

# College & Career Readiness Practices



**Cultivating Equitable  
Learning Environments  
through College and Career  
Exploration and Planning**

Version 1 © 2025 New Tech Network

## TABLE OF CONTENTS



### **Share the Why & Encourage Early Completion**

- 1 College and Career Awareness Meetings
- 2 Action Items for Students and Families
- 3 Incentives for Student Milestones
- 4 Visits and Tours
- 5 Info Sessions and Networking

### **Host Accessible Events for All Students**

- 6 Multilingual Events
- 7 In-School Assemblies and Events
- 8 College and Career Week
- 9 Family Engagement Workshops
- 10 Celebrate Senior Decision Day

### **Offer Small Group Coaching & Instruction**

- 11 Milestone Completion Workshops
- 12 Milestone Completion Meetups

### **Provide Individual Support to Students & Families**

- 13 Early 1:1 Senior Planning Meetings
- 14 Individual Milestone Follow-Up
- 15 Financial Aid Review with Students and Families

### **Increase Support Through Partnerships**

- 16 Peer Ambassadors
- 17 Community Partnerships
- 18 Teacher Partnerships
- 19 College and Career Projects

### **NOT SURE WHERE TO START?**

1. College and Career Awareness Meetings
11. Milestone Completion Workshops
18. Teacher Partnerships

# College & Career Readiness Practices

## OVERVIEW

This set of cards provides college & career readiness practices that support communities where all students deserve a future shaped by possibility. These practices:

- Give high school juniors and seniors step-by-step guidance toward a financially and socially rewarding future, whether that's through college, career, or a path uniquely their own
- Dismantle limiting beliefs, including the idea that future planning only happens in the counselor's office
- Give every student and educator a team they can trust – and turn opportunity from a privilege to a promise
- Open doors for students often overlooked in postsecondary planning, promoting opportunity for every student

## OVERVIEW



Each of the College & Career Readiness Practices reflect an underlying shift in the way learners and educators approach postsecondary planning. The College & Career Readiness Practices Cards are grouped in the set by these key shifts:

**Share the Why & Encourage Early Completion** – These practices cultivate a college- and career-going culture that leverages community assets and provides learners and families with the expectations, knowledge, and support to identify and pursue their future goals.

**Host Accessible Events for All Students** – These practices build on a college- and career-going culture and engage with learners in community-wide experiences where everyone is supported, encouraged, and celebrated on their postsecondary exploration and planning journey.

**Offer Small Group Coaching & Instruction** – These practices provide more focused support to learners with guidance from supportive and experienced educators.

**Provide Individual Support to Students & Families** – These practices build relational trust and create an individualized approach to ensure that every learner is on track to reach their college and career goals.

**Increase Support Through Partnerships** – These practices are designed to leverage assets in the community, share the responsibility, and simplify the complexity of future planning.

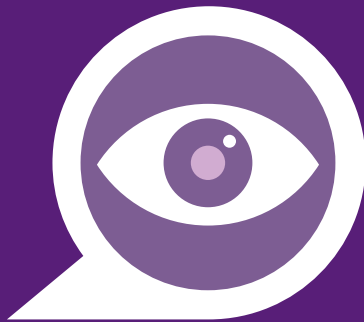
---

### Research

- Tierney, W. G., & Venegas, K. M. (2006). Fictive kin and social capital: The role of peer groups in applying and paying for college. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 49, 1687-1702.
- Ober, T. M., Ahn, J., Ali, A., Homer, B. D., Moner, A., Azam, A., & Ramos, N. (2020). A mixed-methods analysis of mechanisms to support college enrollment among low-income high school students. *Translational Issues in Psychological Science*, 6(2), 118.

# About the Icons

## ICON KEY



Explaining the Meaning  
Behind the Icons  
on Each Card

Version 1 © 2025 New Tech Network

## ICON KEY



### KEY DRIVERS



Junior Planning



Application Support



Financial Access



Senior Transition

### SEASONS



Fall



Spring



All Year



As Needed

### PREP TIME INVESTMENT



Small/Little  
to No Prep



Medium/Some Prep



Large/Thoughtful  
Time and Prep

### Note:

Each NTN Practices Card provides a recommended season of use and an expected prep time investment.

