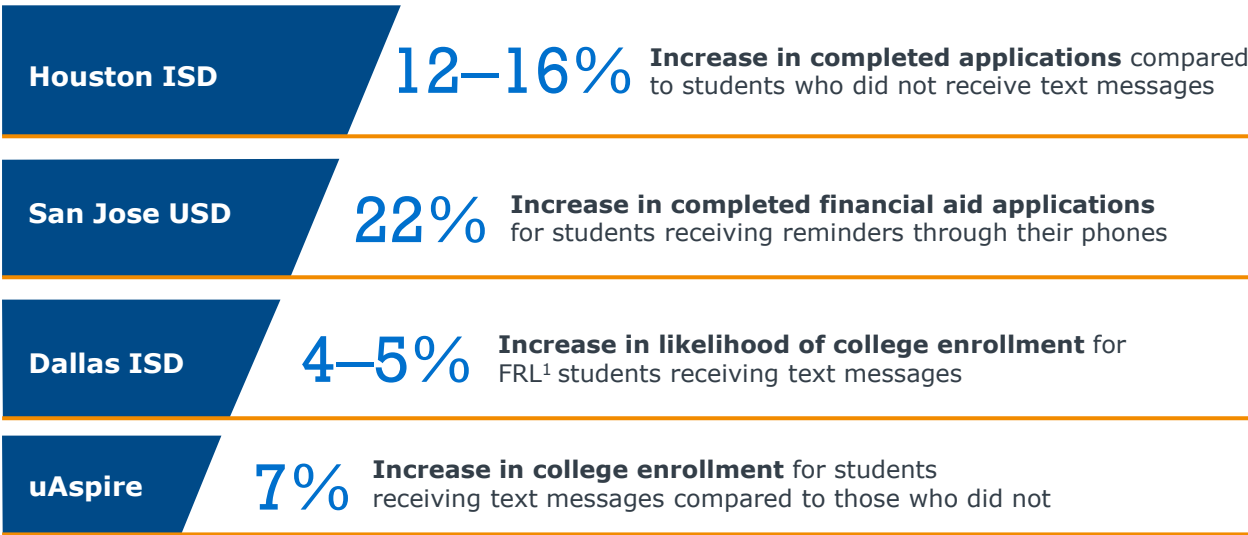
Train staff to monitor and reply to messages promptly to ensure conversations are two-way and interactive. In one study of text nudging, 90% of students read the message within a mere 3 minutes of receiving it. Further, 80% of those students who replied to the message did so within two hours, although most student replies were sent back within the first 15 minutes. Preparing responses to common or anticipated questions in advance can increase capacity and reduce staff time.

More Students Complete Critical Process Steps

Text Messages Increase Postsecondary Application and Enrollment

Districts implementing text campaigns are consistently seeing a significant positive impact on both key college application steps and on college enrollment behavior. With the use of text-message reminders, Houston Independent School District saw a 12 to 16% increase in students submitting college applications, and San Jose Unified School District similarly experienced a 22% increase in submitted financial aid applications. Text nudges have also been found to increase eventual college enrollment rates by 4–7%.

Impact of Text-Message-Nudging Campaigns on College Access



It is important to note that, not only do nudging interventions show demonstrated impact on college enrollment, but early impact studies also show increases in first-year persistence for students as well.

1) Free or reduced-price lunch.

Sources: HISD News Blog, 2015, "Want students to complete their financial aid applications? Text them"; ideas42, 2016, "NUDGING FOR SUCCESS: Using behavioral science to improve the postsecondary student journey"; Harvard University Center for Education Policy Research, 2013, "Strategic Data Project: Summer Melt Handbook"; EAB interviews and analysis.

Affordability Is a Powerful Driver of Attrition

Students Are Most at Risk While Balancing Competing Costs

Even as districts support students through the necessary application steps, college affordability remains a primary concern for low-income and minority students and their parents when considering postsecondary options. At-risk students may struggle with uncertain finances for the entirety of their journey to a postsecondary degree and are at much greater risk of financial attrition because they tend to be more heavily financial aid-dependent.

Students Struggle with the Cost of Attending College

75% Increase in financial attrition from 1994 to 2014 at a public research university in the West

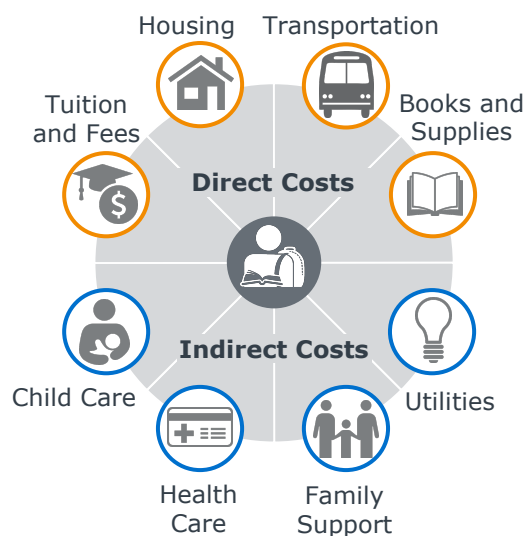
33% Of student responses for withdrawing from college are financial aid-related

Low-Income Students Face Elevated Risk for Missteps

“Our students are financial aid-dependent, so **when their financial aid doesn’t process on time it’s just a domino effect.** Modern middle-class people don’t run into the same financial issues; they just go pay their bill or get their loan and move on. Our students fall into that category of endless paperwork and verification.”

