



Middle School Counselor's Guide

NOSCA's Eight Components of College
and Career Readiness Counseling

 **CollegeBoard**
Advocacy & Policy Center

NOSCA: National Office for School Counselor Advocacy

**OWN THE
TURF**
College and Career
Readiness Counseling

NOSCA's Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling

Own the Turf is NOSCA's national advocacy campaign to galvanize and mobilize school counselors to provide every student with the inspiration, planning, academic preparation and social capital to graduate from high school ready for college and careers. NOSCA's Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling are the road map for this work. They outline an effective path toward creating a college-going culture in schools, districts and communities.

This guide to the Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling is part of a series — one each for elementary, middle and high school counselors — that helps school counselors intentionally focus their work on college and career readiness counseling.

The three guides illustrate how school counselors can use the Eight Components to establish a college-going culture across the K–12 pipeline, promote college and career readiness for all students, and close gaps between low-performing or traditionally underrepresented students and their peers.

The College Board's National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) promotes the value of school counselors as leaders in advancing school reform and student achievement. It seeks to endorse and institutionalize school counseling practice that advocates for equitable educational access and rigorous academic preparation necessary for college and career readiness for all students.

Acknowledgments

Middle School Counselor's Guide: NOSCA's Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling is a National Office for School Counselor Advocacy (NOSCA) publication supported by the College Board Advocacy & Policy Center. This publication is one of three guides to assist school counselors in implementing the Eight Components. The series of guides was written by NOSCA team members Vivian Lee, senior director, and April Bell, associate director.

Many thanks are in order for the production of this publication. Special thanks to Patricia Martin of NOSCA for her leadership and guidance throughout this endeavor; Jennifer Dunn, NOSCA director, for reviewing the guide and providing valuable feedback; Dominique Jones, NOSCA assistant director, for managing the project; and KSA-Plus Communications for editorial and design contributions.

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**Elementary and middle school counselors focus on components 1–6, while high school counselors address components 1–8.*

Your Role in College and Career Readiness Counseling

SCHOOL COUNSELING ACROSS THE K-12 PIPELINE

Imagine a school system in which every student graduates ready for college and career. In this system, all students want to succeed, and they have the tools they need to achieve now and in the future.

Every person in every school community can help students — in elementary, middle and high school — develop the skills and aspirations that are critical to preparing for college and career. As a school counselor, your leadership is central to this work.

Between 2008 and 2018, 63 percent of job openings will require some postsecondary education. But only 42 percent of Americans currently earn an associate degree or higher by the age of 25.¹ What percentage of the students you advise will earn a degree or certification?

Effective school counselors convey the expectation that all students, regardless of their background and economic status, can become college and career ready. The Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling are the road map for leading your school in developing a college-going culture that includes all students.

At first glance, many of the Eight Components may seem familiar, but in fact, they offer a new perspective. The Eight Components are about focusing on critical issues and making sure *all of your decisions and actions* are directly linked to helping *all of your students* prepare for success in college and their chosen careers.

Effective college and career readiness counseling begins in kindergarten and continues through high school. Middle school counselors build on the work of counselors in elementary schools and pave the way for the work of high school counselors.

For example, if high school students are going to take Advanced Placement® (AP®) Calculus, they must complete Algebra I by eighth grade. Attaining that goal

depends on reading proficiently by third grade. There is a clear path, and NOSCA's Eight Components describe it.

School counselors use the Eight Components throughout students' K-12 education:

- Elementary school counselors create early awareness, knowledge and skills that lay the foundation for the academic rigor and social development necessary for college and career readiness. (Components 1-6)
- Middle school counselors create opportunities to explore and deepen college and career knowledge and skills necessary for academic planning and goal setting. (Components 1-6)
- High school counselors create access to college and career pathways that promote full implementation of personal goals that ensure the widest range of future life options. (Components 1-8)

Taken together, the components are the building blocks of college and career readiness counseling. Efforts of school counselors build on each other throughout the K-12 pipeline. The individual components also reinforce one another. They are interconnected, and actions related to one component can lay a foundation for improvements in multiple areas.

