
Improving College-Going Toolkit



**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**



**BILL & MELINDA
GATES *foundation***



Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to AASA's *College Going Data Toolkit*. We have worked hard to make this a hands-on, practical package that will help you do your job.

The college-going rate of our high school seniors needs to increase. Most economists agree that the 21st century global marketplace will demand more college-educated citizens with skill sets that can only be developed through post-secondary education.

In 2009, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that contained new college enrollment reporting requirements for school districts in an attempt to focus attention on this crucial area and encourage best education practices in school divisions across the country. These new reporting requirements have presented difficulties to many school systems that were reporting college enrollment in different ways and, often, using less sophisticated technologies.

Now your state education department is charged by statute to report to the United States Department of Education, and make public, college-going data, disaggregated by district in very specific categories. This more detailed analysis of your student data will be available to your community without additional explanation.

To help you with these new demands, this *AASA College Going Data Toolkit* is designed to

- Help you better understand of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund reporting requirements for college enrollment and persistence that are now required of school districts,
- Provide you strategies for communicating to school boards, teachers, families and your community the student information that is coming from the new data, and
- Offer ideas that may help you increase the college-going and persistence rates of your future graduating classes.

This toolkit is the result of a fortuitous coming together of the federal legislation, a generous grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the expertise of the College Summit, a national non-profit organization that helps high schools raise their **college** enrollment rates by building a **college**-going culture. The result of this collaboration is a

document rich in resources for local school districts and local school leaders concerned with the future of their graduates.

Please take a look. Check out the examples of other school systems already engaged in the endeavor. Use the information that is helpful to you. Let us know what works and what doesn't.

With all best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel A. Domenech". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel A. Domenech

Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

Consistent with the AASA mission of advocating for the highest quality public education for all students, the association applied and received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation designed to accomplish three goals:

- Provide district leaders with a greater awareness and understanding of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund reporting requirements for college enrollment and persistence;
- Provide tools and strategies for communicating these new data items to boards, teachers, families;
- Provide some potential levers of change to positively affect the college-going and persistence rates in the future including ensuring that school system leaders are informed, prepared, conversant, and equipped to increase college-going rates.

This toolkit is designed to augment the nearly dozen day-long meetings sponsored by the grant held throughout the nation. The design of the toolkit follows the mantra of our partners at College Summit - *Own It; Understand It; and Act On It*. You will also see this referred to as *Get Smart; Go Deep; and Get Going*.

Throughout the toolkit, you will also see *Action Steps*. These are designed as initial steps for activating the elements of this toolkit in your organization. The entire toolkit will be updated from time to time as new developments become available and experience allows us to expand the resources available in the toolkit.

STEP 1: OWN IT

College-going has received a great deal of attention as the perceived threat to the welfare of the American economy has been intensified by the recent world-wide economic downturn. Some would suggest that a fundamental cultural change is occurring where post-secondary education is an essential element to retaining American economic health and competitiveness. This may be best exemplified in Secretary Duncan's recent pronouncement.

“High schools must shift from being last-stop destinations for students on their education journey to being launching pads for further growth and lifelong learning. The mission of high schools can no longer be to simply get students to graduate. Their expanded mission, as President Obama has said, must also be to ready students for careers and college--and without the need for remediation.”

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan,
(July 15, 2010 speech to the College Board AP Conference -
“Three Myths of High School Reform”)

The initial concept of this toolkit is entitled "*Own It*." To *Own It* carries a meaning of owning the data about your district as opposed to allowing someone outside your district to characterize your district performance using the data.

Action Step: Your SEA is charged by statute to report college-going data disaggregated by district to the United States Department of Education. Each district should clearly understand when that process will occur; demand prior release to the district; and understand the data elements that comprise that release.

Why Improving Postsecondary Outcomes Is So Important for the American High School

Keith W. Frome, Ed.D., Co-Founder, College Summit, Inc.

If you run a public school, a new set of post-secondary accountability factors will soon be a part of your core work. Your new metric of school success will not be solely about getting more of your kids to graduate nor will it only measure the number or percentage of students who apply to post-secondary. Your new measure of success will not even be how many of your graduating seniors were accepted to college or how much scholarship money your seniors who were accepted received. All of these measures are good leading indicators to measure and celebrate. Ultimately, though, you, as the principal of a public high school will be asked: What percentage of your graduating students enrolled in a post-secondary institution and persisted without needing academic remediation?

There are several reasons the country is making the shift to setting the goal of high school to be post-secondary and college success. First, let's define "college." When educators hear the word "college," their minds usually conjure an image of a leafy 4-year college campus adorned with brick buildings, tweed-clad professors, and strolling students with time to read, reflect, and yes, play. While this image is a reality for a growing number of diverse communities, the term "college" encompasses so many more post-high school learning opportunities. "College" these days refers to "any post-secondary educational experience with value in the marketplace." As the National College Access Network (NCAN) puts it, college is "education" beyond high school. So "college" is a four-year college, a two-year community college, as well as vocational education and certification programs. College does not even necessarily refer to a campus or a physical site anymore. In 2007, 66% of all two and four-year degree Title IV granting institutions offered distance education courses in virtual learning environments.¹ If the term "college" simply refers to a degree or certificate-granting institution or organization a student attends after high school, then high schools that have a "college-going culture" are structured and managed on the expectation that all students will go to "college," so defined, and that college-going results will be measured for the purposes of constant improvement.

¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2008). [Distance Education at Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions, 2006-2007.](#)

The case for increasing the college success rate for all of America's students is grounded in research in academic achievement, individual health and well-being and the economic needs of the country.

1. Academic performance increases when high schools set the goal of college success for all students.

Research demonstrates that when school leaders emphasize post-secondary preparation and matriculation over secondary graduation, drop-out rates reduce and academic performance increases. Why? In a school with a college-going culture, students understand the relevancy of high school to their future. They are able to "connect the dots" between their high school studies and their hopes, dreams and aspirations. Several studies have shown that students who did not complete high school or are considering dropping out report that they just did not understand the point of going to school.² In addition, these students reported that they did not connect with a caring adult or a peer who was college positive and college savvy. High Schools dedicated to launching all of their students to career and college success - what some call "Launchpad High Schools" - measure their success on post-secondary attainment, enjoy structures that provide the kind of meaningful connection all adolescents need to set goals and persevere through obstacles. Indeed, the research literature implies and many practitioners report that even if the school is being held accountable solely for reducing drop-out rates and increasing graduation rates, it is prudent for the leadership to re-orient the work of the faculty towards college-going for all students because of the residual social and academic benefits which accrue to high schools with college-going cultures.

