

How to Develop Collaborations with Institutions of Higher Education

Definition

- **What:** Data-based collaborations between k12 schools/districts and higher educational institutions (two- and four-year colleges and universities) are partnerships built on the mutual recognition of shared responsibility in preparing students for success in postsecondary education and beyond. One model describes these as partnerships that involve co-design, co-delivery, and co-validation of structures, policies, and practices to improve student outcomes.
 - K12 and higher ed institutions co-design courses, pathways, professional development, student supports, and data systems--everything that has an impact on student learning.
 - Schools and colleges share and coordinate faculty, staff, facilities, and resources to co-deliver learning and support systems, whether at k12 sites or on college campuses.
 - Schools and colleges co-validate outcomes, using agreed-on assessments, experiences, and proficiency indicators to determine placement into college credit-bearing courses and to evaluate outcomes.

Effective collaborations include both sharing of data on student indicators and outcomes, and practical collaborations on initiatives to use the data to better serve students.

- **Why:** College data on outcomes helps high schools improve the preparation they offer students by identifying predictors of success and impacts of interventions and policies to improve student progress, particularly for first-generation and low-income students. High school data allows colleges to adapt student supports (such as tutoring and summer bridge program) and improve completion rates. Collaborative policies and practices that prepare students for the rigors of college is in the interest of high schools, colleges, young people, and their communities. One study found that Texas students participating in dual-enrollment classes in high school were 2.2 times more likely than a matched control group to enroll in college, and 1.7 times more likely to complete a degree. K12-higher ed partnerships also foster a culture of community learning and encourage parent engagement in further education.
- **How:** Effective k12-higher education collaboration is built on several key factors. These are listed below, along with some possible elements that each might include.
 1. High-level leadership commitment. (College presidents, district superintendents, and principals)
 - can communicate a vision for postsecondary success for all
 - are in a position to set measurable, achievable goals, and establish an expectation of data-based decision-making

- can invest or reallocate resources to enhance data capacity and implement shifts in policy and practice
 - should establish MOUs articulating mutual benefits, expectations, roles, and responsibilities for the collaboration
2. Robust cross-sector data infrastructure. This includes:
- k12 and college data systems and platforms that “talk” to each other
 - data-sharing agreements to protect student privacy while providing each sector the information it needs beyond what is publicly available
 - a cross-sector team of experienced educators and technical data experts from each institution
 - mutually agreed-upon indicators, predictors, and measures of readiness and success.
 - data beyond academics: noncognitive skills (e.g., time management, perseverance) and college culture awareness and experiences.
 - timely access
 - field testing and feedback cycles at each stage of system development
3. Investment in adult capacity in data use, college-prep instruction, and critical support:
- ongoing faculty and staff training in data use, and time to meet in data teams
 - a full-time college-to-school(s) liaison
 - high school and college faculty collaboration on instructional design and “teaching rounds” for classroom observation
 - coaching in college-friendly instructional practices for middle and high school teachers
 - incentives for k12 teachers to gain credentials needed to teach college-level courses, and for college faculty to provide dual enrollment instruction
 - judicious use of retirees and other potential adjunct instructors
 - enhanced collaboration support capacity: grant writing, communications, etc.
4. Broad support partnerships at community, state, and/or national levels, such as:
- local and/or national nonprofit partners that can help “broker” collaborations
 - state college and career readiness initiatives
 - state funding policies to help sustain the partnership (e.g., allowing colleges to count dual enrollment students for funding purposes)

Resources:

- **How High Schools and Colleges Can Team Up to Use Data and Increase Student Success**, Michael Grady, Jobs for the Future, August 2016
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED567871.pdf> This comprehensive review from a data perspective also includes examples from Providence, RI; Philadelphia; and NYC. Extremely helpful.
- **Partnering to Create College-Going Cultures: A Training Guide, Building Educational Success Through Collaborations**. UCLA, Melissa Friedmann MacDonald and Aimee Dorr, 2007. Very helpful “nuts-and-bolts” guidance on establishing relationships with institutions of higher education. See especially pages 2-3. <http://apep.gseis.ucla.edu/bestla/BEST-CollCultResourceGuide.pdf>

Exemplars in Practice:

- **Clemson University Emerging Scholars Program**. A program to help prepare underserved students along SC’s I95 corridor for college success, beginning in middle grades.
<https://www.clemson.edu/academics/programs/emerging-scholars/>
- **Sharing Responsibility for College Success: A Model Partnership Moves Students to Diplomas and Degrees**. Joel Vargas, Jobs for the Future, December 2014.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561292.pdf> In-depth case study of the highly effective Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD College³ Early College Program in partnership with local colleges.
- **Data Collaboration in New York City: The Challenges of Linking High School and Post-Secondary Data**. CRIS/Annenberg Institute, 2012. Excellent review of benefits and challenges encountered in cross-sector data use and connectivity.
<https://www.annenberginstitute.org/publications/data-collaboration-new-york-city-challenges-linking-high-school-and-post-secondary>
- **Postsecondary Success for All Students: Leveraging Partners and Assets**. FHI360, November 2013. Cases studies of three Citi Postsecondary Success Programs (Miami-Dade Co., Philadelphia, San Francisco). <https://www.fhi360.org/resource/postsecondary-success-all-leveraging-partners-and-assets>

Research Foundations:

- **Building Momentum from High School into College**, Elizabeth Barnett, Jobs for the Future, February 2016. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED564836.pdf> Identifies a “continuum” of college preparatory experiences and achievements that schools can monitor and focus on.
- **Taking College Courses in High School: A Strategy Guide for College Readiness--The College Outcomes of Dual Enrollment in Texas**, JFF, Ben Struhl & Joel Vargas, Oct. 2012.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED537253> The case for the powerful impact of dual enrollment on college-going success for underserved student groups.