Administrator, Public High School

A Focus on Tuition Masks the Full Picture of College Cost



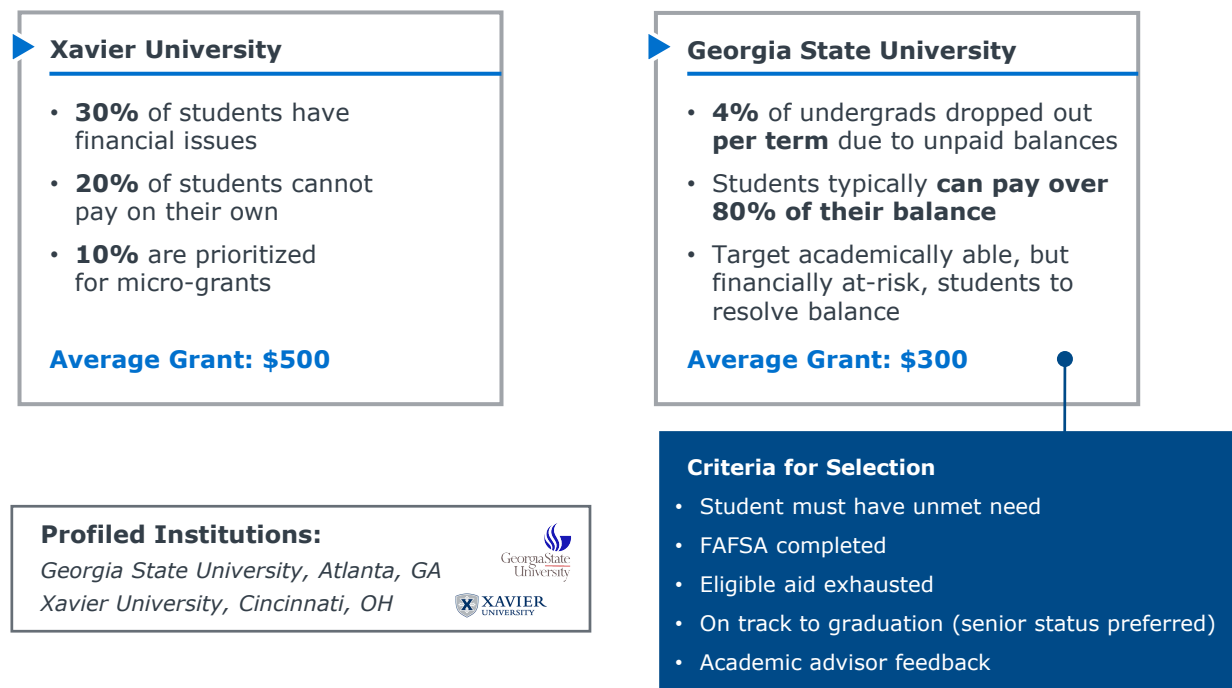
As discussed extensively thus far, low-income and first-generation students often have circumstances (e.g., nontraditional family units, undocumented status) that make navigating the financial aid process more difficult. Helping these students find a way to manage the cost of tuition through scholarships, grants, and loans is critical to make college a reality. Still, focusing exclusively on tuition costs obscures the full range of competing financial priorities that underrepresented students need to balance while on the path to a postsecondary degree.

Higher Education Leverages Micro-Grants

Grants Facilitate Persistence for Financially At-Risk Students

Unpaid balances that block students from on-time course registration are a constant problem very familiar to administrators in higher education. Unfortunately, studies indicate that only 37% of students who drop out from postsecondary institutions intending to return ever do. Many of these students can pay at least 80% of their balance and face only small financial gaps that throw them off track. To address this challenge, some of EAB's innovative higher education members, such as Xavier University and Georgia State University, have implemented targeted micro-grant programs.

Quantitative and Qualitative Criteria Prioritize Student Need and Guide Strategic Impact



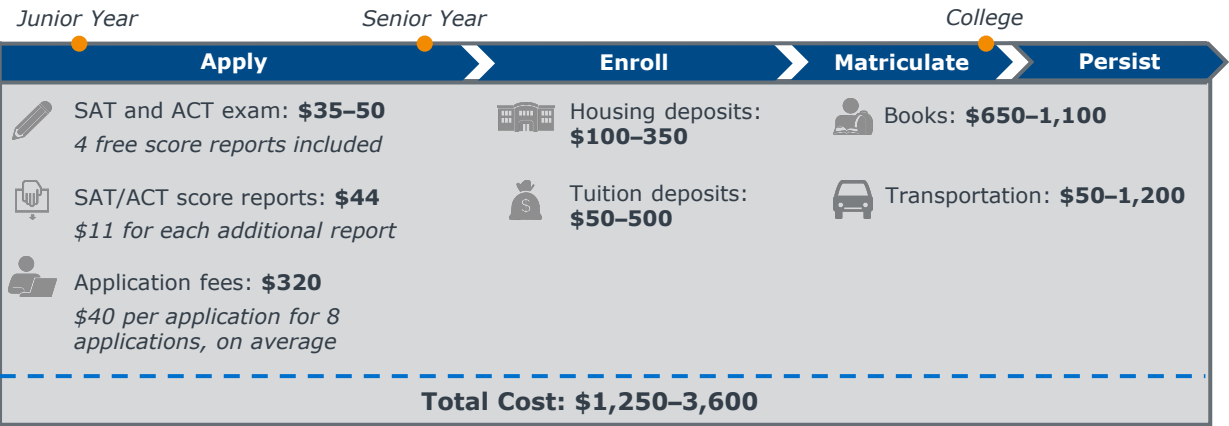
Former President Barack Obama publicly recognized Georgia State University's "Panther Grant" program at the 2014 White House College Opportunity Day of Action. The micro-grants target academically able but financially at-risk students who are likely to be dropped from the institution for an unpaid balance. The financial aid office works with the student affairs office and academic advisors to collect background information on eligible students' circumstances. Administrators then resolve unpaid balances with average grants that range from \$300 to \$500.

Hurdles Start Long Before Tuition Payments Begin

Sufficient Cash Flow for Small Financial Gaps Key to Affordability

Applying to six to ten different institutions requires students and families to manage a multitude of costs. Paying for SAT and ACT exams, securing fee waivers, and sending exam scores can quickly become burdensome to students. Students must then pay application fees that range from \$30 to \$90 each and face pressures to travel to visit campuses to meet expectations for admission to more highly selective institutions.

