

the **CollegeKeys** Compact™

Catalog of **Effective Practices** **2010**

Programs and practices that
expand options for students
from low-income backgrounds

The College Board

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board is composed of more than 5,700 schools, colleges, universities and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,800 colleges through major programs and services in college readiness, college admission, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT® and the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities and concerns.

For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com.

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

www.collegeboard.com/advocacy

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CollegeKeys Compact Statement of Beliefs

In recognition of the right of every student to prepare for, enroll in, and succeed in college, we believe that:

- All students are capable of being prepared for college and that educators, families, communities, and policymakers have the responsibility to ensure that all students, including those from low-income backgrounds, graduate from high school ready for college success.
- All qualified students from low-income backgrounds should receive particular consideration in recruitment, admissions, and financial aid, and that colleges and universities should make every effort to meet the financial needs of this population in ways that make enrollment and full participation in the college experience possible.
- Colleges and universities have a responsibility to provide essential academic support, financial aid, and targeted social and emotional support to ensure that all enrolled students will have every chance to succeed in their chosen academic programs.

To learn more and join the CollegeKeys Compact, visit www.collegeboard.com/collegekeys.

Overview

Successful Strategies for Serving Low-Income Students

The CollegeKeys Compact™ is a national call to action to school districts, colleges and universities, state education agencies, and nonprofit organizations to identify, share, and expand programs and practices that address the needs and challenges of low-income students and help them get ready for, get into, and get through college. The College Board is committed to disseminating information about these effective practices and recognizing exemplary programs through the new Innovation Awards program.

Effective Practices

To date more than 540 institutions and organizations have signed on to the Compact, reaffirming their commitment to expanding opportunities for students from low-income backgrounds. This catalog showcases the programs — in their own words — that participated in the first-ever Innovation Awards. We hope this catalog will be a useful resource for educators and policymakers alike, and that others are inspired by the excellent work being done around the nation to help more deserving students from low-income backgrounds.

Innovation Awards

The Innovation Awards program was established to:

- Disseminate information about effective practices so they can be replicated, adapted and improved.
- Recognize exemplary programs that have proven effective in improving success for low-income students.
- Mobilize educators, institutional leaders, and policymakers to promote policies and practices that expand opportunities for low-income students to get ready for, get into, and get through college.

(See Appendix A for details.)

Low-Income Students

The College Board considers the following students to be low income:

Students enrolled in schools with large numbers of students from low-income backgrounds or enrolled in schools with low college-going or high dropout rates.

–OR–

Students whose families are eligible to receive economic subsidies targeted to low-income families, including students who are:

- Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch programs.
- Part of a family receiving public assistance.
- Residents of federally subsidized housing.

–OR–

Students who are homeless, in foster care, or deemed to be wards of the court.

–OR–

Students who will be first-generation college attendees (neither parent has a college degree) and require some or all of the services needed by the students identified in the first three categories.



Getting Ready

Advanced Level Courses

Bellevue School District

Bellevue, Washington

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Fourteen years ago, AP® course offerings in Bellevue schools were limited. In 1997, all high schools in the district were required to offer AP, and student enrollment drove the number of courses offered. Over time, counselors and teachers were expected to encourage all students to give AP a try. The district produced a persuasive video about the value of AP and showed it to principals, parents, staff and students. Over time, the district's mission became one of opening doors so that all students could benefit from a college prep education, regardless of their ultimate career goals. College prep became the default curriculum and AP became an expectation for college prep. The district embarked on developing a connected, coherent, and rigorous K-12 curriculum, backward mapping from high school AP courses down to kindergarten. The goal was to make AP a natural outcome of taking this rigorous curriculum in the lower grades. For students who found the default honors-level curriculum difficult, new academic support classes in reading and mathematics were instituted, all middle and high schools offered the AVID program, and the district stepped up its recruiting of volunteer tutors. All students in AP courses were required to take a test, either the regular AP test or a mock test. Through grants, the district covered the costs associated with taking the tests for students who couldn't afford to pay. More and more low-income students, students in special education and students of color began to enroll in and complete AP (and now IB), classes.

MEASURING SUCCESS The number of AP tests taken has increased every year from 521 tests in 1998 to 5,844 AP tests (and 309 IB tests) taken in 2008. In the fall of 2009, 3031 students were enrolled in 7,312 AP/IB courses. Between 1998 and 2008, the number of AP tests taken by students from low-income families jumped from 0 to 475. AP tests taken by African American students (who represent 2.4 percent of our total high school population) rose from 3 in 1998 to 68 and the number of Hispanic student tests (about six percent of our total high school population) jumped from 11 to 225 in the same time period. In 2008, ESL students took 38 tests and special education students took 52 tests (there are no records for these groups from 1998). Some of our high schools have been in the Newsweek rankings of top high schools since 2003 and five of our high schools (all but the alternative school) were on the Newsweek top 100 high schools list of 2008.

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Advancing College Opportunity

Stark Education Partnership

Canton, Ohio

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Stark Education Partnership and its partners have created the largest high school-based dual credit program, Advancing College Opportunity, in the state of Ohio. During the 2008-09 academic year, 40 high school teachers met the qualifications to be college adjuncts and were partnered with professors at six colleges and universities to teach 70 dual credit courses meeting full college standards for content and grading. The partnership supported an additional 43 teachers in taking requisite graduate content courses to qualify as adjuncts.

More than 1,200 students were enrolled in dual credit courses in 2008-09, up from 55 in the summer of 2007. That number has increased to 2,359 enrollments in 2009-10. Potential future tuition savings to students and families can be as high as \$2,810,000. The program in 2008-09 incorporated two high-poverty urban, one very high-poverty urban, and two high-poverty and two low- to moderate-income rural districts. In fact, 7 of the 13 districts offering high school based dual credit have substantial poverty and/or issues centered on adult education attainment. Four more districts, including another high-poverty urban district, have joined the partnership for 2009-10. Eighty percent of all the partnership's students last year earned a "B" or better in their dual enrollment coursework. Student success is attributed to effective pedagogical approaches engineered through the teacher-professor partnerships, additional help and support, and sequencing and timing of coursework. Advancing College Opportunity is a critical addition to other strategies, such as AP and College Tech Prep, towards the realization of an eventual goal for all high school students to earn at least 12 college hours. Participation in all strategies has increased. High school-based dual credit, by expanding college opportunity, is also beginning to impact the culture of high poverty communities, such as Canton, where now the number of young adults who have been to college is exceeding those with only a high school diploma.

MEASURING SUCCESS Program success is measured against the following quantitative criteria: Increase in the number of high school teachers meeting college adjunct qualifications; growth in the number of college-level courses; growth in the number of first generation college-going students, particularly in impoverished districts; reported student grades and the percentage of students successfully earning college credit at "C," or better. Process is measured by student attitudinal surveys as well as high school faculty and college professor interviews.

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The A-List Club

William B. Murrah High School

Jackson, Mississippi

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION As a graduation requirement, students enrolled in public schools in Mississippi must pass an exit exam in Algebra I (9th or 10th grade), Biology I (9th or 10th grade), English 10 (10th grade), and U.S. history (11th grade). For each test, there is a “passing” score, a “proficient” score and an “advanced” score. Murrah is trying to increase its state rating level, which is based on the number of students scoring advanced or proficient. The A-List Club was created as a way to motivate students to achieve a higher than passing score.

Expected results of the A-List Club recognition program:

- Increased number of students receiving advanced scores due to recognition and incentives;
- Increased accreditation level of the school;
- Increased number of students taking advantage of tutorials; and
- Enhanced student class participation on a daily basis.

A-List Club members are honored at the beginning of each school year and receive an A-List Club t-shirt. A reception follows the recognition ceremony. In addition, the students receive other special incentives such as lunch at a local eatery and the opportunity to participate in a one-day college tour.

Often, the same few students are recognized for academic success. The A-List, however, is a sizable group and recognizes students who have never received academic recognition. Low-income, high-achieving students need to be reminded that Murrah has high expectations of them and encourages them to reach for college success. This group is also targeted to take a more rigorous curriculum based on their academic achievement.

MEASURING SUCCESS Success is based on the excitement generated by the club’s events and the growth in numbers receiving high scores on the exit exams. The A-List was created in the fall of 2007. In 2006-2007, 17 percent of the students tested scored at the “advanced” level; in 2007-2008, 19 percent scored “advanced”; and in 2008-2009, 16 percent scored “advanced”.