Before designing and implementing all practices, seek to understand:

- Your professional context (e.g., amount of preparation time and resources available)
- Your school environment (e.g., schedules and staffing)
- Your community (e.g., assets and needs)

As you develop a better understanding of your system, consider how to best include the assets and needs of specific populations (e.g., English Language Learners, students experiencing homelessness, students with learning differences) in your design and implementation.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# College and Career Awareness Meetings



### What?

Meet with all juniors, seniors, and families to increase awareness of postsecondary options and financial aid opportunities.

### Why?

To expand access to postsecondary exploration in ways that honor students' identities and cultural assets, foster belonging for families, and build relational trust – ensuring every learner and their family is affirmed and supported.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

# 1

## How?

### JUNIORS

1. **In early fall, meet with juniors and families** to increase awareness of postsecondary options, processes, and timelines.
2. **Share why identifying a postsecondary plan and a wishlist** (with at least three options) in junior year is so important.
3. **Incorporate checkpoints with juniors and families** to discuss student interests and the development of an actionable plan for senior year.

### SENIORS

1. **In early fall, meet with seniors and families to share why financial access is important** to help their students prepare for postsecondary options and understand the financial needs of students and families.
2. **Share what financial aid opportunities are available**, how they might access financial resources, and the support available to help them prepare.
3. **Maintain regular communication regarding timelines, requirements, incentives, and contact information** to build a trusting relationship among staff, students, and families.

### REFLECT

- How can families assist their students in exploring postsecondary options?
- What postsecondary exploration or financial aid activities will students engage in during the school day?
- How can communication efforts meet the language and frequency needs of students and families to build relational trust with educators and staff?
- How can you anticipate the needs of students of color, students who are economically disadvantaged, and other specific groups at your campus?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "College Advising Contact Note" in the NTN Help Center.
- Search "Rising Senior Meeting" in the NTN Help Center.
- See the "Multilingual Events" card in **College & Career Readiness Practices** as a way to provide additional support for scheduling these meetings.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# Action Items for Students and Families



### What?

Create and share a list of action items with students and families in a user-friendly format and in multiple languages.

### Why?

To partner with students and families, understand and uplift their existing knowledge, and organize next steps that support a successful transition to life after high school.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

# 2

## How?

1. **Develop a list of action items for each potential pathway for seniors** to complete during their senior year and during the summer to ensure that they are prepared to transition into their postsecondary choice.
2. **Invite a few students, families, and alumni** to co-design and provide feedback on action items.
3. **Include short descriptions, deadlines, and important contact information** to support students in completing action items.
4. **Share the checklist with students and families in multiple ways** (e.g., printed and digital copies, social media, student portfolios, school website).

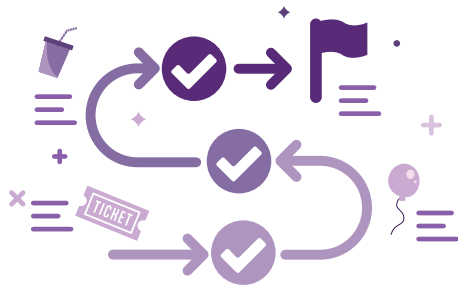
### REFLECT

- How does the list organize action items into manageable tasks to better support students and families in their postsecondary preparation?
- How are you seeking input from students and families as you design the list of action items?
- How is the list of action items incorporated into follow-up meetings among educators, students, and families?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "Senior Checklist" in the NTN Help Center.
- Search "College Preparation Checklist," "Military Preparation Checklist," and "Career/Apprenticeship Program Checklist" in the NTN Help Center.

# Incentives for Student Milestones



## What?

Offer incentives to students who complete a postsecondary milestone by a specific date.

## Why?

To celebrate progress in ways that understand diverse motivations, honor effort, and strengthen a community where every learner's journey is recognized.