Students Deterred Before They Arrive on Campus



Even Small Financial Shortfalls Can Derail Plans

“What we found early on was if you’re short \$20,000 or you’re short \$200 for college, it doesn’t matter—if you don’t have any money, it’s all the same. There are some of our kids who have tens of thousands of dollars of scholarship money, **but they’re short just a few hundred dollars and that’s the reason why they don’t go.**”

Administrator, Public High School

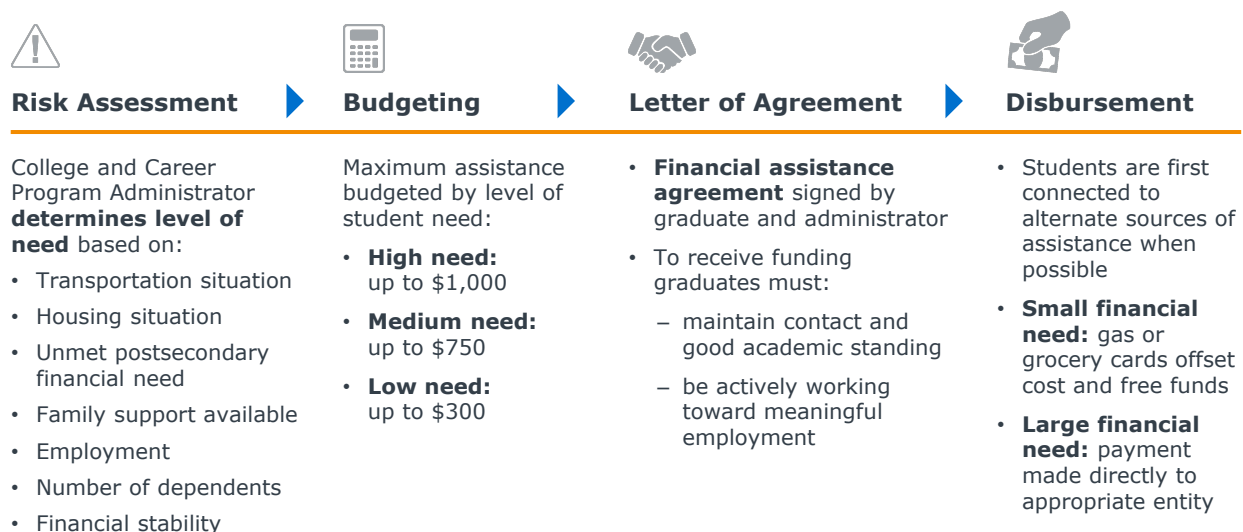
Once past application, students must pay tuition and housing deposits, cover medical expenses for recommended and required vaccinations, buy expensive textbooks and supplies, and secure reliable transportation to campus. All of these costly hurdles arise before students even make it on campus or receive any financial aid from their postsecondary institution. Although school districts hold information nights on financing college or provide support in filing the FAFSA, these financial micro-barriers can significantly impact underrepresented students’ postsecondary plans. Lack of sufficient cash flow to cover some of the hundreds of dollars in costs just to arrive on campus often derails the best of students’ intentions and college aspirations.

Helping Students Overcome Smaller Financial Hurdles

School Provides Targeted Emergency Financial Support

Christel House Academy started a financial assistance program to provide targeted, emergency financial assistance to enable college enrollment. As a public charter school working with underrepresented students, Christel House Academy offers robust college and career transition support. Administrators added the financial assistance component after realizing that highly capable students were not realizing their college aspirations because they lacked sufficient cash flow to cover small expenses such as transportation or textbooks.

Christel House Academy's Financial Assistance Program



Profiled Institution:

Christel House Academy¹, Indianapolis, IN



The college and career coordinator assesses student risk for financial hardship along seven factors and then budgets a maximum amount of assistance available to at-risk students, as outlined above. When a student presents a financial need, the coordinator investigates the claim and first tries to connect the student with alternate sources of financial assistance such as additional scholarships, part-time employment, public benefits (e.g., child care, health insurance, food stamps), or connection to community partners. For small outstanding financial needs, the school provides gas or grocery cards. For larger financial emergencies, administrators will make the payment directly to the appropriate entity.

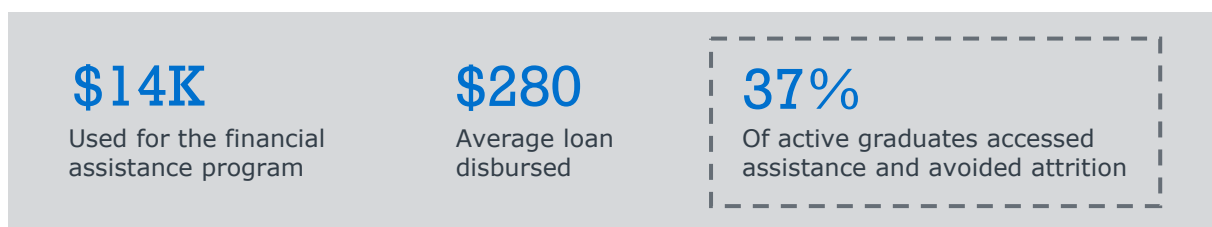
1) Public charter school.

Small Loans, Big Impact

Access to Financial Support Keeps Students on Track

Just over one-third of Christel House Academy graduates have accessed emergency financial assistance to continue on their path to postsecondary education. Similar to the higher education examples presented, the school's average disbursed loan is \$280. The proactive risk-assessment process and involvement by student support personnel in both the secondary and postsecondary examples allows institutions to target students with true emergency financial needs.

Impact of the Christel House Academy Financial Assistance Program (2016–17 School Year)



Considerations for Success from Higher Education

Selection Method and Targeting Distinguish Grants from Other Emergency Funds at Georgia State University



Collaboration with academic affairs substantiates students' circumstances and ensures awards go to those most in need



Proactive targeting and outreach allow grants to support institutional priorities (e.g., equity for underserved populations) while limiting the chance of students gaming the system

