

Building a College Culture

Research on College Access

What was your educational journey?

- What messages did you (or your child) receive both negative and positive about your ability and your potential to go to college? From whom?
- What generation college are you or your child? 1st in family or so many you can't keep track? Who paid?
- What high school preparation did you or your child receive? Did you or your child have a choice of preparation?

The Urgent Need for More College Educated Workers

- The increasing competitiveness of the global market and the shift to an information, service, and technology-based economy in the U.S. propels a growing need for college educated professionals.
- Six out of every ten jobs in our economy depend on highly trained workers with the advanced skills that are available only to those possessing some postsecondary education or training.

Patterns of Attainment

- Across achievement levels, poor students and student of color are least likely to apply to, attend, or complete college.
- First-generation college bound students develop aspirations later, often have aspirations cultivated by teachers or counselors, and while they are in K-12, and experience conflicts between present and future worlds.
- Students whose parents attended college get a head start on college preparations, know about different types of colleges and their admissions requirements, and take the right K-12 courses.

Key Determinants to College Attendance

- Having college plans by the 7th grade
- Attending a college focused high school
- Having families who expect you—an can help you plan—to go to college
- College going is a process

Research Evidence: College Access Gap

- Ensure better academic preparation for college
- Encourage counselors to advise students for college and focus schools on their college preparatory mission
- Increase the quality and quantity of college entrance and financial aid information
- Engage families as college preparation partners
- Lower financial barriers to college affordability
- Create more equitable admissions policies

Lower Financial Barriers

- Financial aid is a critical barrier to improved college access
- The perception and the reality of college affordability is plummeting as unmet financial need is increasing, college costs are rising, student loan debt is mounting, and merit aid is increasing
- 22% of low-SES, academically-qualified students don't attend college because of affordability concerns, even with student aid
- Students and their families don't know or understand college prices and financial aid which limits students' preparation for college. Aspirations do not develop when college seems financially out of reach

Ensure Better Academic preparation

- No better predictor of college enrollment and completion than the rigor of high school courses, specifically advance mathematics
- Raising student achievement helps K-12 educators meet increasing demands for accountability
- Current P-12 accountability systems like exit exams...

Teacher Expectations

- Teachers affect academic preparation, self-esteem, motivation to achieve, and opportunities to learn
- We have research evidence that teachers' expectation of students are influenced by their beliefs about race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status
- Teachers' assessments of students' ability and motivation to learn affects
 - How teachers interact with and support students,
 - Whether and how many opportunities they provide to students to learn and excel
 - The advice they give students, and their interaction with students' families

Teachers Are Important to Improving College Access

- Precursors to academic achievement and college enrollment
 - High expectations
 - Access to caring and knowledgeable adults
- Therefore improving teacher effectiveness and having all students complete rigorous curriculum helps college access goal as well as better workforce preparation accountability.

High School Counseling

- Few resources are devoted college counseling
- Counselor-to-student ratio nationally is 1:477, and in the largest cities it averages 1:750
- Most counselors are not trained in college or financial aid advising and don't have accurate, up-to-date information about college

Primary Counseling Tasks

- Scheduling
- Testing
- Discipline
 - Dropout prevention
 - Suicide prevention
 - Drug abuse prevention

- Pregnancy prevention

Counselors, advising & schools' college preparation missions

- Counselors impact students' aspirations, plans, enrollments, and financial aid knowledge
- Counselors assist parents in fostering supporting students' college aspirations
- Counselors focus their school on it college mission
- Improving counseling would have a significant impact on college access for low-income, rural, and urban students as well as students of color

Research evidence on potential counselor impact

- Counselors: 1. Impact students' aspiration, plans, enrollments, and financial aid knowledge, 2. Assist parents in fostering and supporting