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College Conexion

Our Lady of the Lake University

San Antonio, Texas

2010 WINNER
Southwestern Region

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION College Conexion works with low-income, primarily first-generation Hispanic high school students in two high at-risk, economically disadvantaged school districts in San Antonio, Texas. These students are brought onto the university campus during the school day once or twice a month for training sessions that provide tools and strategies that increase the students' resiliency, enhance their individual talents and hone their academic skills. This initiative empowers students and their parents by improving the quality of their lives within the educational system and their communities. The goals are: 1) help students understand and strengthen their self-concepts and self-confidence; 2) help the students envision themselves reaching their personal, academic, and career-oriented goals; 3) improve parents' understanding of providing a college-going culture; 4) help students learn how to cope and develop strategies to displace stereotyping; and 5) improve academic performances in math, science, and writing.

MEASURING SUCCESS The success of the students and their parents in understanding the many facets of preparing for college and career is measured via numerous quantitative and qualitative methods: the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale; Likert scales for social and academic associations; writing prompts, hands-on-activities responses, and logs. Guest speakers are provided as role models and students use journals to analyze their impact. Parent focus groups are formed and accessed three times during the year. Informational sessions are held throughout the year for parents to help them understand the need for post-secondary education and academic rigor and how to be an advocate for their child. Students learn coping strategies. Academic records are evaluated to find out the percentage of students that chose challenging coursework rather than regular coursework.

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College Readiness System

Hillsborough County Public Schools

Tampa, Florida

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) is dedicated to: 1) increasing the percentage of underrepresented students participating in AP classes to mirror the demographics of the school; 2) providing all students as early as 6th grade with pre-AP strategies; 3) providing support for students new to AP classes with tutorial classes; 4) fostering study groups; and assigning mentors for AP teachers and students. HCPS prepares students in grades 6-12 for college through the implementation of a district-wide college readiness program that includes two components: academic rigor for all students and a comprehensive support system. Students are taught strategies for success in AP classes by using higher levels of critical thinking. HCPS has expanded AP courses at each of our 27 high school and offers a minimum of 9 AP classes per site. The PSAT/NMSQT® is offered at no charge to all students in grades 9-11, and the AP Potential™ software is used to identify students for AP placement and to open access to AP classes. District scheduling software allows us to apply AP Potential for every student at every high school. All students are provided with SAT® online access to prepare for the SAT college entrance exam, and the SAT is provided free of charge to all juniors. A college/career counselor is in place at each high school, and staff development is provided to teachers, administrators, and counselors to encourage equity and access for all students.

MEASURING SUCCESS Student participation in pre-AP and AP coursework has increased 33 percent in the past two years alone, more than 7,000 students are currently in AVID classes, and increased numbers of students are taking the PSAT/NMSQT and SAT. The number of students scoring 3, 4, or 5 on AP exams increased by 2,000 students this past year. Over the past 5 years, Hispanic and Black enrollment has increased in AP classes, for a total increase of 100 percent for Hispanic students and 125 percent for Black students. In addition, HCPS increased the number of dual enrollment classes. HCPS increased the number of principals, counselors and teachers trained in all aspects of the college readiness system (more than 4,000 teachers trained in AVID, SpringBoard®, and AP Summer Institutes, more than 200 counselors, and all principals annually for the past 2 summers). HCPS sponsors a program at the University of South Florida that allows students a taste of the college experience. More than 200 students participated last summer, and more than 500 students participated over the past four summers.

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Connecting Aspirations to a Plan

South Portland High School

South Portland, Maine

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Each year we send all sophomores on college visits. We hire 5 buses and divide students up by their advisor advisee groups. They visit three colleges: a 2-year, a 4-year public, and a 4-year private college. All sophomores are included as this is the year they take a course entitled "Real Life", which introduces students to the career and college planning process. Students are prepared for the trip by their advisors as well as via a whole class meeting when juniors speak to them about the advantages of the trip. Each year we have had two trips in Maine, two in the Boston area, and one in New Hampshire. The goal of the trip is not to have students select a specific college, but rather to expose them to the different types of colleges: large, small, public, private, urban, and rural. We include all sophomores as required by the MELMAC grant. We follow this trip with other activities devoted to specific populations. For instance, we take seniors who have not applied anywhere by April to an On the Spot Admissions Day at Southern Maine Community College. We take a group of students to the University of Southern Maine's Office for Students with Disabilities so that they understand what accommodations are available to them and how to access their services. We also take our English language learner students on a college visit each year either to Southern Maine Community College or the University of Southern Maine.

MEASURING SUCCESS Since we began this program, our college-going rate has increased from 65 to 85 percent. Student participation in honors and AP course has increased as well. This year our school met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in all categories, despite the fact that our school's free- and reduced-lunch program has increased along with our transient segment and our ELL population.

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CSU/AT&T Road to College Tour

California State University, Office of the Chancellor
Long Beach, California

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The CSU/AT&T Road to College Tour statewide outreach and education campaign took a unique approach to outreach by bringing a “college on wheels” bus tour to students, parents, teachers and counselors at high schools in underserved communities. This approach helped students visualize themselves in college and see higher education as a reality, while providing them with tools and resources to help them prepare for and apply to one of the CSU’s 23 campuses. The tour featured a biodiesel tour bus with teen-appealing graphics, a dorm room-style interior, and laptop computers connected to a specially designed website (www.csumathsuccess.org/roadtocollege). The tour’s “All Access” rock tour theme underscored the CSU’s commitment to ensuring all qualified students can attend college. A multilingual CSU student “street team” was deployed at each event to assist the students and provide insight about college. Representatives from the CSU and AT&T served as advisors, and media events were created to generate publicity.

MEASURING SUCCESS CSU developed specific performance measures for the program and achieved the following results:

- Potential students’ contact information was 2,000 — double the initial goal.
- Teachers and counselors trained on CSUMentor totaled 5,500 — 500 more than the initial goal.
- The number of students, parents, teachers and counselors trained in college admissions and financial aid processes was 10,000 — double the goal.
- More than 20,000 Road to College postcards, flyers, and stickers, and “How to Get to College” posters were distributed.
- The tour received coverage in more than 20 TV news stories and more than 15 print or digital stories.
- Within the first three months of the launch of the Road to College website, there have been more than 8,500 visits to the site.
- More than 300 schools requested the tour’s return.
- Lastly, the tour has received four awards to date.

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Destination College: It's Elementary!

Orange County Public Schools

Orlando, Florida

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Destination College: It's Elementary! was developed in 2008 as a means for accomplishing the Orange County Public School District's 11 Essential Outcomes, specifically the district strategic plan's goal of "Intense Focus on Student Achievement." The mission of the program is to provide every student, especially low-income and underrepresented students, with the maximum opportunity to achieve college readiness beginning at the elementary level. The program's goal is to fully prepare every elementary-level student for rigorous courses at the middle and high school levels in order to achieve college readiness. The program provides a framework for implementing research-based, high-yield strategies and is designed for implementation at the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade levels. It challenges each school to create a campus-wide college-going culture, while focusing on specific learning strategies in order to promote college awareness and readiness. Implementation is directly overseen by a school-based leadership team, with the support of a district leadership team. The focus strategies are organization skills, goal-setting, self-advocacy, study skills, high-level questioning, oral language skills, Cornell Notes, cooperative learning, and SQ3R.

MEASURING SUCCESS Quantitative success will be measured through an increase in promotion rates district-wide, with specific focus on 6th grade, as well as by an increase of student enrollment and performance in advanced programs both at the middle and high school levels with an emphasis on low income and under-represented populations. Four schools, (48 teachers), were chosen to pilot the program in 2008-09 with two schools (19 teachers) successfully completing the program. During the pilot year, statistical student data was not collected. Instead, emphasis was placed on school and teacher interest, program relevance, and navigating the online course. For the 2009-2010 school year, 25 schools, with 201 teachers and 3,648 students, are participating. Qualitative success is measured through monthly participant surveys addressing the effectiveness of the program. Additionally, to monitor the continuum of implementation at each elementary school, a yearly matrix is completed for each program essential utilizing the following indicators: In Name Only, Intentionally Structured and Enforced or Culturally Embedded.

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www.ocps.net/cs/services/student/advstudies/Pages/DestinationCollege.aspx

Freshman on Track Program

Kenwood Academy High School

Chicago, Illinois

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The goal of the practice is to provide the target audience of incoming freshmen with the support they require to transition into high school and remain academically successful. The program addresses the dropout rate of students who have poor academic performance.