Impact on Georgia State University Grant Recipients

70% Graduate within two semesters

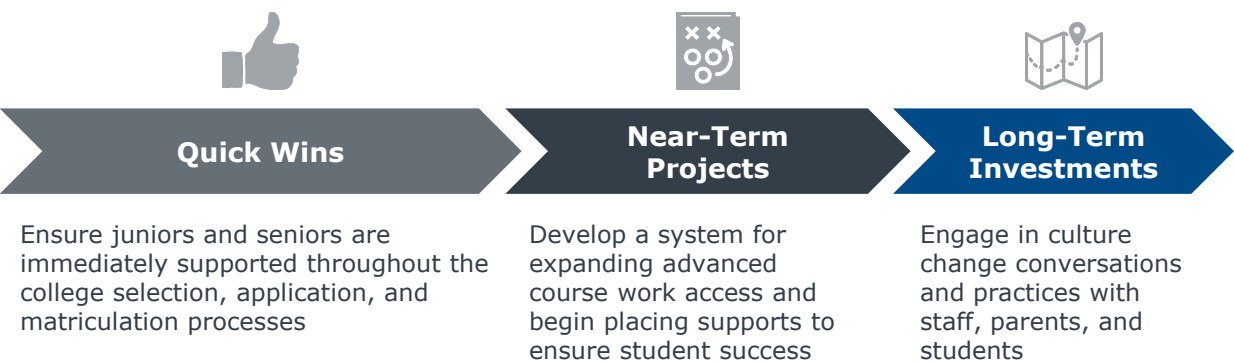
20% Require additional awards

Referring back to the Georgia State University program mentioned earlier, the Panther Grant Program has also seen enormous success, growing from 41 grants in 2011 to 3,700 grants in 2014. Some administrators may initially raise concerns that students will game the system or “double dip” in this type of program to receive financial support. However, the vast majority of grant recipients at Georgia State University do not require additional awards and typically go on to graduate within two semesters.

Taking Actionable Steps to Close the Access Gap

How Schools Can Strategically Use Our Practices

Administrators and staff will be able to quickly and easily incorporate profiled practices that support or enhance already existing initiatives to support college access for low-income and minority students. However, below is an overall recommendation of how districts can strategically prioritize all of the practices presented in this study. The quickest wins will come from implementing the practices presented in Columns III and IV, targeting the significant number of juniors and seniors currently approaching the college application and matriculation processes.



Applicable Study Sections

Column III: Ensure College Choice Focuses on Likelihood of Success	Column IV: Remove Barriers to Application and Matriculation	Column II: Build Student Confidence via Advanced Course Work	Column I: Create a Culture of High Expectations
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Districts can, and must, focus those students on institutions that are likely to support their success and then help at-risk students successfully apply and matriculate. Near-term projects should focus on Column II: districts need to expand access to advanced course work and ensure a greater number of students build the confidence that they can succeed in a college environment. Finally, the longest-term investment will likely be in the practices presented in Column I. Districts will have to engage in sustained efforts to create a culture of high expectations with staff, parents, and students to ensure lasting change.



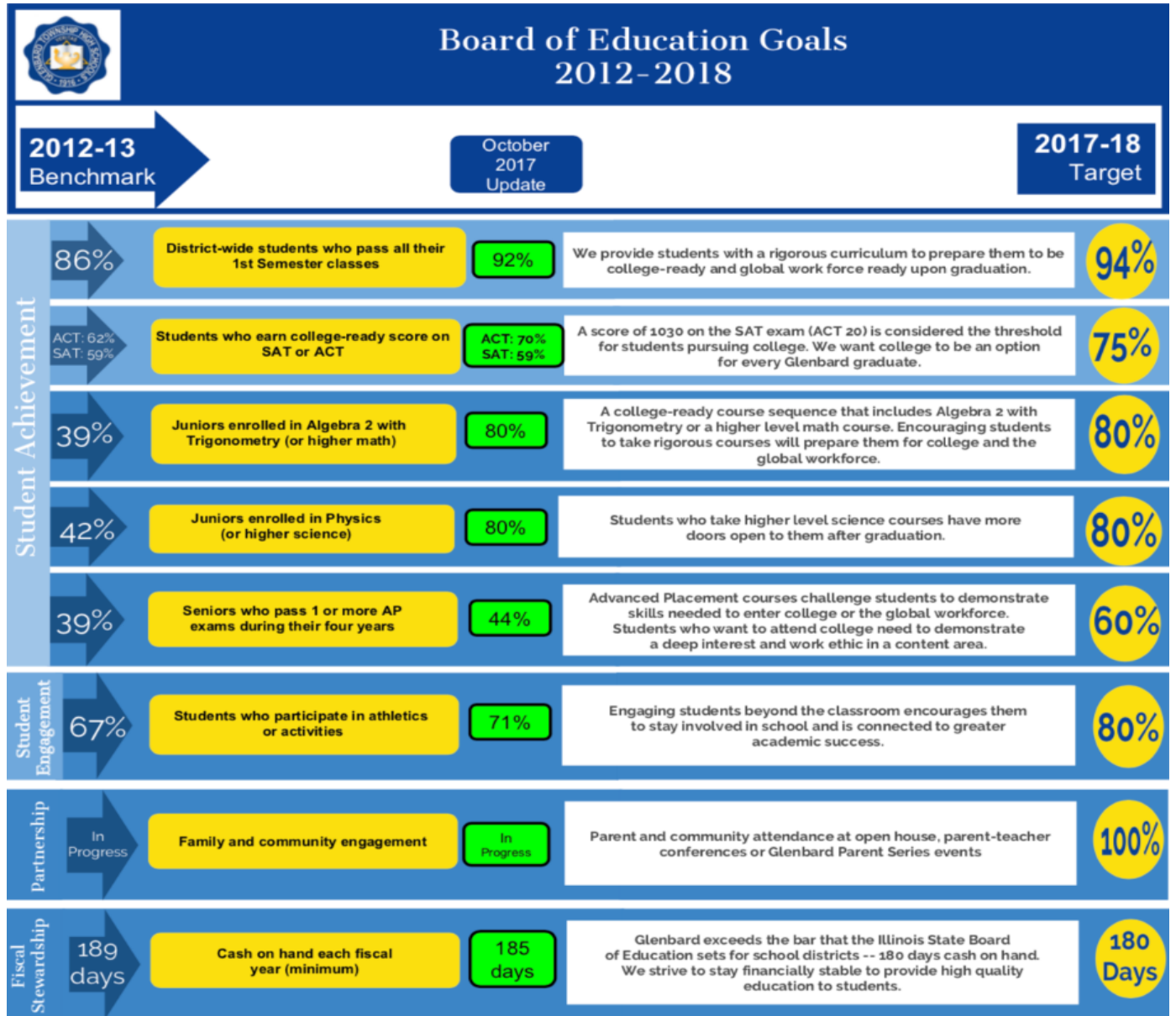
Appendix

Implementation Resources

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Accountability Dashboard

Glenbard High School District #87



Board Goals Update 2016-17 (as of 11.21.2017)

