1. **Visibility and Student Resources**

Provide clear, visible statements in the school that speak to the value and importance of college for all students.

- Wear college memorabilia (t-shirts, sweatshirts, jewelry, etc.) on designated days. Display your college degree. Post bulletin boards or other visuals of college success stories. Speak to students about your educational journey.

- Engage students in conversations about college as an option for them.

- Set up a space in the library or other public space for students to create displays showcasing their college and career aspirations and share them at parent events.

- Post information about college and careers on bulletin boards and on the school website.

- Involve students in college related activities such as March Madness, the Duel in the Desert, college radio/tv stations, fun-runs, charities and so on.

Designate a ‘College Month.’

- Host college and career fairs and/or college and career speakers/presentations.

- Focus on different colleges each day in announcements. Include brief college quizzes (i.e. Which Arizona University has the Lumberjack mascot?), interesting trivia and programs offered.

- Take students on college field trips – real or virtual.

- Include college related activities in all core classes. (English – write letters for promotional information and college swag; Science – include UofA’s Steward Observatory in a lesson; Math – keep data and compute statistics for the college volleyball team.)

- Invite alumni (near peers) to speak with students about their college experiences.

- Encourage students to create college banners, pennants and so on for display during the month.

- Give away college swag to acknowledge desirable behavior during the month. (A drawing for an NAU t-shirt. Only students with no missing assignments for 2 weeks are eligible to win.)
Building a College-Going Culture – Strategies & Activities, continued

Connect individual lesson plans with applications in specific college majors and careers. This includes inviting “guest lecturers” (fire fighters, stock brokers, merchants ...) to teach appropriate objectives based on their occupations.

2. Strategy and Evaluation

Use website announcements, newsletter notes, social media posts and other communication resources to stress the important role of families in creating and maintaining a college-going culture.

Develop professional development activities and goals that help faculty and staff understand the nature and value of a College-Going Culture.

- Encourage faculty/staff to demonstrate confidence in students and their belief that each and every one is capable and worthy of achieving their dreams.

- Institute a mentoring/advisory program where teachers intentionally work towards positive, guiding relationships with students.

- Recognize staff members who excel at making students feel connected to the school.

Share academic benchmark goals with students and plan with them how to reach those goals.

- Discuss with students the importance of the ACT and SAT for college admission and scholarships.

- Understand test-taking strategies and explicitly teach them to students.

- Provide opportunities for students to take timed tests with formats similar to standardized college entrance exams as preparation.

- Include students in goal setting.

Provide access to college/career planning tools.

- Help students create electronic portfolios to track all relevant post-secondary materials (Pre-ECAP, personal statements and resumes).

- Collaborate with high school personnel to ensure that students’ portfolios move with them and that their efforts will be acknowledged and expanded.
3. Inclusiveness

Write a powerful Vision Statement which includes a commitment to supporting all students’ highest possible achievement.

- Post the Vision Statement clearly both inside and outside the school and on the school’s website.
- Engage all staff in creating and facilitating strategies and activities that will help the school actualize its vision.
- Familiarize stakeholders with the specific strategies and activities being undertaken to achieve the School vision.

Encourage students to reflect on their abilities and interests; explore potential post-secondary pathways, and to share the ideas and goals they have for their lives after high school.

- Introduce students to exploration resources that allow them to take an interest inventory, research careers and set career goals.
- Make students aware of the career options that are open to them with a college degree and those that are closed without a degree.
- Guide students in completing a Pre-ECAP based on their career interests identified from an interest inventory and use that information to help them choose appropriate courses in high school.

Monitor absences and ensure that students who are absent without a valid excuse will expect to hear from the school. Identify problems, trends and limitations to school attendance and look for remedies.

Develop advisory groups/periods with curriculum that helps students develop behaviors for success including SMART goal setting, and time management.

4. Academics

Infuse high expectations and a college-going culture in the classroom through rigor, fostering greater independence in students, the courage to take risks and persistence through failure.

- Inform parents and students of the school’s expectation that all students enter high school on track to succeed in college and careers, and reassure them of the opportunities to make that happen. Reflect that expectation in every activity and interaction.
- Hold award ceremonies and acknowledge not just accomplishment, but effort and improvement. Display and recognize Academic Achievement awards prominently.
Building a College-Going Culture – Strategies & Activities, continued

- Encourage all students to take advanced placement classes in high school.
- Integrate college-going-related conversations and activities into classrooms regularly.

Engage and train staff in helping develop students’ academic foundational skills, executive function, self-regulation and sense of place and purpose in the school.

- Reflect a growth mindset that allows students to seek or take advantage of help without embarrassment, shame or judgement.
- Examine formative student achievement data to identify students who need additional support.
- Assign students with attendance or behavior problems, who might otherwise be expelled, assigned to detention or in-school suspension, to an intensive support class.

5. Family and Community Support

Welcome families to support and encourage students’ post-secondary goals.

- Create a College and Career Center at the school to support college aspirations and invite families to access staff and resources.
- Invite parents to participate in designing policies (attendance, behavior, homework, etc.) that promote high school and post-secondary success. Communicate these policies to the community clearly with examples of “what success looks like” on the website, in newsletters, in posters and in verbal communications.
- Plan for students’ to share career interest inventory results and related research in class, at a family event or during student-led conferences.
- Provide resources that document the importance of attendance and its effect on student success.

Invite community members with college degrees to serve (volunteer) as college/career coaches - sharing their experiences with students and families about preparing for and attending college.

Schedule a workshop to provide students and their families with the College & Career Planning Guide and guidance in completing it. Include information about the types of financial aid available to pay for postsecondary education and ways to reduce the cost of college to families.

6. P-20 Collaboration

Develop seamless articulation between elementary, middle and high schools. Ensure that the college-going message is constant as students move through their educational journeys.
Building a College-Going Culture – Strategies & Activities, continued

- Schedule regular opportunities for teachers to work in vertically aligned groups to ensure that instruction is aligned across grades.

- Assign ‘transition staff’ who ensure that students have completed the appropriate coursework to matriculate to high school and on to college. Make sure all students and their families know who is responsible.

- Collaborate with the high school to carry out transition activities, such as summer bridge programs, high school student-shadowing days, high school tours, etc. for all eighth grade students.

Develop partnerships with 4-year and 2-year colleges, trade schools, military recruiters etc. to increase students’ awareness of options for post-secondary plans.

- Co-facilitate/host college-related activities for students and families and raise awareness of, and aspirations for, college.

- Produce a scavenger hunt for important information on the website. (When is the College Fair? What are the requirements for eighth grade graduation?)

- Ask for donations of college or career themed giveaways.

Stay abreast of important “college knowledge.”

Invite high school upperclassmen and recent alumni to share their college preparation experience, highlighting what they did and wished they had done in middle and high school.

7. Sustainability

Nurture a College-Going Culture.

- Participate in the on-line Arizona College Access Professional (CAP) Course to become familiar with resources available to Arizona educators that promote a College-Going Culture. Encourage others to participate.

- Ensure that teachers and staff are sufficiently versed on a career information system (ex. AzCIS) and that they can use it to engage students in exploration and planning their futures.

Based on Postsecondary Success College-Going Culture Rubric
At the Center for Educational Outreach at UC Berkeley Rubric