The innovation of the practice is that it specifically targets incoming freshmen who have the most difficult time adjusting to the high school environment and envisioning their future. The strategy is to focus on a finite number of students rather than the entire population. The practice helps to insure that, as the students move on in grade levels, they have the best possible foundation upon which they can build their success.

MEASURING SUCCESS The most effective approach in expanding the options for low-income students is providing them with their own "on-track lab" where they can receive the guidance and support they need to be successful. Many of the low-income students come from less supportive environments, and the lab and program gives them the reassurance they need to expand their options.

Freshmen are held accountable for their behavior and academic success. The additional support they require is provided them, and the expectation is that participants will go on to college in spite of their economic challenges.

Success of the program is demonstrated in the students' grades and their social success during their freshman year. Additionally, participants are given a survey to ensure the practice is effective in fulfilling students' needs and reaching its goals. The practice's impact is demonstrated by the number of students who demonstrate a smoother transition into the upper grade levels and show reduced number of problems or challenges. These students, typically, become more involved and invested in their academic careers and mature into leadership roles within the overall student body.

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Get the Juice

(HS Faculty Professional Development)

Education Services Foundation

Jackson, Mississippi

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION To increase faculty members' understanding of the importance of pre-college planning and advise them of the important role high school faculty can play in preparing students for college, ESF, in partnership with Murrah High School, promoted a new activity called 1st Tuesday, Get the Juice. First offered in fall 2008, Get the Juice meetings provide teachers with information to educate and support low-income, first-generation students as they aspire for college success. Get the Juice is a once-a-month breakfast meeting where ESF provides college updates on admission and financial aid. Topics include:

- Introduction to college access issues and the benefits of going to college
- Career Exploration – connecting college and career
- GPA Game – understanding admission and scholarship decisions beyond test scores and GPA
- SAT/ACT information and test prep ideas
- How to write effective letters of recommendation and building strong resumes
- Writing college essays
- Understanding college scholarships
- Understanding need-based financial aid & the FAFSA and info on state financial aid

Faculty incentives – Rewards are provided for faculty and staff that excel in student advising and mentoring by using innovative techniques to help students recognize they CAN go to college. These innovative ideas include SAT tip of the day or incorporating the college resume or essay into their classes. Teachers submit a short statement of what they did during the previous month. After reviewing and verifying the submissions, two gift certificates are awarded at each meeting.

MEASURING SUCCESS At the end of the year, the faculty and staff completed evaluation cards, in which 100 percent said the program was important and should be continued. The comments confirmed that faculty appreciated being reminded of their importance in helping students go to college. The faculty offered suggestions of other topics for the meetings and these included inviting college reps to come talk about their college or university. As a community partner, an exciting part of a partnership is to see the project evolve without the partner. Our goal is to help in the creation of a college-culture in the high school and then, once the culture exists; seeing that it is sustained and grows on its own as has the Get the Juice meeting. For fall 2009, ESF is only one of many groups that participate in the faculty development.

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Getting Ready

Punahou School

Honolulu, Hawaii

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION PUEO (Partnerships in Unlimited Educational Opportunities) was launched by Punahou School in 2005 in partnership with the Hawai'i State Department of Education. PUEO is designed to motivate students to develop the skills and confidence that will enable them to excel in school, attain their college aspirations, and contribute to Hawaii's future. Forty fifth-grade students are identified by participating public schools to begin the program each year; each student continues in the program for seven summers. Adding additional 40 students per year, the program will reach its full complement of 280 by summer 2011. Student eligibility criteria focus on students from the academic middle (60 percent of their class) who are eligible for free or reduced lunch programs. In middle school, PUEO students attend Punahou summer school classes in the morning, supplemented in the afternoon by tutoring in English and mathematics. In high school, students continue with credit-bearing, standards-based courses in modern Hawaiian history and participation in democracy. The program culminates in the junior and senior years with SAT preparation and college counseling, utilizing experienced independent school college placement advisors. PUEO activities include: a grounding in sustainability projects, community service and Hawaiian culture; a variety of college visits; and a practical introduction to the world of work through the lens of a college education. PUEO's kumu (counselors) are graduating Punahou seniors and college students. PUEO has been recognized by donors, the Department of Education and the media as one of the success stories in public-private partnership, ensuring that students from low-income backgrounds are inspired to become college-bound.

MEASURING SUCCESS PUEO has been hailed by the superintendent of the Hawaii State Department of Education and received a Community Partners award from the DOE Foundation in 2007. Generously supported by a group of four founding donors, PUEO recently received a multi-year \$3 million leadership grant from the Clarence T.C. Ching Foundation, ensuring its financial stability for the next six years. The high student retention rate (averaging 86 percent year to year), daily attendance during the summer (averaging over 91 percent), weekly and summer-end student evaluations by kumu, written student self-reflections, and the eagerness of Punahou's faculty and the larger community to volunteer to help PUEO students, all attest to the attraction and value of PUEO. As several students have characterized it, "PUEO saved my life."

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Hispanic Youth Institute

Hispanic College Fund

Washington, DC

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Hispanic Youth Institute (HYI) changes the self-perception of low-income Hispanic high school students to improve their academic trajectories and ultimately, to impact the college-going culture of their high schools. The program, targeting rising sophomores, begins with a four-day, three-night on-campus program, which is then extended through year-round student-led initiatives. Because Hispanic students may be struggling in different areas, HYI covers a wide range of factors, including: academic performance, building student self-esteem and self-efficacy, the relationship of current schooling to future success, and knowledge of the college application, selection and financing processes. The HYI addresses these diverse needs through a collaborative effort with schools, businesses and nonprofit organizations. These local coalitions reach across multiple settings and multiple needs, resulting in a synergy that no stand-alone program can achieve. Short-term student outcomes include: 1) greater engagement in community and academic activities; 2) personal ownership of future success; 3) a more positive outlook towards school; 4) sustainable peer and adult support networks; and 5) higher self-esteem. Longer-term (2-4 year) outcomes indicate that 89 percent of HYI alumni are going to college.

MEASURING SUCCESS A longitudinal survey was sent to 1,661 HYS alumni in March/April 2009. We received 286 responses for a 17 percent response rate. Of those respondents:

- 75 percent were still enrolled in high school.
- 13 percent were attending a 4-year college.
- 5 percent were attending a 2-year college.
- 2 percent had received an associate's from a 2-year college, and had then transferred to a 4-year school.
- 4 percent had graduated from high school but were not enrolled in college.
- 1 percent had graduated with a bachelor's degree.
- No students reported having dropped out of high school.

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No AP Child Left Behind

Heritage High School

Vancouver, Washington

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The No AP Student Left Behind program seeks to help our high school students achieve academic success in Advanced Placement® courses through open enrollment. Due to the country's current economic climate, many students and their families who do not qualify for the federally funded free- and reduced-lunch program are in need of financial assistance to succeed in AP courses and exams. The No AP Child Left Behind program supplies academic and financial assistance for students by connecting education with business. The goals of the program are threefold. First, students and teachers receive tutoring and coaching on specific content for various subjects from business mentors with expertise in these fields. Second, students establish business and community connections and networks for future job contacts and internships. Third, students receive financial assistance for the AP test fees. This program supports underserved students from low-income families as they work toward preparing for, obtaining acceptance into, and succeeding in college. No AP Student Left Behind actively pursues ways and dedicates resources to help these students, many of whom are the first in their families to graduate from high school and aspire to go to college, not only get into college but also excel once enrolled.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Quantitative: There has been a 10 percent increase in the number of low-income students enrolled in AP courses at the school. Enrollment in AP courses increased from 306 to 659. The percentage of tests taken by those students enrolled in AP courses increased from 69 to 83 percent.

Qualitative: Survey data show that AP students were most positive about their preparation and likely college acceptance. Students were asked the following four yes/no questions: I am confident I am prepared to attend a four year college/university; I am confident I will be accepted to a four year college/university I have the academic knowledge needed to attend a four year college or university I have the work ethic needed to attend a four year college/university. Survey responses show 90 percent of the AP students felt confident and prepared. Their responses were particularly positive regarding their work ethic. More than 90 percent of the AP students felt they had the requisite reading skills. More than 90 percent of the AP students indicated that they had the requisite communication skills. A much lower percentage of AP students, however, felt they had the requisite writing and mathematics skills.