Goal	2012-13 Baseline	2013-14 Update	2014-15 Update	2015-2016 Update	As of 11.21.2017	2017-18 Goal	% Towards Goal
1st Semester District Passing Rate#	86%	85.3%	83.7%	88%	92.2%	94%	78%
Students who earn 20 or Higher ACT Composite Score	62%	68%	69.6%	71%	70%	75%	62%
Students who earn 1030 or Higher on the SAT Total Score^					59%	75%	N/A
Students who grew 5 pts Composite Explore-ACT **	55%	54%	65.4%	64%	TBD	75%	N/A
Juniors Enrolled in Algebra II or higher Math***	39%	72%	71.5%	74.0%	80%	80%	100%
Juniors Enrolled in Physics or higher Science***	42%	69%	69.9%	77.2%	80%	80%	100%
Students who pursue their elective passion*	92%	96.5%	96.3% (71.8%)	96.9%(71.9%)	97.6% (72.5%)	97%	112%
Graduates attending COD who do not need remediation	70%	74.40%	70.30%	74%	TBD	100%	TBD
Seniors who pass 1 or more AP Exams	39%	40.8%	43%	42%	44.3%	60%	25%
Increase growth scores to 5 pts for Black students	3.2	2.9	3.3	3.9	N/A	5	N/A
Increase growth scores to 5 pts for Hispanic students	3.9	3.5	3.8	3.6	N/A	5	N/A
Students who participate in Athletics/Activities	67%	70%	69%	71%	71.0%	80%	31%
*** Data as of 8.2.2017, not final (based on changes in enrollment for 2017-18)							
** 5pts Composite Growth used for 14-15 and 15-16 only--previously sts had to hit the target growth in all areas to count							
* (72.5%) = elective enrollment excluding world languages							
^ First year of SAT implementation (April, 2017)							
TBD=Data Analysis In Progress							
# Passing rate is based on D or higher (grades 2,3,4,5)							

Parent University Session Guide

Fresno Unified School District

9th Grade

Session 1: Grade-Level Presentation

Understand what to expect and what to do in the freshman year of high school.

Session 2: Behavior and Discipline

Overview of social emotional changes in high school. Warning signs for parents and support services available. Student discipline, bullying, zero tolerance, and suspension.

Session 3: Attendance/Atlas

Understanding differences in attendance and tardiness, learn about truancy and habitual truancy, how to clear an absence, and what is considered an excused absence.

Session 4: HS Campus Visit

At the end of the module, parents will have gained hands-on experience of the dynamics of their feeder high school. Parents will be exposed to the documents that guide school district operations, will understand important individuals and their roles within the district, and will take away tools that will help them prepare their teens for success.

10th Grade

Session 1: Grade-Level Presentation

Understand what to expect and what to do in the sophomore year of high school.

Session 2: Monitoring Student Progress

Parents will learn how to support their student's academic success by learning more about different class options, A–G, student's daily routines, and how to monitor their student's academic progress with an overview of Atlas and EduText.

Session 3: Career Technical Education (CTE): Understanding Industry Sectors and Pathways

Provide parents general information about Career Technical Education and the resources available.

Session 4: College Exploration: Overview of the College Pathway

Provide a general overview of systems of higher education, A–G requirements, entrance exams and financial aid.

Session 5: Advanced Placement (AP) Parent Night

Understanding AP courses and opportunities that come with taking rigorous courses. Meet the teachers and learn about classroom expectations.

Parent University Session Guide (cont.)

Fresno Unified School District

11th Grade

Session 1: Grade-Level Presentation

Overview of student academic standing, college preparation, and support services available. Review of high school graduation and A–G requirements, postsecondary options, college entrance examinations and fees, and senior year timeline.

Session 2: Preparation for SAT and ACT Exams

Provide parents a basic understanding of the importance and benefits of SAT and ACT examinations and scholarship opportunities.

Session 3: Advanced Placement Courses and Examination

Inform parents of the importance of AP courses, benefits of the examination, and test administration. Review postsecondary options.

Session 4: Scholarship and Financial Aid Information

Introduce parents to college preparation such as financial aid, grants, loans, scholarship opportunities, and support programs within a college environment. Overview of the initial stage of the FAFSA application process and review of basic timelines.

12th Grade

Session 1: Grade-Level Presentation

Understand the critical pitfalls, preparations, and resources for support for high school seniors in order to be successful. Reviews senior year expectations, “senioritis,” postsecondary options, and industry sectors.

Session 2: CCC Enrollment and Matriculation Process

Inform parents of important dates, fees, and preparation steps required to complete the CCC application process. Covers community college admission requirements, placement tests and costs, scholarship opportunities, and financial support.

Session 3: CSU Admission and Requirements

Inform parents of important dates, fees, and preparation steps required to complete the CSU application process. Reviews the CSU system, admission requirements, fees, placement tests, financial aid, and student orientation.

Session 4: UC/Private Admission and Requirements

Inform parents of important dates, fees, and preparation steps required to complete UC and Private Universities and Independent colleges’ application process. Reviews UC System, Private/Independent colleges of California, application and admission requirements, exam dates, and fees.

College-Identity Curriculum Guide

The YES Prep college prep curriculum focuses on eight noncognitive skills that are emphasized throughout all four years of their college seminar classes. The noncognitive skills YES Prep teaches come from the work of Dr. William Sedlacek. Below, the definition of each skill is provided, along with positive and negative student behaviors associated with each, taken from the original research. These can be used as a guide for developing curriculum and assessments associated with a noncognitive college prep curriculum.

SKILL #1: POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT

This variable assesses the student's confidence, self-esteem, independence, and determination—all vital components of future achievement and success.

