

How to Provide Postsecondary Exposure Opportunities For Students

Definition

- **What:** Postsecondary exposure refers to programs that help students make decisions, set goals, and succeed after high school by exposing them to postsecondary educational opportunities as well as career options and possibilities. It includes long-term opportunities such as career academies, internships, and dual enrollment as well as occasional programs like college visits and career days.
- **Why:** Exposure to programs such as internships, career paths, colleges and universities, or technical trainings broaden students' horizons and help them make informed and purposeful choices in their pathway to adult success.
- **How:**
 - Develop partnerships with area businesses and schools
 - Coordinate and share efforts between middle and high schools
 - Begin exposure early (ninth and tenth grade in high schools)
 - Identify which members of school staff are responsible for developing post-secondary exposure. Guidance counselors play a key role but it should not be up to them alone.
 - Seek stakeholder input on career options for special focus (e.g. career academies)
 - Consider such options as the following:
 - Career days
 - Field trips to college campuses
 - Visits from college admissions officers or school alumni attending college
 - Career academies
 - Career and technical education
 - Tech prep
 - Dual enrollment
 - Early college high schools

Exemplars in Practice:

- **Beyond College Readiness: College Awareness as a First Step**
National Association of State Boards of Education, February 2016
This policy update highlights ways state boards can help augment their states' college readiness standards with college awareness initiatives. Examples include the states of Washington and Idaho.
http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/Lorenzo_College-Awareness-final.pdf
- **Clemson Emerging Scholars**
Clemson University
This program concentrates on academic preparation, leadership skills, and the college application process. It begins during a student's sophomore year with a week-long residential experience, continues with a two-week experience prior to junior year, and then a final three-week freshman simulation prior to the start of the senior year of high school. Students learn that reading, writing, and math basics are the most important factors in high school and college completion. Although the program is housed at Clemson, students are encouraged to apply to and attend any college they choose.
<http://www.clemsonemergingscholars.org/>

- **Colleges Discover the Rural Student**
Center On Rural Education, January 2017
Article highlights ways colleges/universities, states, and school districts are trying to overcome the geography barrier for students to learn about higher education, recognizing that diversity in geography is as important as diversity in race and ethnicity.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/31/education/edlife/colleges-discover-rural-student.html>

Research Foundations:

- **Ramping up for college readiness in Minnesota high schools: Implementation of a schoolwide program**
REL, June 2016
This report examines Minnesota’s efforts, Ramp-Up to Readiness, to provide more substantial college readiness supports for middle and high school students by focusing on “five dimensions of college readiness” – academic, admissions, career, financial, and personal-social –to increase students’ likelihood of enrolling and succeeding in college.
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/REL_2016146.pdf
- **Predicting Postsecondary Attendance through Cultural Norming: A Test of Community Expectancy**
ERIC (Institute of Education Sciences), 2014
This Arkansas-based study looks at the impact of how community expectancy might influence a student’s decision to attend college.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1046705>
- **Preparing High School Students for Successful Transitions to Postsecondary Education and Employment**
National High School Center & MDRC, August 2008
Highlights specific opportunities schools can make available for their students to improve students’ preparation for postsecondary success.
https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/PreparingHSStudentsforTransition_073108.pdf