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OKC-GO

Oklahoma City Community College

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION OKC-GO is designed to remove some of the financial barriers that limit a student's ability to succeed in college. OKC-GO is exclusive to Oklahoma City Community College (OCCC) and serves graduates from Oklahoma City and Western Heights public high schools. The majority of students who benefit from this program are first-generation college students. The program is funded through college tuition waivers, and eligible students can attend OCCC tuition free for up to three years or 61 college credit hours. OKC-GO is serviced in a three-stage process through three departments within the college:

- **Office of Student Life (Getting Ready):** provides an orientation program to update students on administrative processes, service learning requirements and academic success initiatives designed to meet their unique academic needs; instructs students on their responsibilities to meet with admission advisors each semester and directs them to complete 8 hours of community service each year; and follows up with closing orientation to ensure students have completed all requirements for the program and are prepared for the upcoming semester.
- **Office of Recruitment and Admissions (Getting In):** sends recruiters into the 21 qualifying high schools each year to introduce OCCC and bring awareness of the OKC-GO program; guides students through the application process for the OKC-GO program; and provides printed materials to students and parents during high school campus recruitments efforts, through collaboration with high school counseling offices, and in mail-outs to prospective students.
- **Office of Academic Advisement (Getting Through):** guides students through their educational careers; advises on minimum course load and GPA requirements; and serves as an outreach center

MEASURING SUCCESS OKC-GO students are consistently persisting through their academic careers at the same rate as the majority student population. Student feedback has reflected a general consensus of positive educational reinforcement. Students are excited about the opportunities that have been provided by the program. They appreciate the guidance that they have received and are encouraging others who are eligible for the program to take advantage of the opportunity.

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Project Link

Mercer County Community College

Trenton, New Jersey

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION For the past three years, Youth College of Mercer County Community College has successfully operated an acceleration mechanism — Project Link — that allows low-income high school students to pursue an advanced curriculum related to their postsecondary interests. The primary goal of this initiative is to improve and reinforce academic skills and enable students to earn credit towards college degrees prior to college enrollment, in addition to creating an awareness and appreciation of college education among Trenton high school students. Over the past three years, 77 percent (46 of 60) of the Project Link students earned MCCC credits, while maintaining a 3.05 GPA. During this period, 37 participating students graduated from high school and 74 percent of them enrolled into postsecondary institutions. The Trenton Public School District is one of 31 school districts in New Jersey classified as an Abbott School District. Most districts given this dubious distinction rank low academically, having few high student achievers, and are found in the state's poorest cities. While the financial barriers to seeking a college education are clear, other challenges include poor academic preparation, low expectations and aspirations, limited curricular offerings, and lack of reliable information about college possibilities and the value of attending college. Project Link provides social encouragement and the necessary academic support services for students to become successful as they prepare for postsecondary education.

MEASURING SUCCESS Program objectives are: Enroll 30 eligible high students in college-level courses over the course of a year; 75 percent of the students will achieve a GPA of 2.0 or better in college-level courses; 93 percent of the students will advance to the next grade or graduate from high school; 90 percent of the students will enroll in postsecondary/college education programs; 80 percent of the students who complete courses will indicate that Project Link courses, and related-support services were helpful and worthwhile. Quantitative and qualitative goals have been established to ensure that project goals are accomplished. A sufficient range of evaluation measures will be employed to ensure objectivity and comprehensiveness. Responses will be elicited directly from students, school personnel, and other stakeholders. Evaluation results will be used to revise and improve project services and recognize staff performance. Formative evaluations will be done during the project and a summative evaluation will be completed at the end.

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Study Skills/Test-Taking Techniques/ Organizational Skills Lessons

Delsea Regional High School

Franklinville, New Jersey

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION In an effort to maximize the success of our "at-risk" students we have developed and incorporated a series of study skills lessons, which include: Study Skills, Organizational Skills, Time Management Techniques, Learning Styles, and Test-Taking Techniques. Students who are deemed to be "at risk" (not performing successfully in one or more classes) attend small-group study skills lesson(s). These lesson(s) serve as a method of intervention. Our goal is that students will utilize the techniques addressed, which will ultimately ensure their academic success; keeping all doors of opportunity open!

MEASURING SUCCESS Last year, the lessons were presented to an activities group after school. Students were asked to make comments on the session. The reviews were very positive, which propelled us to offer the sessions to students in small group lessons. Last year, of the 30+ students who sat through one of the interactive lessons, all but two passed each of their courses for the year—a 93 percent success rate.

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Summer Algebra Institutes

California State University, Bakersfield

Bakersfield, California

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Summer Algebra Institute (SAI) targets African American middle and high school students whose math skills are below grade level. Through this cultural connection, the project seeks to enhance math skills, as well as expand the vision of African American students about their future college and career prospects. The project has cognitive and affective learning objectives:

- *Cognitive Learning Objectives:* Increase enrollment and success in college-prep math courses by focusing on algebra readiness; improve college readiness; increase the number of students who complete the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) by the 10th grade and pass the math section.
- *Affective Learning Objectives:* Instill knowledge of the role of Africans in the development of algebra/mathematics; transmit cultural values of learning algebra.

SAI has enhanced the academic performance of underserved and vulnerable middle school students, stimulated college-going aspirations, and increased math skills acquisition.

MEASURING SUCCESS The 2009 overall math grade level proficiency in computation showed a five percent increase, pre- to post-test, in students scoring “above grade level”; four percent increase in students scoring “at grade level”; and a ten percent decrease in students scoring “below grade level”. Word problem proficiency showed a six percent increase in “above grade level”; a ten percent increase in “at grade level”; and a 24 percent decrease in “below grade level”. Outcome evaluation quantitative data is derived from affective and cognitive measures; the key measurement, however, is based on demonstrated grade-level proficiency in math. Since most of the students were assessed at “below grade level” in math skills, progress is defined by the decrease in percentage of students in this category at the conclusion of the six-week Summer Algebra Institute.

The Culturally-Based Math Curriculum Implementation Matrix is the primary instrument for gathering qualitative data about the cultural themes and lessons utilized by the SAI teachers. Teachers indicated that they observed an increase in learning readiness by students, as a result of employing the intervention strategies and curricular lessons.

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Victor E. Bell, Jr. Scholarship Program

College Foundation, Inc.

Raleigh, North Carolina

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Victor E. Bell, Jr. Scholarship Program was established to encourage and assist high potential North Carolina students with limited financial resources to pursue higher education. Awarded to seventh grade students and renewable through four years of college as long as annual eligibility requirements are met, the scholarship program encourages students with academic ability and promise to maintain their scholastic standing and achieve a college degree. An annual call-for-nomination goes to every middle school in North Carolina and to certain approved college access groups that serve seventh graders. Each school or access group may nominate one student; currently, ten new recipients are named each year.

Each individual scholarship award is \$2,000 per recipient per year up to a maximum total contribution of \$20,000, unless a change in the availability of scholarship program funds or college costs requires an adjustment in the amount of future awards. The award for each recipient is contributed annually to an account in North Carolina's National College Savings Program (NCSP) with the Foundation as account owner and the individual recipient as the beneficiary (NCSP 529 Account). Funds from the NCSP 529 Account established for a recipient may be used only for the purpose of education in a baccalaureate or an associate degree program at any of the eligible institutions of higher education in North Carolina.

MEASURING SUCCESS In its third year of operation, the Bell Scholarship Program measures its success by the number of awards made each year and the number of previous recipients eligible for scholarship renewal. As the Program matures and recipients move closer to college enrollment, the number of recipients who gain admission and degrees will further quantify the success of the program.

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Getting In

Admission Possible

Admission Possible

St. Paul, Minnesota

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Admission Possible's mission is to help make college admission a reality for promising low-income students by providing ACT and SAT test preparation services and admissions and financial aid consulting. We accomplish our mission through four central objectives:

1. Identify low-income youth with the potential for success in higher education. Many low-income students who have the potential are being left behind.
2. Provide intensive ACT/SAT test preparation. It is important to "level the playing field" by ensuring the scores of low-income students accurately reflect their true aptitude for higher education.
3. Conduct admissions and financial aid consulting. We provide intensive, one-on-one admissions and financial aid consulting to help students afford college.
4. Leverage existing networks of support through collaborative partnerships and community outreach. We leverage the investments already being made in low-income students and avoid duplication of services by working closely with other successful programs.

