

Nine Steps to Building A College-Going Culture

- 1. College Talk:** A college culture requires clear, ongoing communications with students about what it takes to get to college and what is expected of them to stay on the college path. In their role of preparing all students, all school staff refer to college, share their experiences and thoughts, and provide opportunities for students to informally ask questions about college.
- 2. Clear Expectations:** All students prepare for a full range of postsecondary options and the explicit goals of this preparation is clearly defined, communicated and part of daily school culture, such that students, family, teachers, administrators, and staff recognize the role that each plays in preparing students for college.
- 3. Information and Resources:** Students have access to college information and resources. The information is comprehensive, up-to-date, and accessible. Counselors and other college resource centers or programs work in concert to provide thorough coverage of materials. School faculty is aware of what is available and regularly incorporates it into daily classroom practices.
- 4. Comprehensive Counseling:** All counselors are college counselors. All student interaction with counseling staff are opportunities for college counseling. All counselors are informed and have access to college training, such as the Counselor Breakfast and UC admissions training. All decisions about students' coursework and career options are made with all postsecondary options in mind.
- 5. Testing and Curriculum:** Students are knowledgeable about the PSAT, ACT, SAT, and SAT II, and testing dates. In addition, the school is committed to providing the necessary resources ensuring that students are prepared for the tests and that testing fees are not barriers. Student access to preparatory coursework like Algebra and Geometry is normal. Moreover, the school pledges that students have access to at least the basic A-G college preparatory curriculum.
- 6. Faculty Involvement:** School faculty is active in the creation and maintenance of college culture. They are up to date on important "college knowledge" (admission requirements, types of institutions, etc.) and participate in ongoing professional development to allow them to be active in preparing students for college. This also includes integrating college information and the very idea of college into regular classroom activities.
- 7. Family Involvement:** Parents and/or other family members are informed partners in the process of building a college culture. They have opportunities to gain knowledge about the college planning process as well as being aware that their children and all students have the potential to go to college. The counseling and college resource staff are available to answer any questions and help make decisions about students' academic futures.

3. **College Partnerships:** Forming active links with local colleges and universities is vital to the creation of a college culture. This facilitates college-related activities, such as field trips to college campuses and fairs, academic enrichment programs, and raising awareness of and aspirations toward college.

9. **Articulation:** Students should have a seamless experience where the college message is shared by counselors and teaching staff from elementary, middle and high school. Work being done at each school site should be coordinated with activities at other levels.

College Talk Indicators

1. All teachers teach with the assumption that all students can and will go to college.
2. U.S. Map displayed prominently indicating where the school faculty and staff went to college and (if high school) where high school graduates went to college.
3. Faculty/staff displays their diplomas in their classroom. One counselor even has a picture of the car she owned at the time, next to each corresponding degree.
4. Each teacher displays a sign which states "Mr./Ms. . . . went to If you have any questions about this school, come and ask me."
5. Displaying college banners and college information such as exam dates and deadlines, financial aid information and deadlines, etc.
6. Having a well advertised and easily accessible college career center or college space where students can access information and materials.
7. For elementary students, pictures can be taken of them in a cap and gown and display them as the "Class of . . .", the year they would be expected to graduate from a four year university.
8. Using a curriculum, like "Realizing the College Dream", which has college knowledge as the main focus.
9. Naming each classroom after a specific college and displaying it's banner, information, etc. inside that classroom.
10. Having a specific day, maybe during homecoming week or during a month where college is being emphasized, where everyone wears college gear.
11. Having a college night/college fair and invite students and their families.
12. Having a financial aid night
13. Posting the A-G poster with the school's course list in each classroom and in strategic places around the campus.
14. Using resources, like the FFWD newsletter, short college activities, booklist, etc., which are available from SUP, to spark conversation and interest in college-going in the classroom.
15. Do the Educational Journey exercise and share your Ed Journey experience with your students. Staff and faculty can post their Ed Journey in the classrooms and around the school, as well as on the school website.
16. Display that your school is a "College-Going Community" either on a banner and/or school website.

College-Going Culture Rubric

Center for Educational Outreach at UC Berkeley

The 9 Elements to Support and Encourage a College-Going Culture

School: _____ Date: _____

1	2	3	4
Our school hasn't started work in this area.	Plans are in place to implement this at our school.	This is in place and we have evidence that it occurs.	This is our routine, it works, and we model it for others.

Please evaluate your school for each principle below. Add all scores and divide that sum by 9 to determine your College-Going Culture baseline.

_____ **College Talk** is part of each student's experience. The entire school staff and community members share their own experiences about their college pathways and/or create new experiences that impart their confidence that this pathway is open to all students.

_____ **Clear Expectations** ensure that all students are prepared for a full range of post-secondary options. The goals of what it takes to be prepared are explicitly defined, communicated and part of daily school culture, such that students, families, teachers, administrators, and staff recognize the role that each plays in preparing students for college.

_____ **Information & Resources** are regularly updated and readily available in centralized places such as media center, lunchroom, career/college center, main office, library, and/or college corners in classrooms. These areas are accessible to students, families, faculty, and community members.

_____ **Comprehensive Counseling** for the college pathway is available for every student, primarily from counselors, and supported by outreach staff, teachers and resource personnel. All advisors are informed and have access to college training. Decisions about coursework and career options are made with all post secondary opportunities in mind.

_____ **Testing & Curriculum** development and practices are geared for every student to have college options. All students know about PSAT, SAT, ACT, and SAT II testing dates and have the opportunity to take the tests regardless of cost. Student access to college prep coursework is standard and the school pledges that all students can complete the basic A-G eligibility requirements for UC and CSU. The A-G list is also updated each year to accurately reflect the school's offerings.

_____ **Faculty Involvement** is constant and maintains the college culture at the school. Faculty is up to date on important "college knowledge" and participate in ongoing professional development to allow them to be active in preparing students for college. This also includes integrating college information and the very idea of college into regular classroom activities.

_____ **Family Involvement** is active and regular. Families are informed partners in the process of supporting students through the college pathway. They have opportunities to gain knowledge about the college process and become aware that all students can be college bound. The school staff is available to answer questions and help make decisions about students' academic futures.

_____ **College Partnerships** are strong, facilitating college-related activities, such as field trips to college campuses and fairs, academic enrichment programs, and raising awareness of and aspirations toward college.

_____ **Articulation** between elementary, middle, and high schools is seamless. The college message is constant as students move through their educational journey. Work being done at each school coordinates with activities at other levels and sites.

_____ **College-Going Baseline**

Adapted from Pat McDonough's Nine Elements (UCLA) and SJUSD/CSUSJ GEAR UP Rubric