### KEY DRIVERS



### SEAS.



### PREP.



### NO.

3

## How?

1. **Identify milestones for students to reach** (e.g., creating a postsecondary plan with at least three wishlist options, submitting at least three postsecondary applications, completing a financial aid application), and create a timeline for their completion.
2. **Determine incentives for each milestone** (e.g., extended lunch, pep rally, raffle prizes, swag bags, dorm room supplies, gift cards, food, field trips, experiences).
3. **Seek student input on milestone incentives**, and consider the benefits of offering multiple incentives for a major milestone (e.g., a monthly FAFSA raffle from October to March).
4. **Develop a system to collect proof of completion** and track the status of eligible juniors and seniors.
5. **Create a flyer and communication plan for students, families, and staff** that builds excitement for the fun, practical, and meaningful incentives to celebrate milestone completion.

## REFLECT

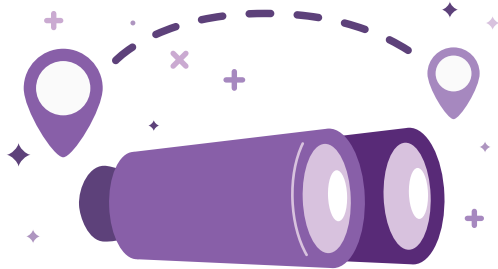
- How can you create a timeline of engagement that continually incorporates student voice in the development of incentives?
- How are you engaging community members to participate in and enhance the celebration of milestones for students?
- How can incentives build on each other and motivate students towards the next milestone?

## GO DEEPER

- Search "FAFSA Flyer with Raffle Prizes" in the NTN Help Center.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# Visits and Tours



### What?

Schedule college tours and career visits to explore campus life and career paths that connect classroom learning to real-world experiences.

### Why?

To provide experiences that expand students' and families' awareness of postsecondary options, cultivate belonging on college campuses and in workplaces, and expose every student to diverse careers and opportunities.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

# 4

## How?

1. **Utilizing student interest data, compile a diverse list of potential colleges** (public and private 4-year colleges, community colleges, and trade/technical schools) and career visits (local businesses and industries, military recruitment centers, apprenticeship training centers, etc.).
2. **Partner with community members in multiple sectors** to create meaningful visit experiences for students and families.
3. **Coordinate the logistics of each college and career visit**, and determine how students will be able to show interest in the visit or the selection process.
4. **Schedule opportunities for all juniors and seniors to visit multiple colleges** to learn more about what the campus has to offer academically and socially, as well as career visits to explore industries that align with their interests.
5. **For seniors that have made their college decision**, connect them to summer bridge programming and orientation sessions at their college.
6. **Design a pre-visit and post-visit workshop** for students to prepare for and reflect on their visit.

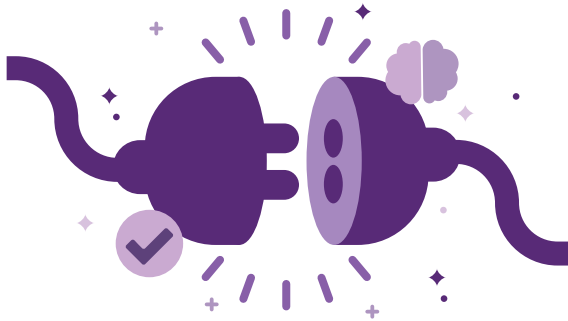
### REFLECT

- What support can you provide to students so that they feel more confident and prepared in speaking with college and career representatives?
- How are students making connections to affinity groups that could foster a sense of belonging in their potential college or career? (e.g., First Gen Student Union, Latinos in Business, Black Student Union)
- Who is benefitting the most from college and career visits? Who is benefitting the least?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "College Visit Checklist and Reaction" and "Photo Frenzy" in the NTN Help Center.
- Search "Field Trip Interest Form" in the NTN Help Center.

# Info Sessions and Networking



## What?

Schedule college and career introductions that engage students in exploring diverse postsecondary opportunities and creating connections.

## Why?

To educate and inspire students to diverse career paths linked to postsecondary education goals in a structured, impactful, and student-centered format.

### KEY DRIVERS



### SEAS.



### PREP.



### NO.

5

## How?

1. **Identify colleges, trade/technical schools, employers, and industries** based on local community needs and student interest.
2. **Collaborate with school staff** and leverage community assets with potential partnerships and connections with college and career professionals.
3. **Create a logistics plan for in-classroom presentations, lunch session workshops, and in-school events** (e.g., college fair, career day).
4. **Design a communication flyer** that promotes the event to students and families in multiple languages.
5. **Connect students with professional representatives during specified sessions** to learn more about prospective colleges, careers, and pathways.
6. **Provide students an opportunity to debrief and reflect** on their interaction with college and career professionals.