MEASURING SUCCESS To date, we have been extremely successful in meeting and even exceeding our goals. In 2008-09, our junior students saw an average score increase of more than 22 percent on the ACT exam — taking students from scores in the bottom 10 percent of all ACT test takers to putting them on track for entry into 4-year colleges. Furthermore, 98 percent of our seniors earned admission to college in 2008-09; 92 percent have been admitted to a four-year institution. Since the organization's founding in 2000, 98 percent of all Admission Possible seniors have been admitted to college! In 2008-2009, our senior students earned nearly \$2.9 million in scholarship money — an average of more than \$4,650 per student. In addition, 95 percent of our senior students applied for financial aid. Additionally, nearly 80 percent of Admission Possible students who enrolled in college are persisting toward their degree today or have already graduated.

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Close the Deal

Jefferson County Public Schools

Louisville, Kentucky

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Most students from Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) understand the importance of continuing their education after high school but don't have the knowledge, skills, or support to actually complete all the paperwork required. Many students have little "college knowledge" and, being prospective first-generation college students, no one at home can provide assistance. The community noted a need for a program that involved EVERY student. In this initiative, JCPS benefits from a partnership with the City of Louisville and Greater Louisville Inc. to help seniors in some of our lowest college-going schools to "Close the Deal." This year-long project not only encourages seniors to apply to college or technical school, but provides the support and assistance they need to get into and pay for college. In the fall, the Mayor hosts a kickoff event where students get to speak in small groups with college admissions counselors, financial aid officials, and recent college grads. In January, students receive help completing their FAFSA forms and work with college admissions counselors. Students continue making connections and building relationships at their school of choice to help ease the transition over the summer. In May, the Mayor returns to host a celebration. This program creates a college-going culture and provides support for college-going students.

MEASURING SUCCESS In the first year of implementation (one school), a comparison was made between the number of students accepted and enrolled in college from the class of 2008 to the class of 2009. We will continue this comparison in the second year of implementation (three schools). Also, students at each school will be asked a series of open-ended questions at various stages of the program to garner student evaluation of the program. Mentors will also be surveyed at the end of the year.

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College Bound, Here We Come

Pitt Community College

Greenville, North Carolina

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Pitt Community College (PCC) is located in Greenville, North Carolina, the largest standard metropolitan statistical area in Pitt County. The fall 2006 enrollment report indicated a minority male population (Black – Non-Hispanic) of 9.3 percent. Black male enrollments fall far short of their 17 percent representation in the county. To increase the enrollment of new black male freshmen, a college initiative called “College Bound, Here We Come” was created. This project targets graduating black male seniors in Pitt County Schools (PCS) who have no plans to attend college after graduation in June. Pitt County Schools transported these seniors to the college to receive a customized full day orientation. The objective of “College Bound, Here We Come” is to help remove barriers that may make it difficult for minority males to continue their studies after finishing high school. Because of this project, new black male freshmen enrollment increased significantly.

As part of “College Bound, Here We Come”, PCC personnel performed skits to demonstrate job interview do’s and don’ts and the need for proper financial planning. Other activities included the high school students taking guided tours of the PCC campus and taking part in informative and engaging mini-sessions to learn more about choosing a college major, paying for an education, placement testing and college success tips. This event is scheduled on the same day as the PCC Student Government Association’s annual Spring Fling event to give program participants a taste of college life during their visit.

MEASURING SUCCESS The increase in freshman black male enrollment is captured in the director of enrollment management and registrar’s standard semester enrollment reports. From spring 2007 to date, approximately 200 black male high school students have participated in the “College Bound, Here We Come” program. Freshman black male enrollment has increase 49 percent since the initiation of this program. Enrollment for all students increased 10-15 percent during the same period.

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Dual Enrollment Initiative

Eastern Connecticut State University

Willimantic, Connecticut

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Dual Enrollment Initiative serves severely economically disadvantaged inner-city students who do not have a high school record that would allow regular admission to Eastern. It allows them to enroll as full-time students at Quinnebaug Valley Community College, located within walking distance from Eastern while they live in Eastern's residence halls and integrate into the campus cultural and residential life. Participating students are recruited with the help of guidance counselors from Hartford Public High School. Their room and board is paid for with grant funds in the first semester while they are taking one course at Eastern and four courses at Quinnebaug Valley Community College. Eastern provides them with employment, spending money, tutoring, mentoring, and transportation as needed. The goal is for all students to become eligible for admission as full-time Eastern students in the second semester. Living on campus is essential to providing a living environment that is safe, stable, and conducive to academic success to these students.

MEASURING SUCCESS Success is measured by: 1) the percentage of students who can be admitted to Eastern full-time in the second semester; 2) by the percentage of the cohort who continue as full-time students into a sophomore year; and 3) by the graduation rate of participants. In year one, seven of nine students successfully enrolled at Eastern as full-time students for the second semester, one of the nine continued at the community college, and one transferred to another community college. Seven have returned to Eastern for a second year as full-time residential students. A second cohort of 10 students entered the program this fall. Other measures of success include the number of Hartford Public High students who indicate interest in participation in the program, the extensive integration of participating students in Eastern's campus, and the positive effect these students have had already in their residence halls and in campus student organizations. While the participating students benefit, the positive effects of the program extend to creation of a more diverse student body and stronger links from our residential, liberal arts university to severely depressed communities in Hartford.

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FAFSA Days

Education Services Foundation

Jackson, Mississippi

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION ESF provides FAFSA Days in the high schools to assist parents and students in completing the required federal form. There were no opportunities in the high schools for families to complete the FAFSA, so we provided a full FAFSA Day with private appointments to fit into the schedules of the students and their families. We started this event in partnership with Murrah High School., Our first event was held in January 2008, to assist students attending competitive colleges with early deadlines. We offered additional FAFSA days in February and March, adding Gulfport High School. During 2009, we extended the program to all Jackson Public high schools and four other high schools. Our goal now is to continue to expand the FAFSA Days across the state. The greatest challenge is to help students understand the importance of completing the FAFSA and meeting the colleges' priority deadlines. There are many barriers for families completing the form, including access to a reliable computer, transportation to a place they can receive assistance, and mistrust of submitting tax data.

MEASURING SUCCESS We based our evaluation of the program's success on the numbers attending our events and completing the FAFSA. Starting in two high schools in 2008, we extended the program to 12 high schools in 2009 and have requests for many more already for 2010. We partner with the high school counselor to make appointments in advance of our visit to guarantee a quiet time for the family to meet with the ESF counselor to complete the FAFSA, the state grant application and ask any questions about college admission. Parents feel comfortable in their child's school and appreciate having an appointment where they know they will be provided appropriate attention. At one inner-city school, not a single parent or student we assisted had a driver's license. We recognized that targeting low-income families in their own neighborhood school provided access that they might not otherwise have. Many parents believe that college is out of reach and therefore simply do not complete the FAFSA. At the end of the process we are able to explain qualification for the Federal Pell Grant. While 70 percent of the students in Mississippi attend community colleges, the Federal Pell Grant pays for 100 percent of the cost of tuition and books (and room and board if the student lives on campus.) Of all the outreach we do across the state, our FAFSA initiative is probably the most rewarding for our counselors and beneficial for the recipients.

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FOCUS

Kenwood Academy High School

Chicago, Illinois

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The goal of FOCUS has been to accept and promote participation of students with varying academic and personal strengths and weaknesses. One of the needs the group addresses is academic, social and personal responsibility, through self-enhancement, leadership and character education. The target audience for the practice is those students who face varying challenges that might otherwise fall through the cracks without support.

MEASURING SUCCESS The success of the practice is measured, in part, by the academic success of the student. As a whole, the participants of the practice have seen a change in their grades for the better. Success is also measured by the students' personal growth and maturity and by their ability and willingness to accept personal responsibility.

FOCUS sponsors college tours, which provide help students and their parents understand and successfully navigate college admissions and financial aid processes. FOCUS workshops and character development components help to change the perception of low-income students, which encourages colleges and universities to include students from low-income backgrounds into their recruitment plans.

The impact of the practice is best demonstrated by the number of former members who return to speak to current students about their college experiences and how the practice helped them achieve academic success. Its impact is also demonstrated by the relationships that have been developed and nurtured with colleges and universities, so that they look forward to receiving FOCUS students.

The practice is built upon a solid foundation that can be replicated and adapted by other educators, institutions and policymakers. Having helped to develop many college leaders and graduates, it is a practice that has proven success.