1. Carnevale, A.P., Smith, N., and Strohl, J. (June 2010). *Help wanted: Projections of jobs and education requirements through 2018*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

EQUITY, DATA AND WORKING SYSTEMWIDE

Being more effective and reaching all students — especially traditionally underserved populations — may require school counselors to work differently. To be successful with the Eight Components, focus your work in these ways:

Be equitable. Equity means giving every student or student group what they need to be successful. For example, participating in rigorous courses, such as Algebra I, in middle school can affect how far a student will progress in math all the way through high school. The key to equity is making sure all students have the opportunity to enroll in, and the support to complete, rigorous courses. School counselors can advance equity by participating on school leadership teams and using data to identify trends in course taking among student groups. They also can work with teachers to create a welcoming learning environment for traditionally underserved students taking Algebra I and other rigorous courses; encourage their schools to develop academic safety nets to support students who struggle with their work; and teach parents and families how to support their children as they take rigorous courses.

Use data to inform practice. Data provide the starting point for understanding your school community. Use data to identify which students and student groups are successfully preparing for college and career — and which are not. And use data to identify disparities among student groups so you can more effectively reach the students most in need.

Work systemwide. Lead a systemwide effort to create a college-going culture in every part of your students' lives. Work directly with students individually, in groups, in classrooms and across grades. And reach out to them through schoolwide events, collaborations with others in the school district, and activities that engage families and the community.² This approach gives students layers of support from a variety of adults and peers — and it positions you as a leader in preparing students for college and career.

WHAT TO MEASURE

Relevant data

This guide identifies relevant data elements for each component. These are data elements, such as attendance, promotion and GPA, that are available in most schools. (See page 16 for a list of the data elements for all components for elementary, middle and high school.)

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Data by student groups

In addition to reviewing data for all students, break down the data to assess performance of student groups, paying close attention to traditionally underserved populations.

- Race and ethnicity
- Gender
- Grade
- Income level (students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals)
- Special education students
- English language learners
- Other student groups, as appropriate for your school (e.g., students who are homeless or students with a military family member who is deployed)

Disparities between student groups

When you review data for student groups, look for disparities. For example, are attendance rates different for males and females? Do promotion rates of students from low-income families differ from promotion rates for their more affluent peers? By asking these questions, you will identify gaps among student groups.

WHAT TO DO

Work systemwide

Implement interventions systemwide — working with students, schools, districts, parents and families, and communities — to reach everyone. Focus your work on the students who need the most help, and then use data to assess the impact of those efforts. In this way, you will create equitable interventions and begin to close the gaps.

2. Content describing how to work systemwide is derived from Lee, V. V., & Goodnough, G. E. (2011). Systemic data-driven school counseling practice and programming for equity. In B. T. Erford (Ed.) *Transforming the school counseling profession* (3rd). Boston, MA: Pearson Merrill Prentice-Hall.

1

College Aspirations

THE GOAL

Build a college-going culture based on early college awareness by nurturing in students the confidence to aspire to college and the resilience to overcome challenges along the way. Maintain high expectations by providing adequate supports, building social capital and conveying the conviction that all students can succeed in college.

WHY IT MATTERS

School communities that intentionally encourage high aspirations for all students are more likely to help them gain the academic preparation necessary to graduate college and career ready.

WHAT TO MEASURE

Active and productive engagement in school is one indicator of students' aspirations. To assess your students' level of engagement, see if they are attending school, behaving appropriately in school and performing well academically.

Relevant data

- Attendance
- Discipline
- Promotion
- GPA

WHAT TO LOOK FOR**Data by student groups**

Break down the data to assess performance of student groups, paying close attention to traditionally underserved populations. (See page 3 for a list of the student groups).

Disparities between student groups

For example:

- How do the attendance rates for homeless students compare to those of students not considered homeless?
- How do the discipline rates for males compare to those of females?
- How do the promotion rates for Latino students compare to those of white students?

WHAT TO DO**Work systemwide**

Work systemwide — with students, schools, districts, parents and families, and communities — to reach everyone. Focus your work on the students who need the most help, and then use data to assess the impact of those efforts. In this way, you will create equitable interventions and begin to close the gaps.



WORK SYSTEMWIDE

Students

(Individual, Group, Classroom and Grade)

- Connect students who have high tardiness, absences and discipline referrals to potential mentors, including more successful peers, high school students and at least one adult in the school and/or community. Focus on students' attitudes and how their behavior affects themselves and others.
- Help students improve their academic performance and learning habits (striving for excellence, organization, flexibility, listening and communicating effectively) to improve grades and promotion/retention outcomes.
- Help students become successful learners and contributing members of a diverse community. Focus on respecting alternative perspectives, compromise, consensus building, collective decision making, goal setting, problem solving and conflict resolution.

