



Helping Students Navigate Pathways to Adult Success Toolkit

RECOMMENDATION 3: STEPS, SUPPORTS & CO-NAVIGATORS

It will engage supportive adults to accompany students and their families as they navigate the complex world of postsecondary planning and decision-making.

NAVIGATION STEPS, SUPPORTS, AND CO-NAVIGATORS

Research has shown that people do well in navigating complex decisions when they know how to ask for support, and when others know how to respond. Young people face the daunting challenge of finding the path to post-secondary opportunity; helping them do so is the responsibility of adults as advisors and co-navigators.

Here are some steps that should be on a navigation checklist:

- Require students to meet with college/career counselors annually, starting in 9th grade, to set and revise goals and organize personal schedules. A “distributed counseling” pool of adults (see above) can enhance existing counseling capacity.
- Help students and families understand “match,” “under-match” and “stretch” goals in college aspirations and/or work opportunities in relation to high school achievement. Many students “under-match,” perhaps choosing what seems easiest and most accessible (e.g., community college), not realizing that pursuing a more selective option could open the door to much greater institutional support that would greatly improve their chances of earning a degree.
- Include parents and families in all matters related to college and career planning.
- Teach students to manage standardized test timelines, finances, and requirements, especially where “gatekeeper” assessments (SAT, ACT, ACT Benchmarks, Work Keys, ASVAB, etc.) are required for college or career access. They must register for assessments, pay or obtain waivers, and take tests early enough to meet deadlines or retake them if necessary.



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- Guide students through the college admissions process starting in the fall of senior year: different institutions' requirements; application, acceptance, and enrollment deadlines; information and orientation sessions; vaccination and health requirements; tutoring, mentoring, and credit opportunities; and major selection. Help students and families overcome fears and understand options. For immediately career-bound students, provide guidance on work-place opportunities, choices, and needed skills.
- Help students and parents become financially literate concerning:
 - cost differences between two-year and four-year institutions in their region
 - submitting the FAFSA on schedule
 - grants and scholarships: how to research and apply for them
 - loan debt (what is reasonable and how to minimize it)
 - tuition aid, work-study, and part-time employment options
 - Monitor progress, reinforce, nag, nurture, and support.

HOW TO PROVIDE POSTSECONDARY GUIDANCE

Providing good postsecondary guidance involves helping students identify their interests and aptitudes, learn about career and academic opportunities that match those interests, and select courses they need to take in preparation. [Read More](#)