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The Impact of Full-Time College Coaches

College Forward: Getting In Initiative

Austin, Texas

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION College Forward’s Getting In Initiative utilizes full-time AmeriCorps College Coaches to lead twice-weekly after-school classes to provide intensive, near-peer mentoring to help underserved high school students gain admission to and financial aid at four-year colleges. Full-time coaches had greater involvement in the lives of their individual students, which increased student outcomes and created a strong commitment to service in these young AmeriCorps volunteers. Coaches were able to improve communication and collaboration with parents and counselors through personal meetings and phone calls, newsletters, and online solutions.

MEASURING SUCCESS The primary goal for the Initiative was to ensure that 100 percent of the low-income and/or first-generation high school seniors apply to college, with at least 85 percent accepted to at least one accredited college — and have the majority of them accepted to four-year institutions. One hundred percent of the 2009 cohort applied, 100 percent were accepted and 100 percent enrolled in college this fall (80 percent enrolled in four-year institutions.) These rates greatly exceed the college-matriculation rates of low-income students across Central Texas, where only 39 percent of low-income students enroll in college, and fewer than half of those students attend 4-year colleges.

College Forward developed a comprehensive logic model that specifically delineates the program’s inputs, outputs, indicators, intermediate outcomes, and end outcomes, and monitors metrics throughout the year to ensure they are achieving desired results. The program model is flexible and uses Naviance Succeed, a Web-based counseling program, to advise high school students, track their progress, and analyze their achievements. Comprehensive records and detailed contact logs are kept of collegians’ academic and social status. Plans are reviewed annually.

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Reach for College! in Schools

Reach for College!

Washington, DC

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Reach for College! (RFC) targets low-income high school students who will be the first in their families to go to and graduate from college. Recent studies show that only 29 percent of DC students go to college and only nine percent graduate; both figures are well below the national average. The Reach for College! philosophy is that every student can succeed. Our goal is to promote equity in education by greatly increasing the number of low-income students in DC and nationally who aspire to and enroll and succeed in college. We have created a getting-ready and getting-in curriculum for grades 9-12 that we provide to high schools. We train teachers in the high schools to teach the curriculum and provide ongoing professional development in college-readiness. In further support, we provide on-site presentations, guest speakers and college tours at the teachers' and schools' request, to ensure excellent implementation and enrichment. Schools implement the program to fit into their own academic programs — some implementing it in one or two classes; others with every student in every grade. The teachers become advocates and personal guides for students for accessing college and communicating what will be required of them in college.

MEASURING SUCCESS We measure success by three metrics. 1) How many Reach for College! seniors graduate from high school? For the last three years, 92.1 percent of RFC seniors have graduated from high school, compared to 68.8 percent of their peers citywide. 2) How many RFC students enroll in college? For the past three years, 73 percent of RFC students have enrolled in college compared to 34 percent of their peers in the same high schools. (These data are verified by the National Student Clearinghouse; and for students who are not in Clearinghouse colleges, are verified by individual student tracking.) 3) How many students progress to sophomore year in college? For the last two years, 51.4 percent of RFC students have progressed to the sophomore year in college, a measure of college persistence. This is compared to the national college graduation rate of 27.5 percent for low-income students. Qualitatively, in case study interviews with RFC students who are in college, the students attribute their college aspiration, college application, financial aid and scholarship application, and college entrance directly to the RFC class. In addition, they say they feel they were better prepared for the social, emotional and academic transition to college than their college peers.

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Registration for a College-Ready Transcript for All

North Central High School

Spokane, Washington

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The primary goal is for all students to graduate with a college-ready transcript. In order to improve the college attendance and success rates, North Central embarked on a college-for-all initiative to change the course-taking patterns of students and create a normative environment where all students would take the most rigorous curriculum possible during high school. The registration and course selection process was overhauled, and students are now registered in advisories consisting of 20 students. Students learn about the nine academic concentrations that help them choose classes in a focused area of interest or strength that connects to postsecondary training. Teachers use AP Potential data to direct students toward rigorous course selections, and the default expectation is that students will sign up for a college-ready set of courses.

The second component of this effective practice is NC College Day, when students either: 1) take the PSAT/NMSQT, ASSET, or ASVAB exam; 2) visit a college campus with teachers; or 3) participate in college preparedness seminars.

MEASURING SUCCESS Quantitative evidence of this success is measured through the Challenge Index (CI), College Readiness Index (CR), and percentage of students who graduate with a college-ready transcript. The Challenge Index has steadily increased. The CI result in 2009 was 1.88 compared to .296 in 2001. The College Readiness Index puts 75 percent of the weight on passing (receiving a score of 3 or higher) AP tests and 25 percent on taking the test. Our CR result in 2009 was 25.78 compared to 11.3 in 2008. In addition, there was a 160 percent increase in the number of seniors passing at least one AP exam in high school. In 2003, 37 percent of our students graduated with a college-ready transcript compared to approximately 70 percent today.

NC College Day was a valuable activity. Interviews with students who participated in college-preparedness testing indicated their increase in understanding of the importance of taking the exams and students who visited college campuses indicated that they wanted more opportunities to speak with college advisors.

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Sophomore Summit

Klein Forest High School

Houston, Texas

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Sophomore Summit for 800 Klein Forest High School tenth grade students has been hosted for the last three years in collaboration with the North Harris County branch of the AAUW (American Association of University Women), community business partners and senior citizen volunteers. The goals of the Summit are: to establish the expectation that all students are capable of success; to promote college aspirations for students from low-income backgrounds; to increase participation in AP courses and increase number of students taking AP tests; to increase awareness of college admissions policies and financial aid resources; and to show students the benefits of good study skills and time management skills.

We have targeted several areas for improvement. The Sophomore Summit supports our need to: 1) involve mentors, volunteers, business and community partners in programs that provide college-planning information and assistance to students from low-income backgrounds; 2) offer students college and career exploration, counseling activities, and exposure to careers that require college; and 3) establish partnerships with colleges to help students with admissions and financial aid processes. The Sophomore Summit targets all tenth graders in an effort to keep them in school. Research indicates that the highest percentage of students drop out before the spring semester of their sophomore years.

MEASURING SUCCESS Because of our efforts, students' PSAT/NMSQT and AP participation and scores have helped close the achievement gap between African American and Hispanic students and their peers. Pre-AP classes have become the default option for many ninth graders. The number of students in AP classes and the number of students taking AP tests in biology, physics, chemistry, calculus, computer science, English language and literature, Spanish, music theory, art and art history has increased. To meet the need for increased sections of AP history and English language this year, three more teachers joined our AP faculty. Our ratio of graduating seniors and the number of students taking AP tests met the Challenge Index and *Newsweek* magazine recognized our accomplishments by naming Klein Forest High School as one of its 2008-09 Top U.S. High Schools.

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Getting Through

21st Century Scholarship Covenant

Indiana University

Bloomington, Indiana

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Indiana University's mission is to make a college education accessible to every state resident, and our 21st Century Scholarship Covenant is a key part of that effort. The Indiana legislature created the 21st Century Scholars program in 1990 to help deserving students earn college degrees, regardless of family income. Students are identified as eligible for the program in the 6th, 7th, or 8th grades, based on qualifying for the free/reduced school lunch program. The state has established 14 regional support sites to mentor and assist Scholars from acceptance into the program through their college years. IU has established out-reach programs with these support sites as well as recruitment initiatives using the SSACI databases for the Scholars. The state also mandates that each participating public college sustain a mentoring program for all enrolled 21st Century Scholars. However, tuition and fees paid by the program represent less than half the total cost of a college education, because these state grants exclude such costs as room, board, and books. IU Bloomington created the 21st Century Scholarship Covenant in the 2007-08 academic year to meet this remaining need based on the family's expected contribution, and to close the financial gap that prevents students from enrolling. The Covenant is our promise to provide 21st Century Scholars with sufficient scholarship and grant aid, and when fully implemented in 2010-11, will enable more than 1,000 students per year to pursue their dream of a college degree.

MEASURING SUCCESS We are maintaining trend data relative to the ethnicity and parent AGI of the new Covenant participants relative to the freshman class, in order to assess our progress toward reaching campus diversity goals. The Black/African American representation has remained at least 24 percent and the Hispanic/Latino representation, at least seven percent for the Covenant aid recipients; the Black/African share of the freshmen class is about seven percent and the Hispanic share has been three percent. The representation of Covenant recipients at or below the median AGI for Indiana has remained in the 90 percent range while the representation of all aid recipients in this AGI range has remained in the 60 percent range, so meeting the needs of lower income students has exceeded our expectations. We are in the process of analyzing trend data relative to the persistence and graduation rates of 21st Century Scholars, so we will be in a position to create comparative data sets for future analysis.