School

- Collaborate with teachers and administrators to review attendance, discipline, promotion/retention and GPA policies and corresponding data. Pilot changes across the school to ensure equity for all student groups. Focus on students' assets and strengths and classroom management.
- Help teachers integrate college/career information into the curriculum to reflect students' interests, talents and abilities. Connect students' interests to academic preparation, postsecondary education and real-world careers.
- Collaborate with teachers to develop interdisciplinary learning opportunities that use creative and performing arts and that make clear connections between academics and careers (e.g., how art can tell the story of history).

District

- Collaborate with elementary school counselors to help students make smooth transitions into middle school. Focus on clarifying academic requirements to graduate college and career ready and outline behavioral expectations. Hold parent meetings, school visits and new student orientations.

- Create middle-to-high-school transition practices that include summer skill-building sessions, parent and student school visits, and orientation. Identify students in need of extra academic and personal support.
- Work with other middle school counselors to develop districtwide practices that strengthen the K–12 college and career ready pipeline by focusing on middle school as the critical bridge between elementary and high school.

Parents and Families

- Create school- and community-based events for parents and families to gain information about helping their children deepen their school engagement (see all student interventions above). Hold the events at a variety of times and locations (community or recreation centers, places of worship, civic centers, or malls) to accommodate a range of schedules. Use materials written in parents' and families' native languages.
- Help parents and families learn how to locate resources (e.g., assistance with academic and behavioral issues such as absenteeism) and to navigate the school system so they can be advocates for their children.
- Teach parents and families the process and components of college and career readiness critical to middle school and how it can open opportunity for high school and beyond.

Community

- Develop community connections to increase student exposure to jobs/careers that reflect their likes and interests and begin to create awareness of their state, national and global communities.
- Invite representatives from local college and career and technical schools, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions (AANAPISIs) to meet with students and families to discuss early college planning and goal setting.

2 Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness

THE GOAL

Advance students' planning, preparation, participation and performance in a rigorous academic program that connects to their college and career aspirations and goals.

WHY IT MATTERS

An academic plan is a road map to success. When students develop an academic plan that specifies the courses they need and in what order, they can focus on college and career planning and goal setting.

WHAT TO MEASURE

To assess your students' academic progress, look at their proficiency in key subject areas; enrollment in and completion of rigorous courses, especially math; and their academic performance in relation to grade-level benchmarks.

Relevant data

- Proficiency in state tests for English, math and science
- Students enrolled in and completing Algebra I

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Data by student groups

Break down the data to assess performance of student groups, paying close attention to traditionally underserved populations. (See page 3 for a list of the student groups).

Disparities between student groups

For example:

- How do English proficiency rates of low-income students compare to those of their more affluent peers?
- How do the Algebra I enrollment rates of African American students compare to those of white students?
- How do the Algebra I completion rates for Latino students compare to those of Asian students?

WHAT TO DO

Work systemwide

Work systemwide — with students, schools, districts, parents and families, and communities — to reach everyone. Focus your work on the students who need the most help, and then use data to assess the impact of those efforts. In this way, you will create equitable interventions and begin to close the gaps.



WORK SYSTEMWIDE

Students

(Individual, Group, Classroom and Grade)

- Help students identify the knowledge and skills they have and those they must acquire for success in middle and high school and beyond. Provide concrete information about how taking courses such as Algebra I in eighth grade can affect their future opportunities.
- Help traditionally underserved students in rigorous courses identify their strengths, build resiliency skills, make personal commitments to learning and persist to course completion.
- Help students gain the studying and test-taking skills and the higher-order thinking skills (application, synthesis, evaluation and creativity) necessary to attain proficiency or higher in key academic areas. Use college and career readiness content as a base for teaching these transferable skills.
- Help students use good learning habits (plan work, use multiple information resources, check for accuracy, ask for feedback, follow directions, ask clarifying questions, increase patience and persistence, and self evaluate) and their learning style to research, write and present projects about careers focused on selected career clusters.

School

- Collaborate with teachers and administrators to examine data about enrollment in rigorous, honors and accelerated courses. Review policies that govern entrance into these courses to ensure equitable access, and monitor both enrollment and completion for all student groups.
- Work with the school's master scheduler to ensure there are sufficient sections of rigorous courses so opportunity is equitable. Collaborate with those who teach rigorous courses to acclimate traditionally underserved students to higher levels of rigor.
- Build early-warning systems for all students experiencing academic difficulty. Provide safety nets, peer supports and mentoring to help students learn concrete ways to improve their performance through skill development.