Positive Evidence

- Does the student feel confident about making it through graduation?
- Does the student make positive statements about him/herself?
- Does the student expect to achieve his/her goals and perform well in academic and nonacademic areas?
- Does the student provide evidence of how he/she will attain his/her goals?
- Does the student link his/her interests and experiences with his/her goals?
- Does the student assume he/she can handle new situations or challenges?

Negative Evidence

- Does the student express any reason he/she might not complete school or succeed and attain his/her goals?
- Does the student express concerns that other students are better than he/she is?
- Does the student expect to have marginal grades?
- Does the student have trouble balancing his/her personal and academic life?
- Does the student appear to be avoiding new challenges or situations?

SKILL #2: REALISTIC SELF-APPRAISAL

This variable assesses the student's ability to recognize and accept his/her strengths and deficiencies, especially in academics, and works hard at self-development to broaden his/her individuality.

Positive Evidence

- Is the student aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses?
- Does the student know what it takes to pursue a given career?
- Is the student realistic about his/her abilities?
- Does the student show an awareness of how his/her service, leadership, extracurricular activities, or schoolwork has caused him/her to change over time?
- Has the student learned something from these structured or unstructured activities?
- Does the student appreciate and understand both positive and negative feedback?
- Does the student provide evidence of overcoming anger, shyness, and lack of discipline?
- Does the student face a problem, such as a bad grade, with determination to do better?

Negative Evidence

- Is the student unaware of how evaluations are done in school?
- Is the student not sure about his/her own abilities?
- Is the student uncertain about how his/her peers or superiors rate his/her performances?
- Does the student overreact to positive or negative reinforcement rather than seeing it in a larger context?
- Is the student unaware of how he/she is doing in classes until grades are out?
- Is the student unaware of positive and negative consequences of his/her grades, actions, or skills?

Sources: Sedlacek W, (2011), "Using Noncognitive Variables in Assessing Readiness for Higher Education," *Readings on Equal Education*, 25, 187-205, www.scribd.com/document/121489625/Article-from-Sedlacek-on-Using-NonCogs#fullscreen&from_embed; EAB interviews and analysis.

College-Identity Curriculum Guide (cont.)

SKILL #3: UNDERSTANDS HOW TO HANDLE RACISM, NAVIGATE THE SYSTEM

This variable assesses the student's ability to understand the role of the "system" in life and to develop a method of assessing the cultural/racial demands of the system and respond accordingly/assertively.

Positive Evidence

- Is the student able to overcome in a positive and effective way challenges or obstacles he/she is confronted with as a result of racism?
- Does the student understand the role of the "system" in his/her life and how it treats nontraditional persons?
- Does the student reveal ways that he/she has learned to "deal" with the "system" accordingly?

Negative Evidence

- Is the student unaware of how the "system" works?
- Is the student preoccupied with racism or does he or she not feel racism exists?
- Does the student blame others for his/her problems?
- Does the student react with the same intensity to large or small issues concerned with race?
- Is the student's method for successfully handling racism that does not interfere with personal and academic development nonexistent?

SKILL #4: LONG-RANGE GOALS

This variable assesses the student's persistence, patience, long-term planning, and willingness to defer gratification and success in college.

Positive Evidence

- Does the student reveal experience with setting both academic and personal long-term goals?
- Does the student provide evidence that he/she is planning for the future?
- Has the student determined a course of study and anticipated the type of career or path he/she might pursue?
- Is the student aware of realistic and intermediate steps necessary to achieve goals?
- Has the student participated in activities (volunteer work, employment, extra courses, community work) related to his/her anticipated career goal?

Negative Evidence

- Does the student lack evidence of setting and accomplishing goals?
- Is the student likely to proceed without clear direction?
- Does the student rely on others to determine outcomes?
- Does the student focus too much attention on the present?
- Is the student's plan for approaching a course, school in general, an activity, or other engagement nonexistent?
- If the student states his/her goals, are the goals vague or unrealistic?

SKILL #5: STRONG SUPPORT PERSON

This variable assesses the availability of a strong support network, help, and encouragement and the degree to which the student relies solely on her/his own resources.

Positive Evidence

- Does the student have a strong support system? (This can be a personal, professional, or academic support as long as it is someone the student can turn to for advice, consultation, assistance, encouragement, etc.)
- Is the student willing to admit that he/she needs help and able to pull on other resources, other than him/herself, to solve problems?

Negative Evidence

- Does the student avoid turning to a support person, mentor, or close advisors for help?
- Does the student keep his/her problems to him/herself?
- Does the student state that he/she can handle things on his/her own?
- Does the student state that access to a previous support person may have been reduced or eliminated?
- Is the student unaware of the importance of a support person?

College-Identity Curriculum Guide (cont.)

SKILL #6: LEADERSHIP

This variable assesses the student's skills developed or influence exercised from his/her formal and informal leadership roles.

Positive Evidence

Has the student taken leadership initiative (e.g., by founding clubs/organizations)? What evidence is there?

Does the student describe the skills he/she has developed as a leader, skills such as assertiveness, effectiveness, organizing, and time management?

Has the student shown evidence of influencing others and being a good role model?

Is the student comfortable providing advice and direction to others?

Does the student describe a commitment to being a role model for siblings, community members, or schoolmates?

Does the student show sustained commitment to one or two types of organizations with increasing involvement, skill development, and responsibility?

Does the student take action and initiative?

Negative Evidence

Is the student unable to turn to others for advice or direction?

Does the student lack confidence or leadership skills?

Is the student passive or does he/she lack initiative?

Is the student overly cautious?

Does the student avoid controversy?

SKILL #7: COMMUNITY

This variable assesses the student's identification with a cultural, geographic, or racial group and his/her demonstrated activity within that community grouping.

Positive Evidence

Does the student show sustained commitment to a service site or issue area?

Does the student demonstrate a specific or long-term commitment/relationship with a community?

Has the student accomplished specific goals in a community setting?

Does the student's community service relate to career or personal goals?

Negative Evidence

Does the student lack involvement in cultural, racial or geographical group or community?

Is the student involved in his/her community in name only?

Does the student engage more in solitary rather than group activities (academic or nonacademic)?

SKILL #8: NONTRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED

This variable assesses the student's experiences gained in a field through study and experiences beyond the classroom. This variable pays particular attention to the ways the student gains nontraditional, perhaps culturally or racially based, views of the field.