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Chico Student Success Center

California State University, Chico
Chico, California

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Chico Student Success Center (CSSC) is a collaborative, student development program with a decade of successful diversity recruitment and retention experiences. The CSSC serves low-income students in an effort to create and support a successful college experience while attending CSU, Chico. The CSSC has partnerships with more than 35 high schools throughout California that serve low-income students. The CSSC supports these students as they transition from high school to higher education and from higher education to professional careers. Last year, the CSSC reached out to more than 1,500 low-income high school students and their families while also serving more than 300 low-income students enrolled at CSU, Chico. More than 90 percent of the students served are students of color.

MEASURING SUCCESS Although we use one major assessment measurement, the six-year graduation rate of our participants, we have identified four Critical Success Factors (CSFs). The CSFs include the following: 1) pre-college milestones (accurate financial aid forms, housing applications, freshmen orientation); 2) current grade point averages; 3) participation in civic engagement activities including community service; and 4) career preparation activities. The students' CSFs are usually identified through personal interviews, although we are currently designing a new social network to help with information flow and data gathering.

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Compass Learning Community

University of Central Oklahoma

Edmond, Oklahoma

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Compass Learning Community (CLC) helps first-year students with low entrance exam scores and an unclear academic focus find the right direction for success. Students with identified risk factors participate in this community. They live together, take the same classes, and are offered weekly supplemental tutoring and instruction opportunities. Additionally, they are connected with committed faculty and a full-time staff member — the Learning Communities Coordinator — who meets with students monthly, advising and mentoring them to facilitate their success.

To truly create an experiment that could challenge the world of retention, UCO invited the students who might have the most challenges themselves to join this community. To identify these students, UCO used common success indicators: high school GPA, SAT and ACT scores, first-generation and socioeconomic status, urban vs. rural background, etc., and brought together those who were the most "qualified." Many of our students were challenged by multiple categories. Students with similar backgrounds have been graduating in the single digit percentages over the past few years at UCO. UCO set a graduation rate goal of 20 percent — a goal that has already been met. Three years into the program, we now have a new goal: a 50 percent graduation rate for each Compass cohort.

MEASURING SUCCESS Qualitative measures include requiring the students to write a journal entry for their Success Central course at the beginning of the year stating why they joined the learning community and outlining their expectations. At the end of the semester they write another journal entry on how and if their expectations have been met. Students also complete a questionnaire addressing their goals and objectives for the year. A survey based on the program objectives is reviewed at the end of each academic year to assess student satisfaction and UCO staff evaluate the retention rate from fall to spring and first to second year and the average GPA of the group.

Eighty percent of the original cohort were first-generation college students. Now in its third year, 60 percent of that original cohort are still with the program, compared to 20 percent or fewer of their non-learning community peers persisting in college. The second cohort (2008-2009) still has 60 percent of its members enrolled. This year (2009-2010), the CLC program was expanded to 40 students from 26. Twenty-nine are first-generation and 15 are undecided in their major. The average ACT score for the group is 17.38.

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Emerald Eagle Scholars Program

University of North Texas

Denton, Texas

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Emerald Eagle Scholars program provides not only access to college, but access to academic success leading to the timely completion of a baccalaureate degree. This “access to success” program is designed to ensure that academically capable but financially disadvantaged students will have every opportunity to successfully complete a bachelor’s degree in a timely fashion. It has shown documented success in paving the way for access to university degrees by at-risk low-income, first-generation students.

Pell grant-eligible freshmen from households with adjusted family incomes that do not exceed \$40,000 per year are qualified to become Emerald Eagle Scholars at UNT, where the access to success program is organized around three conceptual pillars:

1. Financial Support – Tuition and fees are paid for four years utilizing federal, state and institutional grants.
2. Academic Success – Students stay on track to complete a bachelor’s degree and graduate in four years by completing no less than 30 semester credit hours with a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 each academic year.
3. Campus Connection – The opportunities to secure campus employment and mentoring are made available to every Emerald Eagle Scholar, intended to facilitate and strengthen their active engagement in the life of the university.

The program produces results by setting academic performance expectations and by connecting students to campus resources and activities that facilitate their academic success in a partnership committed to the students’ timely graduation.

MEASURING SUCCESS More than just a financial assistance program, the Emerald Eagle Scholars program connects students to campus resources and engages them in activities that facilitate their academic success and, ultimately, the timely completion of their bachelor degrees.

The Purpose: Student attainment of a bachelor’s degree in four years with minimal debt.

The Promise: Tuition and mandatory fees paid for four years utilizing federal, state and institutional grants.

The Expectations: Students stay on track to complete a bachelor’s degree and graduate in four years by: completing no less than 30 semester credit hours each academic calendar year; earning and maintaining a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5; and committing to active engagement on campus.

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Gen-1 Theme House

University of Cincinnati

Cincinnati, Ohio

2010 WINNER
Midwestern Region

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Gen-1 Theme House is an initiative of the UC Partner for Achieving School Success (UC PASS). In August 2008, UC PASS launched the Gen-1 Theme House to help first-generation, Pell grant-eligible students transition successfully from high school into college. The Gen-1 Theme House offers a structured living/learning environment as well as support services such as tutoring and mentoring. UC PASS employs a full-time program coordinator who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the House and assigns a graduate assistant as a Resident Advisor to provide 20 hours of guidance/mentoring weekly and on-site support 24/7. Program support includes mentoring, individual and small-group tutoring, voluntary and mandatory study sessions, frequent monitoring of student academic performance and social activities, and professional counseling and guidance. Students also participate in a weekly House course ("Surviving and Thriving at UC") for college credit (1 credit per quarter) during the year.

The overarching goals of the program are to ensure that the targeted population of students: has a successful freshman year; returns to college for their sophomore year; and graduates with a baccalaureate degree within six years. Students must maintain a minimum quarterly and cumulative GPA. Nationally, 45 percent of incoming freshmen fail to earn a college degree. For first-generation college students who are Pell grant-eligible and live at home/commute, the non-graduation rate approaches 90 percent. Economic realities force first-generation, first-year, low-income college students to sacrifice their college experience, academic performance, and educational success to financial necessity. Too often, these students choose to live at home, commute to school, and work 20-40 hour weeks in order to meet their financial commitments. Studies indicate these very students are the least likely to earn a college degree.

MEASURING SUCCESS The initiative's performance will be measured against adequate academic progress (GPA/credit earned), student retention rate, and student graduation rate. All of the students who remained in the Gen-1 Theme House throughout the academic year have returned as full-time students for Autumn Quarter. The House GPA for the 2008-2009 Autumn Quarter was 2.48. For residents who remained fully enrolled and engaged during the 2008-2009 Winter Quarter the GPA were 2.57. (Conversely, the GPA of the four students who emotionally withdrew from the program during Winter Quarter was 0.84.)

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Learning Outcomes Initiative

Miami Dade College

Miami, Florida

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION To ensure a level playing field for its predominantly low-income students, in 2005 Miami Dade College (MDC) implemented a faculty-led revision of its 25 General Education Goals. This led to the adoption of a new, focused set of 10 College Learning Outcomes that are broad and multidisciplinary and span all programs. The outcomes provide a foundation for learning at MDC that is consistent with today's workforce, global, and technological demands. In 2006, MDC convened a College Learning Outcomes Assessment team to develop a process to gather evidence about students' attainment of the learning objectives, and the results of the first round of assessments were reported in spring 2007.

MEASURING SUCCESS A featured component of the Learning Outcomes Initiative is the institution-level assessment known as the College-wide Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (CSLOA), which represents one of the college's major efforts in identifying an authentic method for measuring what students have learned. A key success indicator for this initiative is the extent to which MDC maintains active engagement across eight campuses in a number of ways: presentations providing valid information applicable to improving student learning and program performance at the college; development in designing authentic assessments, focusing on advancing the quality of instruction; and discussions on using data collected from other measures to learn more about either student learning at the college or the assessment process.

Because this Outcomes Assessment initiative is also a strategic planning goal for the college, progress is also reported in annual reports from various academic and student affairs areas. These reports document measures that indicate the extent to which changes in the curriculum or in instruction — just two examples — facilitated improved learning for students.