## REFLECT

- How are career introductions complementing juniors' exploration and planning journeys, culminating in a postsecondary plan with at least three wishlist options?
- How can college and career connections expose students to diverse experiences within students' fields of interest?
- What follow-up support can be set up to assist students in sense-making and processing?

## GO DEEPER

- Search "College Info Session Flyer" in the NTN Help Center.



## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# Multilingual Events



### What?

Advertise events on multiple platforms, and translate materials in multiple languages to meet the needs of the community.

### Why?

To ensure language inclusivity, foster cultural responsiveness, and build relational trust through communication that reflects and values the full diversity of the school community.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

6

## How?

1. **Highlight aspects of the event** that align with the interests and values of the community.
2. **Identify educators and/or community partners** who can translate promotional material into the primary languages spoken in the community, or use a translation service (e.g., Google Translate, ChatGPT).
3. **Seek feedback on messaging**, cultural appropriateness, and inclusivity.
4. **Advertise on platforms most used by the communities with whom you are seeking to connect** (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook).

### REFLECT

- Does your advertising reflect the diversity of the community you are serving?
- What barriers might prevent certain groups from engaging with your event, and how can you address them?
- What can you learn about your biases through this outreach approach?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "FAFSA Flyer (Spanish)" in the NTN Help Center.
- See uAspire's Financial Aid Resources in multiple languages.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# In-School Assemblies and Events



### What?

A school-day assembly supporting postsecondary preparation, where students explore college, career, military, trade/technical, and workforce training opportunities.

### Why?

To create shared experiences that honor every postsecondary pathway, elevate community stories, and encourage students to actively pursue their future success.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

7

## How?

1. **Gather a team of educators** and determine the goal of the assembly.
2. **Gather a group of students across grade levels**, alongside families and community members, to serve as council to provide opportunities for co-design, perspective sharing, and feedback.
3. **Identify a date and time**, and market the event to teachers and staff.
4. **Tailor assemblies by grade level** (e.g., career exploration for 9th grade, financial aid info for 12th). Have school staff, counselors, and educators explain key planning tools, deadlines, and resources.
5. **Include interactive activities** such as alumni panels, videos, and/or live Q&A to boost engagement.

### REFLECT

- How can you connect this assembly to year-round postsecondary planning efforts?
- What activities can be assigned prior to the assembly to support students' sense-making?
- What follow-up activities can teachers incorporate in their lesson plans to have students connect their learning to classroom learning?

### GO DEEPER

- See the **"Peer Ambassadors"** card in **College & Career Readiness Practices** as a way to provide additional support for this type of event.
- Search **"Junior College Prep Meeting Flyer"** in the NTN Help Center.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# College and Career Week



### What?

Similar to a Spirit Week, this week-long, school-wide event features themed daily activities, workshops, guest speakers, and hands-on guidance.

### Why?

To promote inclusive postsecondary exploration and planning by building awareness, motivation, and confidence and fostering a schoolwide college- and career-going culture.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.



## How?

1. **Form a committee of counselors, teachers, and student leaders** to coordinate the week and make recommendations about external speakers.
2. **Identify a theme for each day** (e.g., Career Exploration, College Applications, Financial Aid & Scholarships).
3. **Connect with community partners**, and invite local colleges, professionals, and alumni to speak and host workshops.
4. **Host evening sessions for families** on financial aid, college admissions, and scholarships.
5. **Market the event on multiple platforms** (e.g., morning announcements, posters, social media) to build excitement and awareness.

### REFLECT

- How will the student experience and student voices be prioritized?
- What potential barriers to participation might students face, and how can you proactively address them?
- How will you help students make sense of the experience and apply what they learn going forward?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "College Week" in the NTN Help Center.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# Family Engagement Workshops



### What?

Host an evening or weekend event designed specifically for families to learn about post-secondary pathways and how to support their student's planning process.

### Why?

To co-create experiences with families that acknowledge their critical role in postsecondary planning, honor their cultural assets, build relational trust, and cultivate shared understanding in navigating students' future opportunities.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.