Positive Evidence

Does the student use his/her knowledge to teach others about the topic?

Is the student working independently in his/her field? (Be sensitive to variations between academic fields and the experiences that can be gained. For example, if in the sciences, by doing independent research, or if in the arts or crafts, by participating in competitions or compositions.)

Negative Evidence

Does the student lack evidence of learning from the community or nonacademic activities?

Is the student traditional in his/her approach to learning?

Is the student unaware of his/her possibilities in a field of interest?

Shared-Experience Video Campaign Toolkit

San Jose State University

First-generation college students often report feelings of not belonging on a college campus. In order to address this issue, schools can provide access to relatable role models and peers for first-generation college students. An easy way to raise student awareness of these examples is to create a video campaign featuring student, staff, and alumni who were also first-generation college students.

Step 1: Identify individuals across campus who were first-generation college students

Begin by identifying individuals in key constituent groups who were or are first-generation college students. Be sure to include current students, alumni, teachers, administrators, and staff. There are a number of ways to collect information on who was or is a first-generation college student on your campus.

Option 1: Reach out to existing clubs and groups

College support programs or other relevant clubs may already exist in your district. These groups are an excellent place to seek out individuals to share their stories, since they are centered around a shared experience and interest in creating support networks.

Option 2: Find interest via word of mouth

If there are no existing groups in your district, you can make people aware of your call for submissions via word of mouth. This can literally be a person-to-person request for names of potentially interested parties or can be done through a flyer campaign and emails.

Step 2: Record interviews

Once you have identified individuals to interview, find a quiet space in which to record your interviews. Use the interview question guides below to conduct your interviews. Ensure that all of your interviewees sign a video release form.

Interview Questions for Students:

1. What does it mean to be a first-generation college student?
2. When did you first realize that you were a first-generation college student?
3. How does being a first-generation college student impact your high school experience?
4. What are some of the strengths you think are unique to first-generation college students?
5. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced on the path to college?
6. What school resources did you use to address that challenge?
7. What do you wish you had known before you started pursuing college?
8. What advice would you give to a first-generation college student who is starting college?
9. What made you want to go to college?
10. How do you find other students to relate and connect to?
11. What are your plans after school?

Interview Questions for Faculty and Staff:

1. When did you first realize that you were a first-generation college student?
2. How did being a first-generation college student impact your college experience?
3. What are some of the strengths you think are unique to first-generation college students?
4. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced when you started college?
5. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
6. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced after you graduated?
7. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
8. What do you wish you had known about university faculty/staff when you first went to college?
9. What advice would you give to a current first-generation college student?

Shared-Experience Video Campaign Toolkit (cont.)

San Jose State University

Interview Questions for Alumni:

1. When did you first realize that you were a first-generation college student?
2. How did being a first-generation college student impact your college experience?
3. What are some of the strengths you think are unique to first-generation college students?
4. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced when you started college?
5. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
6. What was one of the biggest challenges you faced after you graduated?
7. What campus resource did you use to address that challenge?
8. How do you find other students on campus to relate and connect to?
9. What advice would you give to a first-generation college student who is about to graduate?
10. What advice would you give to a current first-generation college student?

Step 3: Edit videos

Below is a list of key aspects to consider while editing your videos:

1. **Shorter is generally better.** While you might be tempted to include the entire interview that you recorded of a student, faculty member, or alumni, students today prefer short video content, often called "video clips," that are less than 1 minute in duration. Try to edit each interview or video to less than 2 to 3 minutes.
2. **You do not need to include the recording of the question.** When you are editing the responses of your interviewees, you should not include the part of the video where you can hear yourself or the staff member who did the recording, asking the question. Just stick to the answer and delete any video where there is a long pause or silence.
3. **Make sure all of the speech in the final video maintains a consistent volume.** Some people speak louder than others. If you are creating a video that features multiple interviewees, be sure to adjust the volume in your editing software so that the soundtrack broadcasts at a consistent level.

Below are some recommended sample formats for your video clips:

Option 1: Multiple interviewees, same question



Option 2: One interviewee, multiple questions



Option 3: One interviewee, one question



Step 4: Distribute videos

Distributing videos via social media is an easy way to share them across campus quickly. Post them to your own social media account pages and send them to other school departments to post on their pages as well. You may also want to consider incentivizing students to share them online with giveaways or raffles.

Accelerated-Course Placement Matrix Criteria

Orange County Public Schools

Data point	Criteria	Score	Grade Level
FSA ELA (two year history)	Average ≥ 2.5	10 points	Grades 8-11
	Average 2.0 - 2.49	8 points	
	Average < 2.0	4 points	
AP Potential	$\geq 60\%$	10 points	Grades 9-11
	40 - 59%	8 points	
	$< 40\%$	4 points	
GPA	UWGPA ≥ 3.0	10 points	Grades 8-11
	UWGPA 2.0 - 2.9	8 points	
	UWGPA < 2.0	0 points	
Credits (by grade level)	On Track	10 points	Grades 9-11
	Not On Track	4 points	
Grade History	No D's or F's	10 points	Grades 8-11
	No more than 1 D or F	8 points	
	Multiple Ds and Fs	4 points	
Alg I EOC	Level 4-5	10 points	Grades 8-11
	Level 3	8 points	
	Level 1-2	4 points	
PERT	≥ 97	10 points	Grades 9-11
	< 97	8 points	
SAT Math	≥ 530	10 points	Grades 9-11
	< 530	8 points	
SAT EBRW	≥ 480	10 points	Grades 9-11
	< 480	8 points	
ACT Math	≥ 18	10 points	Grades 9-11
	< 18	8 points	
ACT Reading	≥ 21	10 points	Grades 9-11
	< 21	8 points	
ACT English	≥ 18	10 points	Grades 9-11
	< 18	8 points	

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

FAFSA Completion Collective Impact Initiative (FCCII)

Colorado Department of Education

What is the FCCII?

Created by the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and with support from the Kresge Foundation, the FCCII connects 24 states in a partnership that aims to assist low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students as they complete the FAFSA, a critical first step in their pursuit of postsecondary education. It builds on the US Department of Education's FAFSA Completion Initiative by allowing states to use Colorado's highly successful tool to track student FAFSA completion and to exchange best practices and strategies in tracking FAFSA completion.