2. College Graduates lead longer, healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Every educator and school leader wants the best for his or her students and they will do whatever it takes to maximize their students' potential. Focusing on post-secondary success is one of the most important ways to act on and manage the idealism that drives every educator's sense of vocation. College graduates consistently earn more and live

² Bridgeland, John, Dilulio, John, and Morrison-Burke, Karen. Dropouts: Perspectives of High School Dropouts. Washington: Civic Enterprises, 2006.

longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives than students who do not go to college or pursue post-secondary training. Even completing just one year of college tends to benefit the student than never having gone at all. In July 2010, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the average worker aged 25 older with no high school diploma earned \$440.00 per week; high school graduates earned an average of \$629.00 per week; workers with just some college or an associate's degree earned 17% more than if they had only a high school diploma, earning an average of \$737.00 per week. Completing college, though, paid off the best with average earnings of \$1,138.00 per week, 80% higher than those with just a high school diploma.³ In 2009, those with some college earned an average yearly salary of \$36,158.00 as compared to those who only complete high school, who averaged \$31,925.00. Those who completed an associate's degree earned somewhat more per year at \$37,531. College completers earned substantially more money with an average salary of \$48,710 per year.

Those who attend college have greater job security too even in the depths of a historic recession. In July, 2010, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 13.8% of workers with less than a high school diploma were unemployed as compared to 10.8% unemployment for high school graduates, 8.3% unemployment for those workers with some college and 4.5% unemployment for those who had earned a B.A. or higher.⁴ In addition, according to the Educational Longitudinal Study, college graduates live longer, smoke less, divorce less, report more job satisfaction, read more newspapers and engage in more community service and volunteer activities than high school graduates.⁵ Why is this? For one reason, college graduates enjoy better paying jobs with more benefits including more access to higher quality health care. College graduates are also exposed to a variety of learning experiences and influences. Their access to a more diverse peer group introduces them to more abundant and healthier life options. In essence, a college degree, gives you more choices.

From a philosophical point of view, the goal of college attainment for all students is just another way of articulating the historic goals of American public education and the needs of a democracy for a well-educated citizenry. As early as 1837, Horace Mann

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table A-5, Employment Status of Civilian Noninstitutional Population 25 Years or Over by Educational Attainment, Seasonally Adjusted, bls.gov

⁴ Bls.gov/news.release. These statistics have stayed virtually the same in 2011, cf. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table A-4, July, 2011.

⁵ Ingels, S.J, Curtin, T.R., Kaufman, P. Alt, M.N. and Chen, K. (2002) "Coming of Age in the 1990s: The Eight-Grade Class of 1988 12 Years Later." (NCES 2002-321). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of education, National Center for Educational Statistics.

argued for more inclusive secondary and post-secondary education: “After the state shall have secured to all its children, that basis of knowledge and morality, which is indispensable to its own security; after it shall have supplied them with the instruments of that individual prosperity, whose aggregate will constitute its own social prosperity; then they may be emancipated from its tutelage, each one to go wherever his well-instructed mind shall determine. At this point, seminaries for higher learning, academies and universities, should stand ready, at private cost, all whose path to any ultimate destination may lie through their halls.”⁶

3. Most economists agree that the 21st century global marketplace will demand more college-educated citizens with specific skill sets that can only be obtained through post-secondary education.

While the various stakeholders in the national movement to make “all kids, college ready” would agree to the above educational and philosophical points, they passionately converge on the economic urgency of ensuring college success for America’s young people. In 2007, the National Center on Education and the Economy published a report entitled Tough Choices or Tough Times. Though not without its critics, the report was widely quoted by pundits, policy makers and philanthropists. It argued that the following factors were eroding our nation’s economic competitiveness in the world marketplace: (1) technology was allowing more companies to hire skilled labor at a distance; (2) automation was extending to not only take the place of unskilled labor but more and more skilled, middle class jobs; and (3) critical steps in the production process were more and more being outsourced. This global trend cannot be stopped, the report declared: “. . . it is easier and easier for employers everywhere to get workers who are better skilled at lower cost than American workers.”⁷ To remain competitive in the face of such an economic structural revolution, the report’s authors argued that America has to increase its capacity to produce more college graduates who are creative, critical thinkers and intellectual synthesizers than our education system currently facilitates⁸. The 21st century economy will require a creative workforce with the skills to research, design, invent, market and manage. This will mean both less need

⁶ Mann, Horace. (1837) “First Annual Report” in The Republic and the School: On the Education of Free Men, ed. Lawrence Cremin. (NY: Teachers College Press, 1957), p. 33.

⁷ New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, *Tough Choices or Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, (2007) National Center on Education and the Economy, San Francisco, CA, p. 5.

⁸Ibid, p. 8.

and also less opportunity for the kind of blue collar work which sustained this country's middle class for much of the last century. It will also mean less demand for local knowledge workers for they can be replaced by software. Admittedly, the recession did see a diminution in the employment security and earning power of college graduates (particularly minorities), but earning a college degree still gives workers a better chance than if they had not pursued post-secondary training of some sort. As we look ahead to better times, economists forecast an even greater need for a college-trained workforce. Demand for workers with a college education will outpace the current supply by 300,000 openings per year. By the year 2018, there will be 3 million fewer college graduates than the labor market will need.⁹ Given the current rates of college enrollment and graduation, colleges and universities will have to confer 10% more 4-year degrees each year to eliminate this shortfall by 2018.¹⁰ When you include the need for 4.7 million additional workers with post-secondary certificates, our K-16 system will have to produce 7.7 million new post-secondary and college graduates by 2018.¹¹ These statistics – especially when combined with the educator's vocational calling to tap the potential of every student who enters his or her school – serve as the clarion call to increase post-secondary achievement for all who are invested in American education and the future of the country and its young people.

Action Step: If the SEA is using National Student Clearinghouse data, the district should get a clear understanding of the accuracy and currency of the data plus understanding which institutions of higher education (IHE) in your area participate.

The *Act On It* section of this toolkit provides some model tools for conducting a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) and constructing a work plan using a template provided.

⁹ Carnevale, Anthony P., et. al., "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018," Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, June, 2010, pg. 16.

¹⁰ Ibid., pg. 18.

¹¹ Ibid.