District

- Collaborate with elementary counselors to assess students' participation in rigorous courses and determine the range of skills that students have when they enter middle school.
- Work with high school counselors to communicate high school academic opportunities and requirements to help parents and students prepare for the transition from middle school. Identify students who will need academic support.
- Collaborate with other middle school counselors to develop lesson plan banks of best practices and data-driven strategic planning ideas that support districtwide academic goal attainment for all students.

Parents and Families

- Create outreach efforts for parents and families that outline critical information provided to students about academic performance, skill development and planning for college and career readiness (see all student interventions above).
- Help parents and families learn how to help their children develop and implement a program of study, create a positive and productive learning environment at home, and understand the consequences of not engaging in the process.
- Help parents and families effectively communicate with school personnel to gather critical information about their children's learning needs, maintain regular communication to closely follow their children's progress and intervene rapidly if needed.

Community

- Team with community programs where students can build reading, numeracy, technology and job readiness skills to increase their effectiveness as learners. This is especially important for underserved students.
- Promote community engagement opportunities that link science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields and college and career readiness through real-life hands-on activities such as robotics.
- Locate community champions who can serve as role models and promote academic excellence, goal setting and career awareness.

3 Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement

THE GOAL

Ensure equitable exposure to a wide range of extracurricular and enrichment opportunities that build leadership, nurture talents and interests, and increase engagement with school.

WHY IT MATTERS

Enrichment and extracurricular activities increase students' engagement and academic performance and assist them in gaining confidence and achieving goals. These experiences give students the opportunity to explore and experiment in activities that can lead to their future college and career options.

WHAT TO MEASURE

Engagement in enrichment and extracurricular activities is measured by participation, including taking on a leadership role.

Relevant data

- Participation in enrichment activities (e.g., academic support, summer bridge programs, TRIO and STEM initiatives)
- Participation in extracurricular activities (e.g., organizations, teams, camps, clubs and scouts)
- Students in leadership positions in enrichment and/or extracurricular activities

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Data by student groups

Break down the data to assess performance of student groups, paying close attention to traditionally underserved populations. (See page 3 for a list of the student groups.)

Disparities between student groups

For example:

- How do low-income students' participation rates in enrichment activities compare to those of their more affluent peers?
- How do participation rates in extracurricular activities of white students compare to those of African American students?
- How does female students' percentage of holding leadership roles compare to that of male students?

WHAT TO DO

Work systemwide

Work systemwide — with students, schools, districts, parents and families, and communities — to reach everyone. Focus your work on the students who need the most help, and then use data to assess the impact of those efforts. In this way, you will create equitable interventions and begin to close the gaps.



WORK SYSTEMWIDE

Students

(Individual, Group, Classroom and Grade)

- Help students develop enrichment and extracurricular portfolios that can increase their options for high school and postsecondary activity participation and enhance their future admission applications. Portfolio items may include work samples, audition recordings, artwork, community service and leadership positions.
- Support students' participation in school, local, regional and national competitions that provide opportunities for positive competitive interactions in endeavors such as debate, athletics, music, dance, drama and STEM.
- Teach students how to identify and research colleges/ career/technical schools that offer academic majors, minors, special programs, and enrichment and extracurricular activities that appeal and connect to their current interests, abilities and talents.
- Teach students how to analyze, review and translate their inventory and survey results and how to use them to inform decisions about choosing and participating in activities.

School

- Collaborate with your school's leadership team to conduct a school and community audit of enrichment and extracurricular activities. Ensure that all activities provide all students with participation and leadership options.
- Encourage teachers to integrate enrichment and extracurricular activities into the academic curriculum to make connections to subject-matter disciplines through class and homework assignments and projects.
- Encourage faculty and staff to provide meaningful student service-learning and community service opportunities that may be applied as future high school credit and enhance future postsecondary admission applications.
- Help activity leaders, coaches and mentors develop letters of recommendation and certificates to confirm students' participation and leadership roles.

District

- Collaborate with elementary and high school counselors to share information about auditions, tryouts and sign-ups for age-appropriate scholarships and grants for enrichment and extracurricular engagement before students enter high school. Share information about participation prerequisites and requirements, including information on National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules and performing arts criteria.
- Collaborate with elementary and high school counselors to develop district-approved lists of resources, materials and individuals/organizations that provide school- and community-based enrichment and extracurricular support, services and assistance.