How was the initiative created?

In 2014, the US Department of Education announced a change in provisions that allowed state grant agencies to disclose limited FAFSA completion information to local educational agencies (LEAs), secondary schools, and to certain designated entities. **This opened the door for all states to implement a data-sharing tool that can equip school district administrators to guide next steps beyond high school.** With the US Department of Education's approval and encouragement, direct assistance could be provided to simplify FAFSA completion and make information about completion more accessible.

Colorado has developed a FAFSA completion tool that can be adapted and adopted by any state that is willing to work with the federal government and sign an agreement that outlines the ways in which the information can be shared and used. Once a state has signed the agreement with the government, it can partner with Colorado and 23 other states to implement its own version of the tool and adapt it to its own needs.

How can states participate in the FCCII?

There are two ways states can participate: (1) FCCII application and (2) Professional Learning Community (PLC). First, states are given the option to receive the technical tool in order to track which students in each district and high school have completed their FAFSA. States in the FCCII also participate in a PLC, which facilitates discussions around FAFSA completion and records best practices for FAFSA completion. While not all states are receiving the technical tool, all involved states in the FCCII are participating in the PLC.

How many states have been involved?

AZ, CO, DE, GA, ID, IL, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MT, NE, NM, ND, NC, OR, UT, WA, WV, WI, WY, and the District of Columbia.

How has DCPS participated?

DCPS adopted the Colorado tool and then integrated it with its own system, allowing the district to track FAFSA completion in real time. This allows administrators from the district to see the completion status of each FAFSA application and even to proactively alert students and families about issues arising with their application that they may not have been aware of. This timely tracking and alerting allows students to correct errors that would have otherwise disqualified them from federal aid.

Text-Message-Nudging Guidelines

Tips for Effectively Text-Messaging Students

Purpose of the Tool

The following list of best practices for texting students was compiled by experts at Signal Vine, a text-messaging provider that works with many colleges, school districts, and community-based organizations nationwide. These tips are intended to provide additional context for practitioners when devising text-messaging calendars, schedules, and content.

- 1 Frequency**
The recommended number of prescheduled or programmed messages is 2–5 per month. We discourage more than that but strongly encourage back-and-forth conversation if a student replies to the message.
- 2 Personalization**
Make sure that the messages are personalized and include relevant student information (e.g., student's first name, grade, school) and the counselor/advisor's name, especially in the first message. The more personalized the message, the higher the response rate.
- 3 Relevancy**
Content of the messages should be relevant to the particular recipient's needs. Colleges often filter messages only to those students who meet certain criteria that would make the message relevant. We strongly discourage mass texting, where everyone receives the same message.
- 4 Action**
Include "calls to action" in the text messages that will nudge students to complete their necessary tasks or to take an action that moves forward in the process. For example, you might include a short link (e.g., bit.ly or goo.gl) to a resource or have a student respond back to answer a question about his or her progress.
- 5 Urgency**
When possible, create urgency by using dates and sending messages about three days prior to deadlines. Make sure that you send the message on a date that is not too close to the deadline (so recipients aren't overwhelmed) but that also is not too far away from the deadline (so they don't forget about the deadline).
- 6 Timing**
Timing can impact the rate of student responses to text messages. During the school year, K–12 students reply most frequently before school (7 am) or after school (4–7 pm). College student messaging should begin between 10 and 11 am; the lunch hour is popular and we have found no need for class-day limitations.
- 7 Interactive**
Ensure that the conversations are two-way and interactive and that counselors are responding to students' messages by answering questions in a timely manner. Prepare staff to monitor/reply to messages during the hour after a programmed message has been sent. Most student replies will be sent back within the first 15 minutes.
- 8 Programmed**
Productivity increases when time is spent up front to design a program of messages around key dates, which reduces the pressure on staff to remember when to engage specific students. We have seen a 4x–10x increase in counselor capacity when staff members are able to readily respond to student replies to programmed messages.

Text-Message-Nudging Guidelines (cont.)

Tips for Effectively Text-Messaging Students

- 9 Opt-Out**
Recipients need to be able to opt out of receiving text messages. In the first message, let students know that they always have the option to text back STOP or CANCEL to stop receiving messages. They can always opt back in at a later time and start receiving text messages again.
- 10 Introduction**
It's best to begin the engagement with a message that introduces the counselor and solidifies the connection. We also recommend that you suggest students save the number and text anytime they need help.
- 11 Prepared Responses**
To further productivity, prepare responses to common or anticipated questions in advance to avoid duplicative or inconsistent work on behalf of staff.
- 12 Prepared Links**
Often students would be best suited to utilize an online resource rather than including all of the content in a text. Make these links readily available for counselors to send students to improve productivity and responsiveness.
- 13 Link Shortening**
When including web links, we find using a link shortener such as bit.ly or goo.gl to be useful in conserving characters in programmed messages.
- 14 Less Is More**
The 160-character limit can be challenging for some organizations that want to send two- and three-part messages. Do not exceed the 160-character limit: the process of honing the content of a text message down to its main point ensures students are able to digest the content quickly.
- 15 10-Digit Personal Touch**
Although short codes (3–6 digit numbers) are popular for marketing companies and some may consider sending texts via email (from an email address), students are most likely to trust a 10-digit phone number.
- 16 Ad Hoc Messages**
Programmed messages can cover only the expected communications, so counselors should text students with one-off, ad hoc messages as necessary. This keeps the texting informal and relevancy high.
- 17 Ask Questions**
The best interactions happen when you ask students a question that invites a response. Messages that contain questions have 30%–40% higher response rates, and they are a great way to get information from students.
- 18 Group Messaging**
Messaging students in groups may save time up front, but it's important that each message is still sent one-on-one to avoid unintended connections being made between message recipients.
- 19 Limited Automation**
There is value in automating some student messages, but students are perceptive and therefore quickly recognize when a "computer" has taken over the conversation. We generally advise no more than 2–3 automated messages in a row if you're looking to keep the relationship personal.



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Advisors to Our Work

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