## How?

1. **Partner with counselors, families, community organizations, and local colleges** to design the event.
2. **Provide interpreters and translated materials** to reach all families.
3. **Host breakout workshops on topics** such as financial aid and scholarships, career exploration, and college application timelines.
4. **Offer sessions at convenient times with childcare, food, and/or virtual options** to maximize opportunities for family engagement.
5. **Distribute take-home guides and checklists** tailored to grade levels.

## REFLECT

- How will you gather meaningful feedback from families about the content, format, and usefulness of the workshop?
- How are you intentionally creating opportunities for families and students to engage in meaningful conversations during and after the workshop?
- What follow-up resources or supports will be provided to help families continue supporting their students after the workshop?

## GO DEEPER

- See the “**Multilingual Events**” card in **College & Career Readiness Practices** as a way to provide additional support for these workshops.
- Search “**AVID Family Night Flyer**” in the NTN Help Center.

# Celebrate Senior Decision Day



## What?

A school-wide event celebrating all seniors' postsecondary decisions, honoring their efforts, and reinforcing the value of planning for the future.

## Why?

To honor and celebrate every student's postsecondary decision, build an inclusive culture of collective pride and belonging, and inspire younger students to plan for life after high school.

### KEY DRIVERS



### SEAS.



### PREP.



### NO.

10

## How?

1. **Organize a committee of counselors, teachers, and student leaders** to plan and coordinate the event.
2. **Plan to celebrate all postsecondary decisions**, including 4-year college, community college, trade/technical schools, military, and employment.
3. **Determine the type of event appropriate for your campus** (e.g., pep rally, assembly, or outdoor celebration) with music, decorations, and shout-outs.
4. **Create a decision wall or photo backdrop** where students can share where they're headed next.
5. **Invite families, staff, alumni, and local partners** to join in the celebration.
6. **Use social media, morning announcements, and newsletters** to highlight student choices.

## REFLECT

- How are student preferences and ideas being considered in how they want to be celebrated?
- How are you ensuring all student groups are included and represented in the celebration? What steps can you take to avoid unintentional exclusion?
- How can the event be designed to inspire and motivate younger students to actively engage in their own postsecondary planning?

## GO DEEPER

- See Reach Higher's College Signing Day Toolkit.
- Search "Decision Day Flyer" in the NTN Help Center.
- See the "Multilingual Events" card in **College & Career Readiness Practices** as a way to provide additional support for this event.
- See the "Storytelling" card in **Culture Practices** for ideas to incorporate storytelling into this event.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# Milestone Completion Workshops



### What?

Classroom workshops that provide students with dedicated time in school to explore postsecondary options and complete key milestones.

### Why?

To allocate time during the school day for all students to engage in college and career planning through guided, inclusive support where peer learning is encouraged.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

# 11

## How?

1. **Select one of the four key drivers:** Junior Planning, Application Support, Financial Access, or Senior Transition.
2. **Define workshop objectives aligned with key college and career planning milestones** (e.g., identify three or more colleges for your wishlist, search for scholarships, finalize your college application list).
3. **Design a lesson plan for the workshop with interactive activities to meet the objectives.**
4. **Coordinate in advance with teachers** who will support and/or facilitate the workshop.
5. **Provide students with a post-workshop survey** to capture feedback to improve future workshops.

### REFLECT

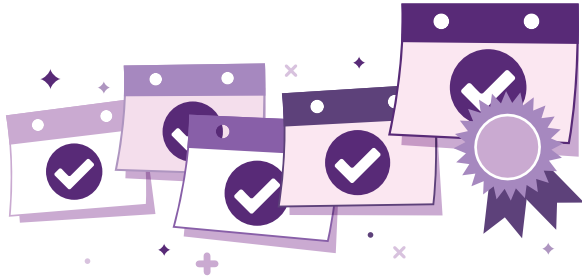
- Are the topics covered addressing key challenges students face in college and career planning?
- Are there opportunities to partner with community organizations, colleges, and/or employers to enhance the workshop experience?

### GO DEEPER

- See the **“Peer Ambassadors”** and **“Teacher Partnerships”** cards in **College & Career Readiness Practices** as a way to provide additional support for this type of workshop.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# Milestone Completion Meetups



### What?

Facilitate small group sessions with four to six students to ensure they are completing their college and career planning milestones and to provide quality feedback.