Step 2: Understand It

After you own it you must develop a deep understanding of the data. This begins with understanding the regulations and indicators that underpin the data. Their origin is found in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) where the 34 indicators are found of which indicators C 10-12 focus on college-going. The State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) outlines the statutory requirements for reporting. Both are included below along with a series of critical questions that might direct your discussions with your SEA.

State Fiscal Stabilization Fund:

Summary of Final Requirements

Final requirements for States receiving funds under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) program were published in the Federal Register on November 12, 2009; see <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-27161.pdf>. Below is a summary of the final requirements.

I. Assurance Indicators and Descriptors

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) requires a State receiving funds under the SFSF program to provide assurances in four key areas of education reform: (a) achieving equity in teacher distribution, (b) improving collection and use of data, (c) standards and assessments, and (d) supporting struggling schools. For each area of reform, the ARRA prescribes specific actions that the State must assure that it will implement. The U.S. Department of Education (Department) has established specific data and information collection and public reporting requirements (the assurance indicators and descriptors) that a State receiving funds under the SFSF program must meet with respect to the statutory assurances. Together with the State plan requirements summarized in Section II below, these requirements will provide transparency on the extent to which a State is implementing the actions for which it has provided assurance. Further, increased access to and focus on the data and information

for these requirements will better enable States and other stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses in education systems and determine where concentrated reform effort is warranted.

Below are tables, by education reform area, summarizing the final data and information collection and public reporting requirements for States.

Total number of requirements: 37 (34 indicators, 3 descriptors)

Number of requirements using existing Department data and information collections: 8

Number of indicators that require a yes/no or similar response: 14

Achieving Equity in Teacher Distribution (education reform area (a))			
Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
Indicator (a)(1)	The number and percentage of core academic courses taught, in the highest-poverty and lowest-poverty schools, by teachers who are highly qualified consistent with section 9101(23) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA)	State and District	Existing data
Indicator (a)(2)	Whether the State’s Teacher Equity Plan (as part of the State’s Highly Qualified Teacher Plan) fully reflects the steps the State is currently taking to ensure that students from low-income families and minority students are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers (as required in section 1111(b)(8)(C) of the ESEA)	State	New information (yes/no indication)
Descriptor (a)(1)	The systems used to evaluate the performance of teachers and the use of results from those systems	District	New information

Achieving Equity in Teacher Distribution (education reform area (a))

Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
	in decisions regarding teacher development, compensation, promotion, retention, and removal		
Indicator (a)(3)	Whether the systems used to evaluate the performance of teachers include student achievement outcomes or student growth data as an evaluation criterion	District	New information (yes/no indication)
Indicator (a)(4)	If the district's teachers receive performance ratings or levels through an evaluation system, the number and percentage of teachers rated at each performance rating or level	District	New data
Indicator (a)(5)	If the district's teachers receive performance ratings or levels through an evaluation system, whether the number and percentage of teachers rated at each performance rating or level are publicly reported for each school in the LEA	District	New information (yes/no indication)
Descriptor (a)(2)	The systems used to evaluate the performance of principals and the use of results from those systems in decisions regarding principal development, compensation, promotion, retention, and removal	District	New information
Indicator (a)(6)	Whether the systems used to evaluate the performance of principals include student achievement outcomes or student growth data as an evaluation criterion	District	New information (yes/no indication)
Indicator (a)(7)	If the district's principals receive performance ratings or levels through an evaluation system, the number and percentage of principals rated at each performance rating or level	District	New data

Improving Collection and Use of Data (education reform area (b))

Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
Indicator (b)(1)	Which of the 12 elements described in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act (20 U.S.C. 9871) are included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system	State	New information (yes/no indication with respect to each element)
Indicator (b)(2)	Whether the State provides student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs	State	New information (yes/no indication)
Indicator (b)(3)	Whether the State provides teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects with reports of individual teacher impact on student achievement on those assessments	State	New information (yes/no indication)

Standards and Assessments (education reform area (c))

Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
Indicator (c)(1)	The approval status, as determined by the Department, of the State’s assessment system under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA with respect to reading/language arts, mathematics, and science assessments	State	Existing information
Indicator (c)(2)	Whether the State has developed and implemented valid and reliable alternate assessments for students with disabilities that are approved by the Department	State	Existing information
Indicator (c)(3)	Whether the State’s alternate assessments for students with disabilities, if approved by the Department, are based on grade-level, modified, or alternate academic achievement standards	State	Existing information
Indicator (c)(4)	Whether the State has completed, within the last two years, an analysis of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the accommodations it provides students with disabilities to ensure their meaningful participation in State assessments	State	New information (yes/no indication)
Indicator (c)(5)	The number and percentage of students with disabilities who are included in State reading/language arts and mathematics assessments	State	Existing data
Indicator (c)(6)	Whether the State has completed, within the last two years, an analysis of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the accommodations it provides limited English proficient students to ensure their meaningful participation in State assessments	State	New information (yes/no indication)
Indicator (c)(7)	Whether the State provides native language versions of State assessments for limited English proficient students that are approved by the Department	State	Existing information

Standards and Assessments (education reform area (c))

Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
Indicator (c)(8)	The number and percentage of limited English proficient students who are included in State reading/language arts and mathematics assessments	State	Existing data
Indicator (c)(9)	Whether the State’s annual State Report Card (under section 1111(h)(1) of the ESEA) contains the most recent available State reading and mathematics National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results as required by 34 CFR 200.11(c)	State	New information (yes/no indication)
Indicator (c)(10)	The number and percentage of students who graduate from high school using a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as required by 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1)(i)	State, district, and school (by subgroup)	New data
Indicator (c)(11)	Of the students who graduate from high school consistent with 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1)(i), the number and percentage who enroll in an institution of higher education (IHE) (as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA)) within 16 months of receiving a regular high school diploma	State, district, and school (by subgroup)	New data
Indicator (c)(12)	Of the students who graduate from high school consistent with 34 CFR 200.19(b)(1)(i) who enroll in a public IHE (as defined in section 101(a) of the HEA) in the State within 16 months of receiving a regular high school diploma, the number and percentage who complete at least one year’s worth of college credit (applicable to a degree) within	State, district, and school (by subgroup)	New data

Standards and Assessments (education reform area (c))

Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
	two years of enrollment in the IHE		

Supporting Struggling Schools (education reform area (d))

Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
Indicator (d)(1)	The average statewide school gain in the “all students” category and the average statewide school gain for each student subgroup (as under section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v) of the ESEA) on the State assessments in reading/language arts, and the number and percentage of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that have made progress on State assessments in reading/language arts, in the last year	State; State and district	New data
Indicator (d)(2)	The average statewide school gain in the “all students” category and the average statewide school gain for each student subgroup (as under section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v) of the ESEA) on State assessments in mathematics, and the number and percentage of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that have made progress on State assessments in mathematics, in the last year	State; State and district	New data
Descriptor	The definition of “persistently lowest-achieving	State	New

Supporting Struggling Schools (education reform area (d))

Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
(d)(1)	schools” that the State uses to identify such schools		information
Indicator (d)(3)	The number and identity of the schools that are Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools	State	New data and information
Indicator (d)(4)	Of the persistently lowest-achieving schools that are Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, the number and identity of those schools that have been turned around, restarted, closed, or transformed (as defined in this notice) in the last year	State	New data and information
Indicator (d)(5)	The number and identity of the schools that are secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds that are identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools	State	New data and information
Indicator (d)(6)	Of the persistently lowest-achieving schools that are secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, the number and identity of those schools that have been turned around, restarted, closed, or transformed in the last year	State	New data and information
Indicator (d)(7)	The number of charter schools that are currently permitted to operate under State law	State and (if applicable) district	New data
Indicator (d)(8)	The number of charter schools currently operating	State and (if applicable)	Existing data

Supporting Struggling Schools (education reform area (d))

Citation	Description	Reporting Level	New or Existing Collection?
		district	
Indicator (d)(9)	The number and percentage of charter schools that have made progress on State assessments in reading/language arts in the last year	State and (if applicable) district	New data
Indicator (d)(10)	The number and percentage of charter schools that have made progress on State assessments in mathematics in the last year	State and (if applicable) district	New data
Indicator (d)(11)	The number and identity of charter schools that have closed (including schools that were not reauthorized to operate) within each of the last five years	State and (if applicable) district	New data and information
Indicator (d)(12)	For each charter school that has closed (including a school that was not reauthorized to operate) within each of the last five years, whether the closure of the school was for financial, enrollment, academic, or other reasons	School	New information

II. State Plans

The ARRA also requires a State that seeks funds under the SFSF program to submit an application to the Department containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require. The Department has established specific requirements for a plan that a State must submit (the State plan), as part of its application for the second phase

of funding under the SFSF program, that describes its ability to collect and publicly report the data and other information required for the assurance indicators and descriptors summarized above. Below is a summary of the final State plan requirements.

General Indicator and Descriptor Requirements

Except as discussed below, the State plan must describe the State's current ability to collect the data or other information needed for the assurance indicators and descriptors as well as the State's current ability to make the data or information easily available to the public. If the State is currently able to fully collect and publicly report the required data or other information at least annually, the State must provide the most recent data or information with its plan. If a State is not currently able to fully collect or publicly report the data or other information at least annually, the plan must describe the State's process and timeline for developing and implementing the means to do so as soon as possible but no later than September 30, 2011. The State plan must describe the State's collection and public reporting abilities with respect to each individual indicator or descriptor.

Requirements for Indicators in Improving Collection and Use of Data

(education reform area (b))

Indicator (b)(1). With respect to Indicator (b)(1), the State must develop and implement a statewide longitudinal data system that includes each of the 12 elements described in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act. In its plan, the State accordingly must indicate which of the 12 elements are currently included in the State's statewide longitudinal data system. If the State's statewide longitudinal data system does not currently include all 12 elements, the State must describe its process and timeline for developing and implementing, as soon as possible but no later than September 30, 2011, a statewide longitudinal data system that fully includes all 12 elements.

Indicator (b)(2). With respect to Indicator (b)(2), the State must provide student growth data on their students to, at a minimum, teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects, in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs. In its plan, the State accordingly must indicate whether it provides teachers with such data. If the State does not provide teachers with such data, it must describe its process and timeline for

Requirements for Indicators in Improving Collection and Use of Data

(education reform area (b))

developing and implementing, as soon as possible but no later than September 30, 2011, the means to provide teachers with such data.

Indicator (b)(3). With respect to Indicator (b)(3), the State must indicate whether it provides teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects with reports of individual teacher impact on student achievement on those assessments. If the State does not provide those teachers with such reports, it must describe the State's process and timeline for developing and implementing the means to provide those teachers with such reports.

Requirements for Indicators (c)(11) and (c)(12)

With respect to Indicators (c)(11) and (c)(12), the State is required to, at a minimum, possess the ability to collect and publicly report the data. As a result, the general indicator and descriptor requirements discussed above apply to these indicators, at a minimum, with respect to the State's development of the means to collect and to publicly report the data. Accordingly, if, for either of these indicators, a State will develop but not implement the means to collect and publicly report the data (i.e., the State will not collect and publicly report the data) by September 30, 2011, the State must submit a plan with respect to the indicator that addresses the general indicator and descriptor requirements only with respect to the State's development of the means to collect and to publicly report the data, and not the State's implementation of those means. If submitting a plan in this manner, a State must include in its plan a description of the evidence it will provide to the Department, by September 30, 2011, to demonstrate that it has developed the means to collect and publicly report that data. If, however, for either of these indicators, a State will develop and implement those means (i.e., the State will collect and publicly report the data) by September 30, 2011, the State must submit a plan with respect to the indicator that fully addresses the general indicator and descriptor requirements.

General Requirements

In its plan, the State must describe the following:

- (1) The agency or agencies in the State responsible for the development, execution, and oversight of the plan, including the institutional infrastructure and capacity of the agency or agencies as they relate to each of those tasks;
- (2) The agency or agencies, institutions, or organizations, if any, providing technical assistance or other support in the development, execution, and oversight of the plan, and the nature of such technical assistance or other support;
- (3) The overall budget for the development, execution, and oversight of the plan;
- (4) The processes the State employs to review and verify the required data and other information; and
- (5) The processes the State employs to ensure that, consistent with 34 CFR 99.31(b), the required data and other information are not made publicly available in a manner that personally identifies students, where applicable.

Subpart A Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

Sec. 200.19 Other academic indicators.

(a) Elementary and middle schools--(1) Choice of indicator. To determine AYP, consistent with Sec. 200.14(e), each State must use at least one other academic indicator for public elementary schools and at least one other academic indicator for public middle schools, such as those in paragraph (c) of this section.

(2) Goals. A State may, but is not required to, increase the goals of its other academic indicators over the course of the timeline under Sec. 200.15.