Parents and Families

- Create outreach efforts that help parents and families understand and engage in their role of supporting their children's participation in enrichment and extracurricular activities (see all student interventions above).
- Teach parents and families how to identify their children's unique ideas, interests, talents and abilities. Provide resources and materials that encourage and support learning, curiosity and development, such as home lesson plans for academic and activity portfolio and calendar development.
- Teach parents and families how to use school and community resources to locate free and low-cost enrichment and extracurricular activities that support academic learning and engagement and career interest development.

Community

- Collaborate with community leaders to distribute lists of community organizations that offer enrichment and extracurricular opportunities that support the districtwide college and career readiness agenda.
- Collaborate with federal, state and local enrichment programs that are geared to identifying and supporting underserved students, parents and families (e.g., GEAR-UP, 4-H and precollege programs).

4 College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes

THE GOAL

Provide early and ongoing exposure to experiences and information necessary to make informed decisions when selecting a college or career that connects to academic preparation and future aspirations.

WHY IT MATTERS

Deepening students' self-awareness — and the connection between who they are and their ability to fulfill their future educational goals — is a critical part of college and career exploration and selection.

WHAT TO MEASURE

To assess students' movement through the college and career process, look at participation in continuous exploration and selection experiences and engagement.

Relevant data

- Participation in college and career exploration programs

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Data by student groups

Break down the data to assess performance of student groups, paying close attention to traditionally underserved populations. (See page 3 for a list of the student groups.)

Disparities between student groups

For example:

- How do participation rates in college and career exploration programs for African American female students compare to those of white female students?
- How do seventh-grade English language learners' (ELL) participation rates in college and career exploration programs compare to those of seventh-grade non-ELL students?
- How do participation rates in college and career exploration programs of Latino students compare to those of African American students?

WHAT TO DO

Work systemwide

Work systemwide — with students, schools, districts, parents and families, and communities — to reach everyone. Focus your work on the students who need the most help, and then use data to assess the impact of those efforts. In this way, you will create equitable interventions and begin to close the gaps.



WORK SYSTEMWIDE

Students

(Individual, Group, Classroom and Grade)

- Help students develop programs of study to make connections between students' middle and high school academic preparation and their postsecondary success.
- Teach students how to research a wide range of institutions and how to obtain, review and navigate admission applications (paper and online) and learn about the various application sections, including directions, essay topics and work-sample submissions.
- Help students sign up for college/career/technical school mailings, listservs and social media groups to get institution updates and newsletters. Use student-led discussion groups as platforms for students to share information and resources about colleges and careers.
- Provide students with information about different types of institutions (e.g., two- and four-year, public and private, in-state and out-of-state). Show students how their schoolwork now can connect to various degrees, majors, school supports and amenities, and institutional costs.
- Create experiential opportunities, such as working with a mentor, on-site field trips and job shadowing, to help students identify links between their personal and educational aspirations and their school performance (e.g., reading, math and language proficiency).

School

- Collaborate with teachers to integrate college/career/technical school admission application processes into existing academic curriculum. Activities might include writing personal essays, developing academic and extracurricular resumes, and gathering and documenting personal and family information.
- Collaborate with academic department heads to distribute course selection information that charts the relationship between middle and high school courses and postsecondary majors and career options. Explain the types of rigorous courses recommended for various future career opportunities.

District

- Collaborate with high school counselors to align college and career information in middle and high school so students' planning is continuous and supports the district's college and career readiness agenda. Include information about postsecondary institutions that offer precollege programs, initiatives and resources.
- Coordinate districtwide visits to college and career fairs and college/career/technical schools that include student engagement with campus offices such as admission and financial aid, academic departments, and campus life (e.g., student support services, clubs and organizations, residence life, counseling, and community service).

Parents and Families

- Create outreach efforts to teach parents and families about their role in assisting their children in continuous college and career exploration and selection processes (see all student interventions above).
- Teach parents how to help their children compare and contrast postsecondary institutions' attributes, offerings and admission requirements.
- Assist parents and families with signing up for college/career/technical school mailings, listservs and social media groups to retrieve newsletters and other forms of information that may be relevant to their children's academic interests and career goals.

Community

- Connect with area nonprofit organizations to pool resources to develop before- and after-care academic programming that supports your school and community's college and career exploration goals and increases student engagement during out-of-school time.
- Collaborate with local postsecondary institutions to develop messages about middle and high school graduation requirements and prerequisites for accelerated programs.

