



Increasing College Access: One Kid at a Time

While increasing college access and success is a national priority, the barriers must be addressed at a local level. Today’s episode highlights one rural school district’s approach to changing the expectations for college-going within their schools and the community.

Summary Points

Communication (early & often)

- Grade level parent meetings beginning in middle school
- Discuss college and financial aid at all grades

Individualized meetings

- Students are aware of our open door policy
- Counseling staff makes themselves available
- Meetings are catalyst for other conversations

Celebration & recognition

- Recognition for college going (boards, pictures, TVs, etc.)
- Rewarding/celebrating those achievements
- Entire school is buying into the celebration/recognition

Partnerships

- Initiate contact with local college admissions representatives
- Approach the conversation with “How can we help our students and it best help you?”
- Invaluable relationships: appreciate ability to call directly, text, etc.

Data use

- Continually survey/poll students (at all grade levels) to obtain data about their career/college/major interests
- Use the data obtained to facilitate small and large group activities (speakers, information sessions, etc.)

A plan for every step

- Communicate to students that we have a plan in place to help them at every step – FSA ID, FAFSA, TN Promise, Verification, etc.
- Guidance for every step of the processes: from research to application

Continue the Conversation

“What are the untapped resources in your school or community to support a college-going culture?”

Podcast Episode 13 — Run Time 18:41



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Food for Thought

Communication (early & often)

- What would that look like at my school? How do we currently disseminate information and track engagement with our parents?

Individualized meetings

- What is the perception of our counseling office from students/parents/staff at my school?
- What would it take to shift outdated or outmoded beliefs?

Celebration & recognition

- How can my school recognize and/or incentivize our students for their accomplishments and/or completed college-going tasks (milestones)?

Partnerships

- Are there opportunities for new or stronger partnerships with local colleges?
- Who “owns” the relationships with our college and career partners?

Data use

- How are we capturing, organizing, and evaluating student college-going data (including progress toward college and career ready milestones)?

A plan for every step

- Do my students see my office providing assistance in the various steps of the college going process?

References & Recommended Resources

Seamless Pathways: Bridging Tennessee’s Gap Between High School and Post-secondary (Rep.). (2017, February). Retrieved January 11, 2018, from Tennessee Department of Education (Office of Research and Strategy) website: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/reports/rpt_high_school-seamless_pathways.pdf

A Path of Choice: Building a Postsecondary-going School Culture (Rep.). (2017, May). Retrieved November 6, 2017, from Tennessee Department of Education website: https://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/ccte_sr_a_path_of_choice.pdf

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