(3) Reporting. A State and its LEAs must report under section 1111(h) of the Act (annual report cards) performance on the academic indicators for elementary and middle schools at the school, LEA, and State levels in the aggregate and disaggregated by each subgroup described in Sec. 200.13(b)(7)(ii).

(4) Determining AYP. A State--

(i) Must disaggregate its other academic indicators for elementary and middle schools by each subgroup described in Sec. 200.13(b)(7)(ii) for purposes of determining AYP under Sec. 200.20(b)(2) ("safe harbor") and as required under section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vii)

of the Act (additional academic indicators under paragraph (c) of this section); but (ii) Need not disaggregate those indicators for determining AYP under Sec. 200.20(a)(1)(ii) (meeting the State's annual measurable objectives).

(b) High schools--(1) Graduation rate. Consistent with paragraphs (b)(4) and (b)(5) of this section regarding reporting and determining AYP, respectively, each State must calculate a graduation rate, defined as follows, for all public high schools in the State:

(i)(A) A State must calculate a "four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate," defined as the number of students who graduate in four years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for that graduating class.

(B) For those high schools that start after grade nine, the cohort must be calculated based on the earliest high school grade.

(ii) The term "adjusted cohort" means the students who enter grade 9 (or the earliest high school grade) and any students who transfer into the cohort in grades 9 through 12 minus any students removed from the cohort.

(A) The term "students who transfer into the cohort" means the students who enroll after the beginning of the entering cohort's first year in high school, up to and including in grade 12.

(B) To remove a student from the cohort, a school or LEA must confirm in writing that the student transferred out, emigrated to another country, or is deceased.

(1) To confirm that a student transferred out, the school or LEA must have official written documentation that the student enrolled in another school or in an educational program that culminates in the award of a regular high school diploma.

(2) A student who is retained in grade, enrolls in a General Educational Development (GED) program, or leaves school for any other reason may not be counted as having transferred out for the purpose of calculating graduation rate and must remain in the adjusted cohort.

(iii) The term "students who graduate in four years" means students who earn a regular high school diploma at the conclusion of their fourth year, before the conclusion of their fourth year, or during a summer session immediately following their fourth year.

(iv) The term "regular high school diploma" means the standard high school diploma that is awarded to students in the State and that is fully aligned with the State's academic content standards or a higher diploma and does not include a GED credential, certificate of attendance, or any alternative award.

(v) In addition to calculating a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, a State may propose to the Secretary for approval an "extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate."

(A) An extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is defined as the number of students who graduate in four years or more with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, provided that the adjustments account for any students who transfer into the cohort by the end of the year of graduation being considered

minus the number of students who transfer out, emigrate to another country, or are deceased by the end of that year.

(B) A State may calculate one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates.

(2) Transitional graduation rate. (i) Prior to the deadline in paragraph (b)(4)(ii)(A) of this section, a State must calculate graduation rate as defined in paragraph (b)(1) of this section or use, on a transitional basis--

(A) A graduation rate that measures the percentage of students from the beginning of high school who graduate with a regular high school diploma in the standard number of years; or

(B) Another definition, developed by the State and approved by the Secretary, that more accurately measures the rate of student graduation from high school with a regular high school diploma.

(ii) For a transitional graduation rate calculated under paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section--

(A) "Regular high school diploma" has the same meaning as in paragraph (b)(1)(iv) of this section;

(B) "Standard number of years" means four years unless a high school begins after ninth grade, in which case the standard number of years is the number of grades in the school; and

(C) A dropout may not be counted as a transfer.

(3) Goal and targets. (i) A State must set--

(A) A single graduation rate goal that represents the rate the State expects all high schools in the State to meet; and

(B) Annual graduation rate targets that reflect continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year toward meeting or exceeding the graduation rate goal.

(ii) Beginning with AYP determinations under Sec. 200.20 based on school year 2009-2010 assessment results, in order to make AYP, any high school or LEA that serves grade 12 and the State must meet or exceed--

(A) The graduation rate goal set by the State under paragraph (b)(3)(i)(A) of this section; or

(B) The State's targets for continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year, as set by the State under paragraph (b)(3)(i)(B) of this section.

(4) Reporting. (i) In accordance with the deadlines in paragraph (b)(4)(ii) of this section, a State and its LEAs must report under section 1111(h) of the Act (annual report cards) graduation rate at the school, LEA, and State levels in the aggregate and disaggregated by each subgroup described in Sec. 200.13(b)(7)(ii).

(ii)(A) Beginning with report cards providing results of assessments administered in the 2010-2011 school year, a State and its LEAs must report the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate calculated in accordance with paragraph (b)(1)(i) through (iv) of this section.

(B) If a State adopts an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate calculated in accordance with paragraph (b)(1)(v) of this section, the State and its LEAs must report, beginning with the first year for which the State calculates such a rate, the extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate separately from the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

(C) Prior to the deadline in paragraph (b)(4)(ii)(A) of this section, a State and its LEAs must report a graduation rate calculated in accordance with paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section in the aggregate and disaggregated by the subgroups in Sec. 200.13(b)(7)(ii).

(5) Determining AYP. (i) Beginning with AYP determinations under Sec. 200.20 based on school year 2011-2012 assessment results, a State must calculate graduation rate under paragraph (b)(1) of this section at the school, LEA, and State levels in the aggregate and disaggregated by each subgroup described in Sec. 200.13(b)(7)(ii).

(ii) Prior to the AYP determinations described in paragraph (b)(5)(i) of this section, a State must calculate graduation rate in accordance with either paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this section--

(A) In the aggregate at the school, LEA, and State levels for determining AYP under Sec. 200.20(a)(1)(ii) (meeting the State's annual measurable objectives), except as provided in paragraph (b)(7)(iii) of this section; but

(B) In the aggregate and disaggregated by each subgroup described in Sec. 200.13(b)(7)(ii) for purposes of determining AYP under Sec. 200.20(b)(2) ("safe harbor") and as required under section 1111(b)(2)(C)(vii) of the Act (additional academic indicators under paragraph (c) of this section).

(6) Accountability workbook. (i) A State must revise its Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook submitted under section 1111 of the Act to include the following:

(A) The State's graduation rate definition that the State will use to determine AYP based on school year 2009-2010 assessment results.

(B) The State's progress toward meeting the deadline in paragraph (b)(4)(ii)(A) of this section for calculating and reporting the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate defined in paragraph (b)(1)(i) through (iv) of this section.

(C) The State's graduation rate goal and targets.