5

College and Career Assessments

THE GOAL

Promote preparation, participation and performance in college and career assessments by all students.

WHY IT MATTERS

Testing, such as ReadStep™, EXPLORE, PSAT/NMSQT®, PLAN, and career assessments, is one critical element of college and career readiness. Teaching students how testing and academics will help them attain their aspirations is a critical part of helping them set and reach their goals.

WHAT TO MEASURE

To assess your students' testing needs, look at their preparation, participation and performance for college and career assessments.

Relevant data

- Participation in career/interest assessments
- Participation in ReadStep, PSAT/NMSQT, EXPLORE and PLAN
- Performance in ReadStep, PSAT/NMSQT, EXPLORE and PLAN

WHAT TO LOOK FOR**Data by student groups**

Break down the data to assess performance of student groups, paying close attention to traditionally underserved populations. (See page 3 for a list of the student groups.)

Disparities between student groups

For example:

- How do Native American students' participation rates in career/interest assessments compare to those of Latino students?
- How do the ReadStep performance rates of African American students compare to those of white students?
- How do the Asian students' participation rates in EXPLORE compare to those of white students?

WHAT TO DO**Work systemwide**

Work systemwide — with students, schools, districts, parents and families, and communities — to reach everyone. Focus your work on the students who need the most help, and then use data to assess the impact of those efforts. In this way, you will create equitable interventions and begin to close the gaps.



WORK SYSTEMWIDE

Students

(Individual, Group, Classroom and Grade)

- Help students understand the connections among assessments, academic planning (program of study), college and career exploration, and future life aspirations. Pay attention to students who do not participate in assessments to promote equity for all student groups.
- Help students become test savvy by developing test-preparation skills that include how to overcome test anxiety, identify types of test questions, make educated guesses and interpret scores.
- Teach students how to use assessment results to identify knowledge and skill gaps and take ownership of their learning. Emphasize the importance of assessments and also assure them that a one-time assessment is not the sole determinant of their future.
- Help students use career interest inventory results in positive ways that promote self-knowledge and connect to their future ambitions. Provide real-life experiences, such as classroom visitors, field trips and technology-based activities, to show students a broad range of future possibilities.

School

- For all college and career assessments given at school, identify policies, practices and procedures, or structural barriers that may limit test participation or negatively affect performance.
- Collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop a positive culture and climate around assessments. Emphasize that assessments are a means of increasing one's knowledge of self and career opportunities.
- Help teachers integrate college and career assessments into the curriculum in ways that fill knowledge and skill gaps and make concrete links between academic content areas and college and careers.

District

- Collaborate with elementary school counselors to gather information about career-related interest inventories or career-focused information used in elementary school to create a smooth transition for students entering middle school.
- Collaborate with high school counselors to share information about college and career/interest assessments to assist in identifying skill gaps for students as they transition to high school.
- Collaborate with middle school counselors across the district to plan districtwide career activities that reflect students' interests and support district goals for college and career readiness.

Parents and Families

- Create outreach efforts to help parents and families promote a positive perspective on assessments and to show their children how to use assessments as tools for gathering information and learning about themselves (see all student interventions above).
- Help parents and families create a positive home environment focused on preparing students to participate in assessments. Emphasize reducing test anxiety and preparing for test day.
- Provide parents and families with information about potential college and career assessments/inventories available in high school. Include the appropriate use, timing and interpretation of assessment results to inform academic planning in productive ways.

Community

- Collaborate with local libraries, recreation and civic centers that have online capabilities to provide students, parents and families with access to questionnaires, surveys and inventories so they can share exploration experiences outside the classroom.
- Create partnerships with community leaders that represent careers identified in students' assessment results. Provide opportunities for students to visit job sites to broaden their understanding and knowledge of various careers.
- Collaborate with community leaders to ensure that they convey the accurate meaning and purpose of assessments and assessment results to the community.

6 College Affordability Planning

THE GOAL

Provide students and families with comprehensive information about college costs, options for paying for college, and the financial aid and scholarship processes and eligibility requirements, so they are able to plan for and afford a college education.

WHY IT MATTERS

Understanding financial planning and the use and management of money is critical for students and families. These skills will assist them in making sound financial plans and decisions related to students' future educational goals.

