

Alternative High School Initiative (AHSI)
High School to College Transition Work Group

Defining Career and College Readiness, Access, and Success
(Final Draft)

DESIRED RESULT : To enhance each AHSI intermediary's capacity to prepare, matriculate, track and support students' post high school plans and success.

STRATEGIES

In order to achieve this result, the High School to College Transition work group will implement four strategies, namely:

1. Develop a common understanding of key competency-based indicators which demonstrate student's career and college readiness.
2. Identify and develop tools that improve and support college access, readiness and transition support for students.
3. Develop a communication structure that will guide the High School to College Transition work and facilitate its collaboration with other AHSI work groups.
4. Build interest and opportunities to address, share and improve strategies around career and college preparation and transition support for students.

The first strategy indicates that it is important for AHSI intermediaries to develop a common understanding of key competency-based indicators which demonstrate student's career and college readiness, ability to access/matriculate on to post-secondary education and post-secondary success. **This document is a final draft of the AHSI definition and understanding of: 1) what it means to be career and college ready; 2) what it means to be able to access and matriculate on to post-secondary opportunities; and 3) what it means to be successful throughout post-secondary endeavors.**

Career and College Readiness

To support a student in becoming career and college ready it is important to establish a future focus culture within the school environment. Indicators that a school has a future focus/college going culture include:

- **College Preparation Services-** Includes but not limited to college preparation workshops/classes taking place on a regular basis in which students receive instruction on how to access and prepare for college i.e. completing applications, researching college opportunities; learning about financial aid, etc.
- **Career preparation/workforce development services-** Includes but not limited to work based learning opportunities-internships, job shadowing, work place tours, informational interviews
- **Future focus vision as part of school mission-** School mission explicitly states post-secondary matriculation as a desired result for all of its students. As a result the future focus mission will be apparent in the school's culture.
- **Dedicated personnel-** Individuals whose primary focus is to provide guidance for students preparing for life after high school.
- **Align resources that support the future focus-** Includes but not limited to funding for college prep activities, personnel, etc.

- **Parent/Guardian support/involvement-** School actively works to involve parents in all aspects of post-secondary preparation. School may provide opportunities for parents/guardians to learn about financial aid, scholarships and other topics of interest and importance.

There are several components that enable a student to be career and college ready. A career and college ready student has mastered academic competencies necessary for high school completion and post-secondary acceptance and displays an awareness of and the ability to apply for college/other post-secondary opportunities. Furthermore, a student is to be considered career and college ready if he or she is able to display maturity, self management/advocacy, communication, leadership, organizational and study skills.

Possible Indicators

The following is a list of indicators that identify a student who is career/college ready:

Demonstration of Soft Skills:

- Oral and written communication skills
- Critical thinking/problem solving skills
- Time management skills
- Organizational skills
- Study skills
- Independence
- Maturity
- Self advocacy
- Intellectual openness
- Self determination
- Goal oriented
- Leadership
- Cultural/social awareness

Academic Indicators

- Completion of entrance exams and/or other post-secondary requirements.
- Demonstrate academic eligibility
- Participation in career development/work based learning opportunities (i.e., internships, job shadowing, informational interviews work place tours, interview techniques, resume writing instruction, etc.
 - As a result student displays an awareness/knowledge of how to access career/work opportunities
- Participation in college preparation opportunities (i.e., college prep workshops/classes, college visits, pre-college summer immersion programs, dual enrollment courses, research application requirements etc.)
 - As a result student displays an awareness/knowledge of how to access college/post-secondary education opportunities
- Exposure to financial literacy topics (ex., Financial Aid, checking/savings accounts, credit cards, etc.)

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- Student takes advantage of leadership opportunities
- Completion of high school by earning a diploma
- Completion of high school by earning a GED

Career and College Access/Matriculation

A student is ready to access/matriculate on to post secondary opportunities if he or she displays the characteristics of being career and college ready. In addition, being able to access post secondary options is dependant upon the students' ability to secure financial support for both academic and living expenses.

Possible Indicators

- Completion of FAFSA and/or scholarship applications
- Completion of work/college applications and acceptance to post-secondary opportunities
- Financial literacy (i.e., understanding of savings/checking account, loans, credit cards etc.)
- Awareness of how to search for financial support
- Paid housing application and deposit
- Attend orientation or express intent to attend
- Understand support group options (i.e., campus clubs and organizations, mental health services, academic support offices etc.)
- Exposure to work place & employment activities
- Identified an adult with whom to maintain a supportive link either on campus or off campus.

Another important aspect of accessing and moving on to post secondary opportunities is the support a student receives as they transition from high school to their desired career or college choice. **Effective transition support services may include:**

- Personnel devoted to regular follow-ups with student. Follow-ups include checking on students' academic status and other needs. Personnel also may also want to ensure students have met all requirements necessary for entry into their post-secondary choices.
- Providing resources and services around financial aid, scholarships, job placement, etc.

Post secondary Success

To ensure students' post secondary success it is important for each AHSI intermediary to provide supportive resources and track students' achievement. Alumni support may include:

- Academic counseling
- Job/career access services
- Financial support opportunities
- Social/emotional support

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- Contact with alumni
- Drop in Alumni support services

To further ensure post secondary success it is important for *students* to take advantage of various opportunities that can provide guidance and support. Possible opportunities include:

- Career and job placement fairs
- Student engages in campus leadership opportunities (ex, student government)
- Active participation in campus student groups (ex., culturally supportive groups like black student union, Latino student union, and other social groups)
- Student seeks academic tutoring and takes advantage of professor office hours

In addition, student success is dependent on the individual and the goals set by the student. The student can be considered successful if he or she has the ability to move forward with personal goals.

Specifically, *possible* indicators of post secondary success *might* include:

- Enrollment in post secondary education including:
 - 2 or 4 year institution
 - Certificate program
 - Apprenticeship
- Military enlistment
- World travel
- Completion of a certificate or other degree program offered by a post secondary institution
- Successful entry into a part-time or full-time work commitment, particularly one related to a young person's career interest