(D) An explanation of how the State's graduation rate goal represents the rate the State expects all high schools in the State to meet and how the State's targets demonstrate continuous and substantial improvement from the prior year toward meeting or exceeding the goal.

(E) The graduation rate for the most recent school year of the high school at the 10th percentile, the 50th percentile, and the 90th percentile in the State (ranked in terms of graduation rate).

(F) If a State uses an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, a description of how it will use that rate with its four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate to determine whether its schools and LEAs have made AYP.

(ii) Each State must submit, consistent with the timeline in Sec. 200.7(a)(2)(iii), its revised Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook in accordance with

paragraph (b)(6)(i) of this section to the Department for technical assistance and peer review under the process established by the Secretary under section 1111(e)(2) of the Act.

(7) Extension. (i) If a State cannot meet the deadline in paragraph (b)(4)(ii)(A) of this section, the State may request an extension of the deadline from the Secretary.

(ii) To receive an extension, a State must submit to the Secretary, by March 2, 2009--

(A) Evidence satisfactory to the Secretary demonstrating that the State cannot meet the deadline in paragraph (b)(4)(ii)(A) of this section; and

(B) A detailed plan and timeline addressing the steps the State will take to implement, as expeditiously as possible, a graduation rate consistent with paragraph (b)(1)(i) through (iv) of this section.

(iii) A State that receives an extension under this paragraph must, beginning with AYP determinations under Sec. 200.20 based on school year 2011-2012 assessment results, calculate graduation rate under paragraph (b)(2) of this section at the school, LEA, and State levels in the aggregate and disaggregated by each subgroup described in Sec. 200.13(b)(7)(ii).

(c) The State may include additional academic indicators determined by the State, including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Additional State or locally administered assessments not included in the State assessment system under Sec. 200.2.

(2) Grade-to-grade retention rates.

(3) Attendance rates.

(4) Percentages of students completing gifted and talented, advanced placement, and college preparatory courses.

(d) A State must ensure that its other academic indicators are--

(1) Valid and reliable;

(2) Consistent with relevant, nationally recognized professional and technical standards, if any; and

(3) Consistent throughout the State within each grade span.

(e) Except as provided in Sec. 200.20(b)(2), a State--

(1) May not use the indicators in paragraphs (a) through (c) of this section to reduce the number, or change the identity, of schools that would otherwise be subject to school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring if those indicators were not used; but

(2) May use the indicators to identify additional schools for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.



Action Step: Empanel a taskforce to carefully review of the indicators and statutory requirements. Using the listing of proposed questions (below) augment that list with those questions in need of SEA response. Note: The taskforce might benefit by beginning their work by viewing the webinar.

College-Going webinar [Link to the one done by Keith and Bob]

CRITICAL AND UNANSWERED QUESTIONS REGARDING 34 CFR 200.19

- Do states have the option of determining how the calculating of the *four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate* is determined unique to their own specific needs and conditions?
- Are there exceptions from calculation of the *four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates* for students who become ill, incarcerated, retained, resided outside of the country where equating grade nine might be difficult, or other related reason for taking more than four years and one summer? Note: Retentions, GED enrollments or departure from school for any other reason cannot be counted in the cohort.
- Is a district required to count in the *four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates* a student that transfers in credit deficient?
- As specified in the regulations, the *earliest high school grade* suggests an alternative form of calculating the *four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates* but provides no details regarding the meaning.
- The application of *students who transfer into the cohort* definition is inexact and must be more accurately defined.
- As specified in the regulations, removing a student from the cohort requires that the LEA must confirm in *writing* suggest an exact definition. Does this allow requests for transcripts to be counted in compliance with the regulation?
- If a high school is on a year round schedule are there any variations in the calculation that must be applied?
- The term *regular diploma* is used throughout the regulations while the definition enjoys wide variation in state statues.
- How are year high school graduates treated?
- How are 2 plus 2 (early college enrollment) enrollment are treated when their diploma and associate degree, by design, might require 5-years of enrollment?
- What negotiated agreements have been made between the SEA and the Secretary regarding *one or more extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rates* and *traditional graduation rates*? Do these concessions represent a revised requirement for reporting cohort rates or an additional requirement for reporting an addition rate?

- Under what conditions may a state request an extension?
- As specified in the regulations (200.20), what additional assessments have been agreed to by the SEA?
- Make certain there is a common definition with associated metrics for critical terms (retention, persistence, regular diploma, etc.).
- Who releases the data, when it is to be released, and make certain the district and schools receive reasonable advance notice?
- Who is going to be responsible for explaining the meaning of the data upon its release - LEA or SEA?
- How many of the IHE in the state are participating in NSC? Which IHE are not and why?
- The SEA must be able to certify that the provisions of FERPA are met by the release of student data files to NSC.
- Are all districts in the state releasing the same information to NSC?

Thanks to the work of the of the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), a brochure explaining their work and a five (5) examples of the use of the NSC data by district around the nations has been provided. These case study examples exemplify all elements of the Own It/Understand It/ Act On It rubric of this toolkit.

- NCS Student Tracker [Link to: Student Tracker file]

http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/highschools/case_studies.htm

- Austin, Texas

http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/highschools/pdfs/AustinISD_Postsecondary_Outcomes_2009_Graduates_District.pdf

- Baltimore, Maryland

http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/highschools/pdfs/BCPS_casestudy.pdf

- Montgomery County, Maryland

<http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/highschools/pdfs/MCPS%20APExamsKeyToPostsecondarySuccess.pdf>

- Denver, Colorado

http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/highschools/pdfs/DPS_Postsecondary_Report.pdf

Action Step: Help the taskforce to become well grounded in the research and literature on college going by making relevant from the following listing:

RELEVANT RESOURCES

- AIR - Finishing the First Lap

http://www.air.org/files/AIR_Schneider_Finishing_the_First_Lap_Oct10.pdf

- Chicago - From High School to the Future

http://www.studentclearinghouse.org/highschools/pdfs/CCSR_Potholes_Report.pdf

- New Schools Venture Fund - Paving the Way for College Success

<http://www.newschools.org/files/college-success-full.pdf>

- WICHE - Knocking at the Door

<http://www.wiche.edu/knocking>

- Jobs for the Future

<http://www.jff.org/>

- USOE College Completion Toolkit

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/college_completion_tool_kit.pdf

Finally, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* issued a document in late August of 2011 entitled "Almanac of Higher Education 2011-12." There is a wealth of information about student demographics, access, and equity (along with many other topics) that can assist

gaining a broad understanding of college-going. The almanac can be accessed at:
www.chronicle.com/almanac.