WHAT TO MEASURE

Continued participation in financial literacy and financial aid planning initiatives encourages students and families to engage in the timely collection and preparation of financial information and documentation needed for future completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Relevant data

- Participation in early awareness financial literacy and financial aid initiatives
- Participation in financial aid planning processes

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Data by student groups

Break down the data to assess performance of student groups, paying close attention to traditionally underserved populations. (See page 3 for a list of the student groups.)

Disparities between student groups

For example:

- How do English language learners' participation rates in financial literacy initiatives compare to those of non-English language learners?
- How do low-income students' participation rates in financial aid initiatives compare to those of their more affluent peers?
- How do participation rates in financial aid planning processes of eighth-grade white students compare to those of eighth-grade Latino students?

WHAT TO DO

Work systemwide

Work systemwide — with students, schools, districts, parents and families, and communities — to reach everyone. Focus your work on the students who need the most help, and then use data to assess the impact of those efforts. In this way, you will create equitable interventions and begin to close the gaps.



WORK SYSTEMWIDE

Students

(Individual, Group, Classroom and Grade)

- Teach students how to make personal financial decisions and how to identify the characteristics of being financially responsible. Provide concrete examples of everyday living costs and expenses (e.g., food, gas, utilities, transportation and rent/mortgage).
- Teach students about various financial aid opportunities (e.g., scholarships, grants, loans, work-study, savings plans) from sources such as the federal government, state higher education agencies, postsecondary institutions, organizations and private funders.
- Teach students how to research and apply for (with parental consent) age- and grade-appropriate scholarships and grants from various funders. Ensure that students know how to identify and adhere to various financial aid application deadlines and requirements.
- Provide students with financial aid glossaries and tools such as net price calculators to build financial literacy and provide information about how to pay for college/career/technical school and in-depth examples of future lifestyle options and the level of wealth needed to attain them.

School

- Encourage teachers to integrate financial literacy and financial aid vocabulary into the existing academic curriculum. Incorporate videos, interactive classroom activities and assignments that cover income and careers, money management, financial planning, credit and debt, and saving and investing.
- Collaborate with your school librarian to develop a resource center that includes free age-appropriate financial literacy and financial aid information, resources and tools in multiple languages from federal and state entities such as the U.S. Department of Education, the Federal Trade Commission, the U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission, and the state higher education commission.

District

- Collaborate with other middle school counselors to share information about federal, state, district and school-based scholarships and grants. Share tips, strategies, guidebooks and sample applications.
- Collaborate with other middle school counselors to review and analyze trends in districtwide high school FAFSA data. Use these data to support your school and district's financial literacy and financial aid awareness agenda.

Parents and Families

- Create outreach efforts to ensure that parents and families are aware of their role in helping their children deepen their financial literacy and their knowledge of financial aid processes (see all student interventions above).
- Ensure that parents and families understand federal privacy laws (regarding children under age 13) such as The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) and the Children's Privacy Protection Final Rule, which address parental consent and the collection, use and disclosure of student-, parent- and family-identifiable information.
- Ensure that parents and families engage in the financial aid application preparation process knowing that their special, unique and/or financial circumstances may not prevent their students from applying for and/or receiving most financial aid. Assist parents and families in documenting special circumstances that may qualify them for special financial aid programs and support.

Community

- Collaborate with faith-based institutions to publish paper and online announcements in bulletins, newsletters and message boards about school and community-based financial literacy and financial aid awareness initiatives.
- Partner with local businesses and financial institutions to develop and provide scholarship and stipend opportunities for students.
- Collaborate with financial institutions to give students, parents and families information about opening student checking and savings accounts, creating and managing personal budgets, and avoiding credit card problems.

Data Elements for the Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling

The chart below shows key data elements for each of the Eight Components.