### Why?

To provide spaces that meet students' needs, build relational trust, and support progress toward postsecondary goals.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

# 12

## How?

1. **Select one of the four key drivers:** Junior Planning, Application Support, Financial Access, or Senior Transition.
2. **Define session objectives aligned with key college and career planning milestones** (e.g., identify three or more colleges for your wishlist, search for scholarships, finalize your college application list).
3. **Identify students with similar goals and/or progress** (e.g., interest in a trade school, some progress on creating their college wishlist).
4. **Partner with teachers to pull small groups of students** from class during a specific day and time.
5. **Document progress during each small group session to track achievements** and areas that need improvement.
6. **Schedule individual follow-up meetings** with students who need additional support completing their milestones.

### REFLECT

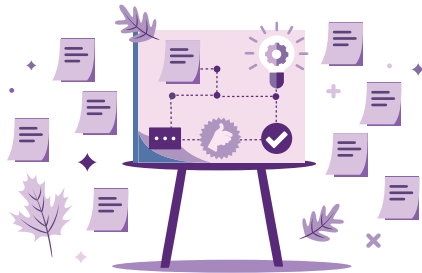
- How will you determine which students would benefit most from participating in these small group sessions?
- How will you gather and incorporate student feedback to improve the effectiveness of these sessions?
- What equity challenges might you encounter in organizing these sessions? How might you plan to mitigate these challenges?

### GO DEEPER

- See the “**Individual Milestone Follow-Up**” card in **College & Career Readiness Practices** as a next step.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# Early 1:1 Senior Planning Meetings



### What?

Meet one-on-one with seniors in early fall to review and discuss their postsecondary plans.

### Why?

To build relational trust through individualized conversations that honor students' identities, understand their assets and needs, and ensure every senior has a well-informed plan for life after high school.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

# 13

## How?

1. **Create a scheduling system for counselors, teachers, advisors, and staff** to meet with each individual senior in early fall to discuss their postsecondary plan.
2. **Develop a template for individual senior meetings** that include goals, discussion points for their postsecondary plan, and next steps.
3. **Share the template with students, families, and staff** to assist students in preparation for their meeting.
4. **Conduct and document individual senior meetings** personalized to their career interests and postsecondary goals.
5. **Schedule a follow-up meeting in mid-fall** to confirm progress on students' postsecondary plans and provide support with any unfinished steps.

### REFLECT

- What barriers do you anticipate students facing in developing an actionable postsecondary plan? What are possible next steps for them?
- How can you encourage postsecondary conversations between students and families before and after the initial senior meeting?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "Postsecondary Applications Check-In Questions" in the NTN Help Center.
- Search "Junior to Senior Year Transition Plan" in the NTN Help Center.



## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# Individual Milestone Follow-Up



### What?

Follow up individually during the school day with students who need additional time and support to complete key college and career readiness milestones.

### Why?

To center student needs through a caring, responsive approach to providing timely and targeted support.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

# 14

## How?

1. **Identify students who need additional time and support to complete key college and career readiness milestones** (e.g., juniors without a college wishlist or postsecondary plan, seniors who have not yet submitted college/financial aid applications or made a decision about their postsecondary plan).
2. **Leverage pre-existing relationships with teachers, counselors, and advisors** to follow-up individually with students, and provide clear instructions to staff including guiding questions, a clear timeline, and expectations for tracking progress and follow-up.
3. **Assign each student to a staff member to meet with them individually** during the school day to build relational trust, determine next steps, and support them in completing their milestones.
4. **Create a plan to identify barriers to completion** during these interactions, and develop opportunities to further support students in completing milestones.

### REFLECT

- How can you maximize pre-existing staff and student mentorship for these individual student meetings?
- How will you capture student experience feedback and incorporate it into a follow-up plan?
- How will your learning from the initial individual student meetings increase the school team's capacity for more individual student follow-up?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "Student Pass" and "Application Status Tracker with Staff Assignments" in the NTN Help Center.
- Search "FAFSA Passes" in the NTN Help Center.