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Persistence Pals

Grand Valley State University

Allendale, Michigan

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION Persistence Pals connects select students enrolled at Grand Valley State University with faculty and staff to improve persistence and progress toward degree completion. The students are from high schools with high populations of first-generation and low-income families. The goal is to improve the graduation rate of these students. Pals work in teams; each team has four to eight members from across the campus. Each team must meet with their group once a month. Pals are not advisors — they are friends, adults who care about their students' success. Most teams have devised other methods to engage their students in the Grand Valley community and connect the students to advising, tutoring, and social and cultural events. This is strictly a voluntary effort. Lunches are provided for each team meeting by sponsoring departments and offices, and are coordinated through the Vice Provost's office and food service at a reduced rate.

MEASURING SUCCESS Success of the program is measured in the persistence rate and the six-year graduation rate of first-generation students. Pilot year 2008-09 saw 14 Detroit charter school students enter as freshmen, and 13 returned in fall 2009. This represents a 93 percent return rate compared with the overall average of 83 percent of the freshman class returning for their second year. The program has been expanded to work with 71 high schools using 100+ Grand Valley employees who volunteer to connect with the students.

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Program for Students with Cumulative GPAs of Less Than 2.0

Westchester Community College
Valhalla, New York

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION At Westchester Community College we have developed a structure to help return and retain academically at-risk students. Our program employs different outreach methods and techniques to assist students who have encountered academic troubles. We have developed a counseling approach and a clearly defined retention structure, utilizing strategies that help students gain fresh starts and improve their retention and success in college. Westchester Community College is a suburban institution with an open admissions policy. Annually we serve an ethnically and economically diverse population of more than 12,000 credit students, who are largely first generation college students. Each semester, approximately 20 percent of our students have cumulative grade point averages of less than a 2.0. The program focuses on the dynamics and issues of helping these students regain access to the institution, its services and programs, with the goal of becoming academically and personally successful. These students benefit from the additional attention that we provide. Our intrusive intensive care program for academically at risk students is generating positive outcomes by: 1) restricting students in academic risk from registering; 2) by clearly explaining to them in a letter from the Academic Vice President that each will be required to have a mandatory counseling appointment with their designated counselor; 3) by sending multiple mailings encouraging communication; and 4) by requiring a mid-semester academic update.

MEASURING SUCCESS A program review randomly selected and evaluated 50 students who had three semesters of GPAs of less than 2.0 to determine whether the intrusive intervention was successful. The results indicate that 64 percent of the students successfully increased their GPAs, 28 percent of the students' GPAs decreased, and eight percent had no change. (Data was collected during spring 2007.)

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Student Scheduled Child Care

Oklahoma City Community College

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Student Scheduled Child Care program has two primary goals; 1) retention and graduation of students raising young children and 2) high quality, affordable child care services for the Oklahoma City Community College student-parent. This child care service is offered while the student-parent attends class and is a semester-long reservation. During the six-month planning period, surveys, interviews and informal conversations with the college president and other administrative staff determined that student-parents of young children were distracted from their studies due in part to a concern for the care and safety of their children. Low-income students were unable to afford quality child care. Cases were reported in which students dropped out of college for this reason. Providing quality child care and a positive learning environment for the children offers peace of mind and allows student-parents to concentrate on coursework. Students are charged \$10.00 per child per evening, or \$10.00 for the morning /\$10.00 for the afternoon if daytime care is needed during class attendance.

MEASURING SUCCESS Quantitative measures include the numbers of returning students enrolling their children in the Student Scheduled Child Care program; retention in college enrollment as observed through repeated usage of Student Scheduled Child Care opportunities; and graduation rates of student-parents with children enrolled in the Student Scheduled Child Care program. The Office of Records and Graduation Services is able to provide graduation information. The Admissions Office and a review of student schedules provide retention information.

Qualitative measures include the testimonials of student-parents that express the benefits of having a Student Scheduled Child Care program as related to advancement through their college degree program plan, as well as teacher reports on the success of the children's participation in the program activities.

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Summer Contracts to Restore Good Academic Standing for Carolina Covenant Scholars

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Carolina Covenant program makes it possible for high-ability, low-income students admitted to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to graduate debt-free. The Covenant is committed to help these students (65 percent minority and 53 percent first-generation) succeed academically. The University provides a comprehensive array of academic and personal support services aimed at improving integration with the community, retention, and graduation rates. The use of contracts was instituted to help scholars who are placed on academic probation or become academically ineligible at the end of the spring semester to participate in summer school in order to restore good academic standing. The contracts allow more direct intervention with course selection and prescribed support services. Students' summer aid is packaged up front as loans, with the promise of converting these to grants at the end of the summer term provided that the Scholar either restores academic eligibility or demonstrates a good faith effort to do so.

MEASURING SUCCESS At the end of spring 2008, 97 Scholars were on academic probation or were academically ineligible to return in fall 2008. Seventy-four of these Scholars applied for financial aid to attend summer classes; 40 signed contracts and 34 did not. Of the 40 who signed, 39 fulfilled the terms of their contract and had their loans converted to grants. Of these 39, 34 (87.2 percent) were allowed to enroll in the fall semester. Of the 34 who did not sign contracts, 17 (50 percent) restored their good academic standing; 17 (50 percent) did not. Scholars who signed contracts and received mentoring and academic services restored academic good standing at a higher rate than those who did not (87.2 percent compared to 50 percent).

In summer 2009, 54 contracts were issued to students, and 45 of those (83.3 percent) were allowed to enroll in fall 2009. The summer contracts are an effective practice for retention and graduation efforts in the Carolina Covenant Scholars Program.

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Ujima Project/HOME Room Riverside Community College District Riverside, California

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION The Ujima Project is a mentoring program with faculty mentors and student peer advocates with a student club component. The target audience is first generation college-going African American students. The purpose of the program is to stimulate student engagement in campus life through student activities. The ultimate goal is transfer, AA or certificate attainment, and the project supports students in their studies through successful course completion and retention from semester to semester. The challenges the program addresses are poor rates of retention and success, and low GPAs for African American students. As an open access institution, many Riverside Community College students test below college readiness and face many challenges in achieving academic success and timely progression through their courses of study. Many are woefully underprepared for college. With poor reading and writing skills, they often must take two to three remedial courses in sequence before they are ready for college-level reading and writing courses. This is coupled with the fact that general education transfer courses put no limitations on enrollment. The students receive guidance counseling, emotional support, and help in developing self-knowledge in order to be successful in a relatively new (for them) institutional culture.

MEASURING SUCCESS The Ujima Project's success is measured in numerous ways. Many students have emotional problems, legal problems, and family problems; therefore, counseling is a major component of the program. A counselor is on duty for a few hours per week and documents counseling appointments. GPAs, stated majors, career goals, course completion rates and course retention rates of students in the program are reviewed. All students are required to have professors fill out progress reports at least once during each semester. The number of students that use the resources of the HOME Room (a dedicated space for all activities) are counted, along with the number, duration and purpose of visits — including special events like presentations and guest speakers. These are cross tabulated with demographic and academic data. Qualitative measures include relationships that develop between faculty mentors and students/peer advocates and students. Records of club activities, attendance, and documented college "service hours" are maintained.

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Appendix A

Innovation Awards

In each of the College Board's six regions, three exceptional initiatives — one each in the categories of Getting Ready, Getting In, and Getting Through — were selected to receive special recognition for their innovation and demonstrated efficacy in increasing the percentage of low-income students who get ready for, get into, or get through college successfully.

Winning submissions received an award of \$5,000 to help expand or sustain their program. The awards were presented formally in a ceremony at each of the College Board regional forums in February 2010. The College Board applauds these winning programs, whose achievement has been noted throughout the catalog.

A review committee was established comprising two representatives from each of the College Board's six regions in K-12 and higher education. Submissions were evaluated on the following criteria:

- **Relevance:** Alignment to the principles and priorities outlined in the Compact
- **Innovation:** New, creative, and sustainable strategies for advancing the goals of the Compact
- **Impact:** Demonstration of meaningful progress toward stated goals of the initiative
- **Potential:** Opportunity for replication and adaptation by other educators, institutions, and policymakers

For more information and to participate in next year's Innovation Awards program, visit www.collegeboard.com/collegekeys.

The College Board Advocacy & Policy Center was established to help transform education in America. Guided by the College Board's principles of excellence and equity in education, we work to ensure that students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. We make critical connections between policy, research and real-world practice to develop innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges in education today.

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