Data Elements, By Component	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
1. College Aspirations			
Attendance	●	●	●
Discipline	●	●	●
Promotion	●	●	●
GPA		●	●
Dropout			●
2. Academic Planning for College and Career Readiness			
Students reading on grade level in grade 3	●		
Proficiency in state tests for English, math and science	●	●	●
Students enrolled in and completing Algebra I		●	●
Students enrolled in and completing AP courses			●
Students enrolled in and completing courses required for in-state university admission			●
3. Enrichment and Extracurricular Engagement			
Participation in enrichment activities (e.g., academic support, summer bridge programs, TRIO and STEM initiatives)	●	●	●
Participation in extracurricular activities (e.g., organizations, teams, camps, clubs and scouts)	●	●	●
Students in leadership positions in enrichment and/or extracurricular programs	●	●	●
4. College and Career Exploration and Selection Processes			
Participation in college and career exploration programs	●	●	●
College and career/technical school application completion			●
College and career/technical school application submission			●
5. College and Career Assessments			
Participation in career/interest assessments	●	●	●
Participation in Readiness Step™, PSAT/NMSQT®, EXPLORE and PLAN		●	●
Performance on Readiness Step, PSAT/NMSQT, EXPLORE and PLAN		●	●
Participation in SAT®, SAT Subject Tests™ and ACT			●
Performance on SAT, SAT Subject Tests and ACT			●
6. College Affordability Planning			
Participation in early awareness financial literacy and financial aid initiatives	●	●	●
Participation in financial aid planning processes		●	●
Scholarship application completion			●
FAFSA completion			●
7. College and Career Admission Processes			
Two- and four-year college acceptance			●
Career and technical school acceptance			●
Early action or early decision acceptance (four-year institutions)			●
8. Transition from High School Graduation to College Enrollment			
Final transcripts processed			●
Two- and four-year college enrollment			●
Career and technical school enrollment			●

Additional Resources

- College Board — www.collegeboard.org
 - College Counseling Sourcebook — <http://store.collegeboard.com/sto/enter.do>
 - CollegeEd® — <http://ce.collegeboard.org/about-ce/>
 - National Career Development Guidelines — http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/Home_Page
 - National PTA Standards — www.pta.org/national_standards.asp
 - NOSCA's Eight Components of College and Career Readiness Counseling — <http://nosca.collegeboard.org>
 - NOSCA's Own the Turf College and Career Readiness Counseling Toolkit — <http://nosca.collegeboard.org>
 - School Counselor's Strategic Planning Tool — <http://nosca.collegeboard.org>
 - Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) — www.sreb.org
 - YouCanGo!™ — <http://youcango.collegeboard.org>
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About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of more than 5,900 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success — including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators and schools.

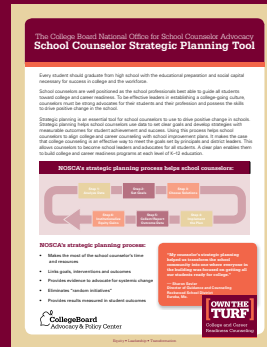
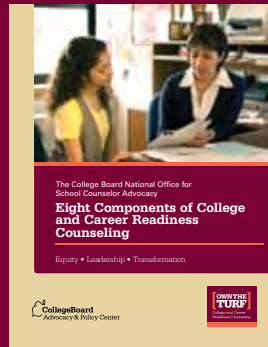
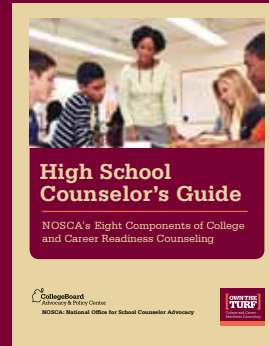
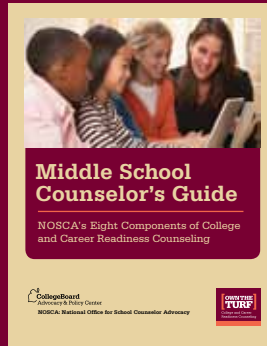
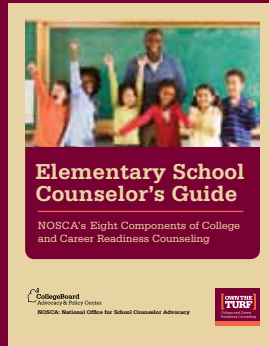
For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

NOSCA: The National Office for School Counselor Advocacy

creates a national presence for school counselors by:

- Developing, publishing and nationally disseminating tools and materials that will enhance school counselors' capacity to practice in ways that promote college and career readiness for all students.
- Creating processes and strategies that will help school counselors solidify their position as important players in educational reform, using data to demonstrate accountability measures that promote educational equity.
- Providing research, training and conferences that will help school counselors in attaining the knowledge and skills needed for providing college and career readiness counseling for all students.



Advocacy is central to the work of the College Board. Working with members, policymakers and the education community, we promote programs, policies and practices that increase college access and success for all students. In a world of growing complexity and competing demands, we advocate to ensure that education comes first.

www.collegeboard.org ■ advocacy.collegeboard.org ■ <http://nosca.collegeboard.org>



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