Step 3: Act on It

Act On It suggests taking control of improving your district's college-going profile. Whether it is changing the mindset on reluctant or first generation college goers, or aligning your pupil personnel services to encourage college-going, or if it is engaging middle and elementary schools in a campaign of promoting college-going, it is essential that broad community support is developed including action planning, diagnostic analysis, and the development of a cohesive communications plan. This section provides you with essential elements learned by College Summit in their nearly two decades of this work.

10 Tips for Building College-Going Culture in Your High School

Keith W. Frome, Ed.D., Co-Founder, College Summit, Inc.

College-going culture in a high school occurs in 4 categories:

1. **Academic Rigor:** the degree to which a college-readiness curriculum is the default curriculum for all students;
2. **Student Support Structures:** the degree to which all students are guided, supported, measured and managed to post-secondary success;
3. **Expectations:** the degree to which all stakeholders in the school expect all students to be college ready and college bound
4. **Signaling:** the degree to which the overt and covert signals of the school align with and communicate the college-success expectations for the student body.

10 Ways to Strengthen Your School's College-Going Culture:

Keith W. Frome, Ed.D., Co-Founder, College Summit, Inc.

1. Find out what percentage of the senior class in past years actually enrolled in college and other forms of post-secondary education and establish the goal of your school to increase that amount by 20 percent.
2. Make sure that all students are enrolled in a program which will ensure that they graduate with the credits necessary to successfully apply to post-

- secondary programs. Establish credit recovery programs or mechanisms for those who are not on track.
3. Structure the school schedule so that all students receive post-secondary management services from trained educators.
 4. Work so that all of your students hold post-secondary aspirations by the 10th grade, take the PSAT, ACT or SAT, hold on to their post-secondary aspirations in the 12th grade, apply to 5 post-secondary institutions, and file the FAFSA by March 1st of their senior year.
 5. Establish a college application navigation tracking system so that each student's progress on the indicators above can be measured and remediated as needed.
 6. Focus resources on academic priority students in 9th grade by following their progress on three indicators: attendance, F-rates in math and English, and course credit completion.
 7. Organize 12th grade peer leaders to help their fellow students navigate the college application path.
 8. Flood the hallways, message boards, your website, and communications systems with college-going messages and celebrations.
 9. Provide professional development to all faculty members so that they can assist their students in applying to college and so that they support the college-success signals of the school.
 10. Provide parents and families with frequent communications and support nights about the elements of the college application process, especially on the issue of financial assistance.

Assess Your High School's College Going Culture

By: Dr. Keith Frome, College Summit

Dr. Frome has constructed a simple self-assessment instrument designed to assist schools to determine the nature of their college-going culture.

1. What was the college enrollment rate of your school's most recent senior class? (This question does NOT ask for the number of seniors who applied to college or were accepted to college but asks you to report the percentage who actually enrolled in the fall following their senior year graduation).

a.. 80-100%

- b. 60-80%
 - c. 40-60 %
 - d. Below 40%
 - e. Don't know
2. Among the graduating seniors two years ago:
- a. 80-100% of those who enrolled in college persisted to their sophomore year.
 - b. 60-80% of those who enrolled in college persisted to their sophomore year.
 - c. 40-60% of those who enrolled in college persisted to their sophomore year.
 - d. Less than 50% of those who enrolled in college persisted to their sophomore year.
 - e. Don't know.
3. On the whole, the majority of the faculty of your school believes:
- a. All students can and should be bound for post-secondary education
 - b. Most students can and should be bound for post-secondary education
 - c. Only the students with high academic achievement or who are Division 1 caliber athletes can and should be bound for post-secondary education
 - d. Their educational responsibility is solely to help students graduate from high school
 - e. None of the above
4. On the whole, your students believe that they go to high school
- a. To prepare for college and career success
 - b. To graduate and enter the work force
 - c. Because that is what is expected of them
 - d. They've been told that education is a good thing to do

- e. Don't know
5. In your high school, a college-ready curriculum
- a. Is required of all students
 - b. Is available to all students but not all students are required to take it
 - c. Is available to those students who qualify
 - d. Is not available in my school
 - e. Don't know
6. Which of the following is true of your student body?
- a. 80-90% of my students miss less than seven days per semester or $\frac{1}{2}$ year
 - b. 60-80% of my students miss less than seven days per semester or $\frac{1}{2}$ year
 - c. 40-60% of my students miss less than seven days per semester or $\frac{1}{2}$ year
 - d. 20-40% of my students miss less than seven days per semester or $\frac{1}{2}$ year
 - e. Don't know
7. Which of the following is true of your 11th and 12th graders
- a. 90-100% take the ACT or the SAT
 - b. 70-90% take the ACT or the SAT
 - c. 50-70% take the ACT or the SAT
 - d. 30-50% or less take the ACT or the SAT
 - e. Don't know
8. The following percentage of your 11th-grade class has completed at least one year of algebra:
- a. 90-100%
 - b. 70-90%
 - c. 50-70%
 - d. Below 50%
 - e. Don't know

9. Your high school's college advisory program:
- Is structured into the regular school schedule and includes all students
 - Is open to all students who decide to participate
 - Meets on an ad hoc basis
 - There is no college advisory program in my high school
 - Don't know.
10. How do you use peer mentors and student leaders to build college-going culture in your school?
- My high school trains rising 12th graders to work with their peers and younger students in a structured program to increase college awareness and applications.
 - My high school uses peer mentors mostly for academic and support services but not to aid in the college preparation and application process.
 - My high school uses peer mentors on an ad hoc basis as needed.
 - My high school does not utilize peer mentoring in the college application or college awareness process.
 - Don't know

Scoring Guide: The higher percentage of "a" responses corresponds to a higher degree of college-going culture. In those categories, where you scored your school at a "b" or lower level, you might consider making plans to move the structure of your school into the "a" category.

Diagnostic Tools/Action Plan Template

In thinking about those College Summit 10 Tips to Improving College-Going, it was seen as important to provide a diagnostic tool (SWOT) designed to assist in the planning of each step of their action plan. SWOT analysis is a convenient and easy method for realistically looking at your plans for improving college-going. The action planning template helps organize you plan for action. Both are downloadable from internet links and are concise and easy to use.

