WAYS TO CREATE A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE IN YOUR SCHOOL

1 Have a table with college-planning information at Freshmen orientation that students are required to visit. 2 Encourage Freshmen and their parents to sign a “College Going Contract” that states their commitment to planning for a higher education. 3 Emphasize taking advantage of career and major exploration electives and opportunities. 4 Present many ways and forms of communication for parents to receive college-planning materials. 5 Highlight summer enrichment opportunities as being part of the path to college. 6 Present college-going messages to ALL students at all levels of academic rigor. 7 Encourage outgoing seniors to serve as mentors for lower classmen—use their experiences and advice as part of your curriculum. 8 Ask college recruiters to prepare information specifically for lower classmen. 9 Implement a “college check” into your annual registration process so that students are reminded of how to stay on track for college. 10 Keep track of students who have moved from your high school; look for specific trends related to success at the college level. 11 Ask for time at school-wide events, such as pep-rallies and homecoming, to present college-going messages. 12 Work with your student council to incorporate college-going messages into spirit days. 13 Regardless of why a student visits the counseling office, send them away with a college-going message. 14 Host a college and career day in the spring for eighth grade students making them aware of how to plan for their field of study while in high school. 15 Get out of the office! Place college-going messages everywhere. 16 Ask teachers to assist you by infusing pro-college messages and exercises into their curriculum. 17 Devote one week each year to celebrating the benefits and experience of going to college. 18 Research and identify funding sources and grants to support you in your mission. Be selective! Avoid advertising options. 19 Teach students the life skills that are needed to be successful in college (i.e. note-taking, study habits, time/money management). 20 Partner with local colleges to find volunteers to perform assessments of your school culture. 21 In the schedule of classes denote which classes fulfill college entrance requirements. 22 Describe your own path to college for students—ask others in your school and community to do the same. 23 Create a college deadline calendar that highlights important test dates, application timelines, and financial aid deadlines. 24 Send a postcard home to a different family each week, personally recognizing their child’s success and college-going potential. 25 Encourage families to seek out other friends and families who have enrolled their children in college to share what their experiences have been like. 26 Keep current data on college attendance rates and make those statistics available to your students. 27 Provide information about multiple kinds of colleges including professional institutions. 28 Find a way to recognize every college-bound student, not just those graduating at the top of their class. 29 Is your counseling office an environment that encourages students to visit frequently? Present materials in a welcoming manner, foster a friendly atmosphere that catches their attention. 30 Get technical! Learning how to effectively use computers can save your program time, money, and a ton of headaches! 31 Assess the hiring and evaluation practices at your school, do they include measures of college advocacy? 32 Counsel students to register for classes that are as academically rigorous as possible. 33 Create “exit strategies” for remedial classes that help students enter higher level coursework when ready. 34 During registration, help parents understand that remedial courses to not fulfill college entrance requirements. 35 It’s not always just about college: Collaborate with other school support staff to create comprehensive programs that includes pro-college messages. 36 Include information on preparing students for college as part of faculty trainings. 37 Emphasize the difference between high school graduation requirements and university admission requirements. 38 Work with middle school counselors to help incoming freshmen create a personalized four-year plan upon entrance into high school. 39 Challenge students to attend the most academically rigorous institution possible and to keep their options open by taking college entrance tests, researching universities, etc. 40 Advocate that tracking policies include ways parents can reject their child’s placement in remedial coursework if test scores are borderline. 41 Find what gets your students excited about college student life. For example, if it’s NCAA tournament season, highlight the colleges that make it to the finals. Find ways to show it’s more than just four more years of school. 42 Getting in is only the beginning. Have a conversation with admitted students about what to expect in college and how to avoid common pitfalls. 43 Going to community college is a great first step! Have a conversation with students about their ultimate careers goals and what they will need in order to transfer to a four-year school. 44 Strike a pose! Include your photo on letters and posters to help student recognize you in the halls. 45 What’s your idea?? Share it with your colleagues and make it happen!