# Financial Aid Review with Students and Families



## What?

Personally contact seniors and families to review their financial aid status and discuss next steps.

## Why?

To co-navigate complex financial aid application statuses and offers with empathy; honor family expertise; and reinforce belonging through transparent, culturally responsive guidance.

### KEY DRIVERS



### SEAS.



### PREP.



### NO.

15

## How?

1. **Create a checklist for reviewing seniors' financial aid application statuses and offers**, and design a meeting agenda that incorporates families' input on goals, hopes, and needs.
2. **Create an outreach plan to students and families** with clear objectives for the meeting and flexible scheduling options.
3. **Contact seniors and families personally through multiple platforms** (e.g., phone call, text, email, learning management system).
4. **Conduct individual meetings with seniors and families** to check their financial aid verification statuses, complete the verification process as needed, review and evaluate financial aid offers, understand loan terms and conditions, assist in writing appeal letters if necessary, and make a financial plan to support the student's postsecondary plan.

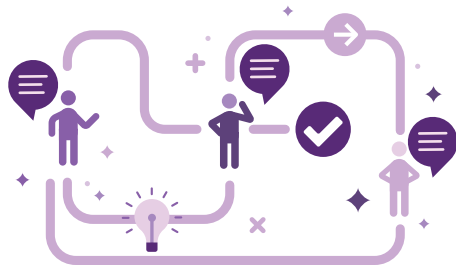
## REFLECT

- What resources or information could assist students and families in preparation for the meeting?
- How will you gather and incorporate student and family feedback to provide support in the next steps identified?
- Who on your staff would be excited to partner with you and meet individually with students and families? How can you invite staff that has already built relational trust with students and families?

## GO DEEPER

- Search "FAFSA Letters Home in English and Spanish" in the NTN Help Center.
- See uAspire's Financial Aid Resources in multiple languages.
- See Federal Student Aid's FAFSA checklists.
- See the "Multilingual Events" card in **College & Career Readiness Practices** as a way to provide additional support for scheduling these meetings.
- See the "Family Engagement Workshops" card in **College & Career Readiness Practices** as a next step.

# Peer Ambassadors



## What?

Recruit and train student ambassadors with recent experience and expertise to provide support to their peers.

## Why?

To leverage community assets by empowering students to meaningfully guide and support their peers.

### KEY DRIVERS



### SEAS.



### PREP.



### NO.

# 16

## How?

1. **Recruit peer ambassadors.** Think about who students will identify with, as well as who has the experience and the capacity to support fellow students. Consider compensating peer ambassadors for their time (with a stipend, credit, recognition, etc.).
2. **Provide training and clear expectations.** Explain how ambassadors will support their peers, when this work will happen, and what the intended outcomes are. Ensure they have the resources they need to succeed.
3. **Communicate the opportunity.** Share with teachers, students, and families what support is available through peer ambassadors and why they should participate.
4. **Check-in regularly.** Find consistent times to touch base with peer ambassadors to learn what is working well and what could be improved. Start this routine early to identify quick fixes and provide support throughout.
5. **Assess the program.** Ask for feedback from both peer ambassadors and the students they served. Identify successes and opportunities for growth.

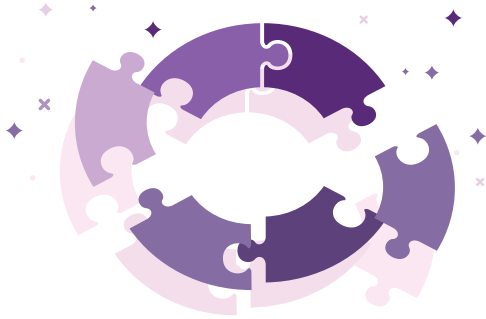
## REFLECT

- Which groups of students might benefit the most from working with a peer ambassador? How might you specifically recruit peer ambassadors that they will identify with?
- How might you engage recent graduate alumni to serve as peer ambassadors, either for one-time events or on an ongoing basis?
- Which student clubs, organizations, and identity-based spaces could provide opportunities for built-in peer ambassador connections?

## GO DEEPER

- See the “**Teacher Partnerships**” card in **College & Career Readiness Practices** to connect this practice with educators who serve as student activity advisors and coaches who can help identify potential peer ambassadors.