- Action Planning Template
<http://cotrails.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/ActionPlanTemplate.doc>

- Diagnostic Tool (SWOT)
http://www.businessballs.com/freematerialsinword/free_SWOT_analysis_template.doc

Communications Planning

Following are three sample letters to help you garner early involvement of key stakeholders from both inside and outside the district.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of Education
FROM: <superintendent name here>
DATE: <date here>

SUBJECT: The issues and implications of new data reporting requirements

A new Federal law now requires our district to report comprehensive data about the progress of students after they leave our schools and go on to postsecondary education. This college-going data is now an additional part of our overall accountability reporting efforts.

While this requirement represents another demanding data collection and dissemination requirement, it also presents an important opportunity to track our students after graduation giving us useful information to assess the success of our schools in preparing students for post-secondary education.

The state department of education retains the primary responsibility for disseminating these data. They will release it in the immediate future. Once it is out, our district, including the board, will take a leadership role in assisting parents, students and the greater community to gain a greater understanding about what it all means.

Issues

As presently constituted, the requirements leave us with many questions unanswered.

We will be working with the state department of education to make certain that difficult questions like the following are addressed:

- How are students who enlist in the military immediately after high school treated as many of these students are clearly focused on attending post-secondary education on the GI Bill?
- How are school credited with the students who attend apprenticeship, vocational training and other post-secondary programs that are not generally characterized as a two or four year degree-granting program?
- How are 2+2 and early college enrollment students treated given the fact that they may have completed both high school graduation and an associate degree? How does this conflict with the four-year cohort requirement of the regulations?
- Are colleges and universities going to release parallel data regarding their graduation and persistence rates?
- Are we operating with a clearly and common understanding of the requirements of the regulations - for example, do we have agreement on what "persistence" means when looking at first and second year college students?
- Is the four-cohort required by the regulations an accurate reflection of how our students progress through high school?
- How are fifth year seniors treated?
- How many post-secondary institutions participate in the data collections and data sharing efforts necessary to make certain the data reported is accurate?

- What about FERPA compliance?

Implications

Once the data has been released, and we are reasonably certain it is an accurate reflection of how are students, we will assess what the implications are for the design/redesign of our present program.

Here are a few options we might consider:

- How does this new data set impact our present strategic plan?
- What are the implications of the data for our present counseling staff? How could future staff development better serve the goal of greater participation in post-secondary education?
- What does the data set suggest regarding our students' participation levels in a college-track curricula and basic and remedial coursework?
- What are the implications for middle and elementary schools?
- What are some college-going culture-building activities that we could expand or add with both with our students and our staff?
- What can we do to encourage and support those who are the first in their family to go to college?

While some will see this new requirement as a burden, I believe we must view it as an opportunity to support our mission to give students the education they need to be successful beyond our four walls. It is my hope that this new regulation will make us stronger as a school community and will result in providing our students a more seamless transition to post secondary education.

Please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns.

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS AND STAFF:

A new Federal law now requires our district to report comprehensive data about the progress of students after they leave our schools and continue on to postsecondary education. College-going data is now an additional part of our overall accountability reporting efforts.

Indeed, this represents a paradigm shift as we expand our goal from high school graduation to post secondary attendance. College going is the new metric by which our performance will be measured and will be an additional component of each school's strategic plan.

The state department of education retains the primary responsibility for disseminating these data. They will release the information in the immediate future. Once it is out, our district, including the board, will take a leadership role in assisting parents, students and the greater community to gain a greater understanding about what it all means.

Issues

As presently constituted, the requirements leave us with many questions unanswered.

We will be working with the state department of education to make certain that difficult questions like the following are addressed:

- How are students who enlist in the military immediately after high school treated as many of these students are clearly focused on attending post-secondary education on the GI Bill?
- How are schools credited with the students who attend apprenticeship, vocational training and other post-secondary programs that are not generally characterized as a two or four year degree-granting program?
- How are 2+2 and early college enrollment students treated given the fact that they may have completed both high school graduation and an associate degree? How does this conflict with the four-year cohort requirement of the regulations?
- Are colleges and universities going to release parallel data regarding their graduation and persistence rates?
- Are we operating with a clearly and common understanding of the requirements of the regulations - for example, do we have agreement on what "persistence" means when looking at first and second year college students?
- Is the four-cohort required by the regulations an accurate reflection of how our students progress through high school?
- How are fifth year seniors treated?
- How many post-secondary institutions participate in the data collections and data sharing efforts necessary to make certain the data reported is accurate?
- What about FERPA compliance?

Implications

Once the data has been released, and we are reasonably certain it is an accurate reflection of how are students, we will assess what the implications are for the design/redesign of our present program.

Here are a few options we might consider:

- How does this new data set impact our present strategic plan?
- What are the implications of the data for our present counseling staff? How could future staff development better serve the goal of greater participation in post-secondary education?
- What does the data set suggest regarding our students' participation levels in a college-track curricula and basic and remedial coursework?
- What are the implications for middle and elementary schools?
- What are some college-going culture-building activities that we could expand or add with both with our students and our staff?
- What can we do to encourage and support those who are the first in their family to go to college?

Making this significant shift will be a challenge for all of us, and it is important to focus on the opportunity it presents for improved performance and transparency. Groups such as the College Summit and the National Student Clearinghouse will be valuable resources for us as we analyze our school culture and seek to make change. We will also turn to the community for support through a citizens' committee that we will organize to view this issue as belonging to the entire community.

Please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns.

LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY/OP ED/EDITORIAL BOARD AND MEDIA:

Did you ever wonder how <name of school district> students do after they leave our high school(s) and continue on with postsecondary education? We will soon have information to help answer that question.

As a result of new data collection systems, school districts across the country will be given additional ways to think about our students' achievement and progress. This data will be delivered to our state department of education in <city> from where, as mandated by Federal law, it will be made public.

This as a new opportunity for our school community providing us with a whole new set of data by which we can positively impact and systematically encourage the success of our students in college. To prepare for this new challenge we plan the following steps:

- Work with officials at the state department of education to gain clarity around what the numbers represent. For example, how are students who attend apprenticeships or vocational training characterized? What about students who enlist in the military? Will colleges and universities be releasing parallel data? And, what about student privacy?
- Convene members of our leadership team to consider the implications of this data on school division strategic planning.
- Form a committee of citizens and school personnel to engage in discussion and action about the meaning of this new data to our particular school community.

While some will see this new requirement as a burden, I believe we must view it as an opportunity to support our mission to give students the education they need to be successful beyond our four walls. It is my hope that this new information will make us stronger as a school community and will result in providing our students a more seamless transition to post secondary education.

Please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns.

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National Student Clearinghouse