# Community Partnerships



## What?

Partner with local colleges, employers, and community-based organizations.

## Why?

To cultivate partnerships that leverage community assets and increase opportunities for students to be supported in their college and career exploration and planning.

### KEY DRIVERS



### SEAS.



### PREP.



### NO.

17

## How?

1. **Identify existing partnerships and opportunities for new partnerships.** Reach out to local college admissions and financial aid departments, career training programs, and college access organizations. Build a directory of key partners and share it with your postsecondary leadership team.
2. **Communicate opportunities such as events, assemblies, workshops, and internships,** and invite partners to connect with and support students and families.
3. **Ensure partners have information about your school and your students** so that they show up prepared.
4. **Appreciate partners** who have contributed and supported your students and families.
5. **Maintain ongoing communication with partners** throughout the year to keep them engaged.

## REFLECT

- Which local college, career, and community-based partnerships have worked well, and what would it take to replicate or build on that success for next time?
- Which partnerships haven't gone well, and what would it take to prevent or mitigate the obstacles going forward?
- Do your current partners reflect the options and opportunities that your students are interested in? (e.g., only partnerships with 4-year colleges while none with community colleges or trade schools)

## GO DEEPER

- Search "College Rep Emails" in the NTN Help Center.

# Teacher Partnerships



## What?

Partner with teachers in a specific department or class.

## Why?

To distribute ownership of postsecondary planning across classrooms in ways that strengthen relational trust and embed belonging into daily instruction.

### KEY DRIVERS



### SEAS.



### PREP.



### NO.

18

## How?

- 1. Identify the department or class that will support a specific effort.** For example, invite English/ELA teachers to support postsecondary applications and Social Studies/Government teachers to support financial access.
- 2. Provide training and clear expectations.** Meet with teachers during an advisory staff, grade-level team, or department meeting. Explain what support is needed and why, and provide teachers with tools and resources needed to support students (e.g., model for teachers how students will use a career exploration tool to identify at least 2 careers that align with their interests and strengths).
- 3. Check-in regularly.** Find consistent times to touch base with teachers to learn what is working well and what could be improved. Start this routine early to identify quick fixes and provide support throughout.
- 4. Assess the support.** Ask for feedback from both teachers and students. Identify successes and opportunities for growth.

## REFLECT

- What experience and knowledge do teachers have in the area you're asking them to support? How might their personal experiences shape the advice they give to students? What do you wish they knew?
- How have you engaged teacher leaders and school leaders in this effort? What support and resources can they provide? What barriers could they remove?
- Who would be excited to pilot this effort in their classroom first and then champion the work in their department?

## GO DEEPER

- Search "Pre-Senior Round Up Presentation" in the NTN Help Center.
- Search "Slide Deck for Staff Development Meetings" and "Email to Teachers" in the NTN Help Center.

## COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

# College and Career Projects



### What?

Design projects where students explore options and opportunities for life after high school.

### Why?

To invite learners to explore futures through student-centered projects exploring their passions and interests while developing essential skills.

#### KEY DRIVERS



#### SEAS.



#### PREP.



#### NO.

# 19

## How?

1. **Identify a specific class** (ex: English, advisory, etc.) to launch the project.
2. **Choose a topic for the project** such as college & career exploration or transitioning to life after high school.
3. **Launch the project with an engaging and authentic task designed to provide context for their learning.** Ask students to name what they already know about the topic and what they need to know in order to complete the project.
4. **Scaffold supports for students to build the skills and knowledge** needed to create the final product and showcase their learning. Provide regular benchmarks to check on students' progress and help them reflect on what they are learning.
5. **Conclude the project with students presenting their project** to peers, educators, families, and/or community members. Share ideas and suggestions, receive feedback, and celebrate their plan for their future.

### REFLECT

- What resources or professional learning might facilitators need to be prepared to launch the project?
- Who will you include in the culminating event to best support each student?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "Culture Day Presentation" in the NTN Help Center.
- Read NTN's article "A Comprehensive Guide to Project-Based Learning."
- See the "Knows and Need-to-Knows" card in **Learner-Centered Practices** and the "Spiraling the Driving Question" and "Visual Benchmarks" cards in **Assessment Practices** to connect this practice with project-based learning.