

College and Career Readiness Benchmarks: Define the qualities and achievements that students need to enroll, persist, and succeed in college, postsecondary training opportunities, and meaningful careers. These benchmarks define student characteristics, choices, and actions, so that students, families, teachers, counselors, and school administrators can make better choices and prioritize actions to help students reach (and surpass) these benchmarks.

Toolkit Name:	Best Practices in Counseling and Postsecondary Planning School Culture: 9-12 Timeline Tool
Target Audience:	School Leaders, members of a postsecondary planning inquiry team, grade teams
Benchmark Domain:	College and Career Access
Purpose	This tool is designed to illustrate the components of a high quality college access and support program that supports all students in developing postsecondary aspirations and graduating with a plan in place for continued education. The year-by-year sequencing provides a roadmap for school leaders to guide the development of their college and career programming. This tool should be used alongside Best Practices in Counseling and Postsecondary Planning School Culture: School Barometer Tool to help school communities assess strengths and gaps and make an action plan for developing key areas.
How to Use:	Read through the breakdown of each year, reflect on what systems, structures or events are currently in place at the school; and then identify what gaps exist. After assessing, identify staff training needs, curriculum development needs, or other supports that can be found to address the gaps.
When to Use:	This tool can be completed at any point in the school year, to support a team or individual in setting goals for school development.

The domain of **College and Career Access** describes the exploration and planning processes that need to occur for students to develop meaningful personal aspirations and an understanding of the path towards their goals. This domain includes working with students to evaluate their interests and future goals and providing direct support for the steps needed to gain entrance into programs and schools that best meet students' needs and goals. This support tool represents the sequence of events that best support *high school students* in making the best decisions for their postsecondary plans.

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It is important to note that each of the four domains of college and career readiness must be addressed for students to graduate college and career ready. This tool does not provide recommendations around academic programming, for example, but schools should be reviewing their available courses and establishing pathways for all students to engage in the most challenging courses possible each year that they are enrolled.

The Access sequence outlines activities that students should be engaging in each year that they are enrolled. Below are some essential activities that should occur each year for every student.

Activities for Each Year

- Every student meets 1-1 with an advisor to review program, transcript and planning for key access events (exams, application submission, etc).
School Leaders: Establish a college and career readiness inquiry team or planning team. Determine what systems and structures you will put into place to ensure that 1-1 meetings occur.
- At least 1 college tour per student, per grade is planned.
School Leaders: Designate staff responsible for planning, and ensure that diverse mix of 2 and 4 year colleges are visited across students' four years. Staff prepare with students prior to trip (review colleges, brainstorm questions) and debrief trip with students following trip.
- Participate in extracurricular activities consistently each year of school.
School Leaders: Extracurricular activities are crucial to student development and college readiness. Students need to consistently participate in activities each year to ensure a competitive college application and gain important interpersonal skills. Schools should ensure that a diverse array of activities are staffed and supported.

The access domain is organized into four areas of development that students need to address each year: **Career Exploration; Getting In; Money Matters; and Summer Matters.** **Summer Matters** highlights the importance of the summer months for developing skills and engaging in experiences that support students in developing college and career plans. The following should take place each year for students in this area:

SUMMER MATTERS:

Every student should plan a summer activity that helps them develop college and career ready skills: a job, internship, classes, or enrichment activities.

School Leaders: Designate a staff member responsible for collecting and distributing summer program information and maintaining a centrally located bulletin board with information about summer programs. Find time in school schedule (e.g. advisory) for students to review and select summer opportunities. Require a "summer plan" for each student to be completed by June.

YEAR ONE

	What Students Do	What School Leaders Do
College and Career Exploration	Start researching colleges. By the end of the year, you should be able to describe different types of colleges (2 year, 4 year) and degrees, have a list of three colleges you are interested in, know the colleges' SAT and GPA requirements, etc.	Identify where in the school day college and career planning take place and what staff are responsible. Have programming, curriculum and a college search tool in place. Some ways to do this are through Advisory or having a college and career center. Ensure that one staff person is knowledgeable about college and career training options, including which colleges excel at working with SWD's, to ensure that "best fit" matches are made.
	Make sure that your teachers get to know you. You'll need them to write recommendations for you for college, jobs, and internships.	Ensure that all teachers are trained in the basics of college planning and application process to ensure a school-wide college going culture and accurate information is given to students.
	By the end of this year, you should understand different types of financial aid and the processes around H/EOP, FAFSA, and grants/loans/scholarships.	Integrate financial planning and knowledge into the school's college and career planning scope and sequence. Students delay planning for college if they believe they cannot afford it. Accurate, consistent information beginning in 9th grade is key.
	Understand graduation requirements and college ready requirements.	Ensure that advisement includes discussion of basic graduation requirements and recommended courses for college readiness. Make sure programming structures are in place for all students to take challenging courses aligned with recommendations for college readiness : http://schools.nyc.gov/RulesPolicies/GraduationRequirements/default.htm
Getting In	Complete a career inventory. Use career inventory tools like Career Zone to see how your interests match up with college majors and career paths.	Career interest inventories, including web based tool selected, staff trained and tools used with all students.
	Identify three career options and what further education they require.	Work with curriculum committee or lead teachers to develop a research project on exploring careers.
	Aim for an overall GPA of 80% or above to be eligible for the widest possible range of colleges.	1-1 advisement scheduled for all students at the mid-point and end of the school year.
	Register for a professional sounding email (your name @ gmail).	Functional computer and internet access available daily for all students. Students have opportunities to learn about and practice written communication via email.
Money Matters	Save some money for SAT II Subject tests.	Identify and meet 1-1 with students who are candidates to take Subject Tests to review the tests, costs and plan with student and family testing schedule and saving plan for test costs or waiver eligibility.

YEAR TWO

	What Students Do	What Schools Do
College and Career Exploration	Update your list of three colleges that you are interested in.	College search tool integrated into college planning curriculum.
	Aim for an overall GPA of 80% or above to be eligible for the widest possible range of colleges.	1-1 advisement scheduled for all students at the mid-point and end of the school year.
	Update your list of three career paths that you are interested in and what college majors match up with those paths.	Career inventory tool and discussion of majors integrated into college planning curriculum.
Getting In	Write a resume and practice your interview skills for jobs and colleges.	Functional computer and internet access available daily for all students. Students have opportunities to learn about and practice written communication via email.
	Sign up for a free account at collegeboard.com.	Teachers trained in understanding the P/SAT structure, content and scoring. P/SAT literacy, numeracy and test taking skills integrated into subject areas.
	Study for the PSAT and take the exam.	Plan in place for 1-1 score review with all students. Plan in place for score review with data team, or college-going inquiry team.
	Review your PSAT scores with your counselor/college advisor.	Meetings with all students who should consider SAT II's by Nov of 10th grade.
Money Matters	Sign up for SAT II subject tests (in June) for subjects that you got above an 80% in. Save money for the SAT, unless you are eligible for a fee waiver.	Create SAT outreach plan: who will lead awareness, parent communication, registration and prep activities? Train each of these staff and plan calendar of outreach, prep and planning activities. Determine school policy for College Board waivers with widest possible eligibility and ease of access: who is eligible, and how will waivers be distributed.

YEAR THREE

YEAR THREE		
	What Schools Do	
Getting In	What Students Do	
	When you get your SAT scores back, review them along with your transcript and begin to research colleges. If you have not started, meet with a college counselor who can help you learn about different types of college and think about what to consider when researching.	College research workshops for all 11th grade students led by trained staff.
	Based on your research, make a college list that includes your target, safety, and reach schools. Show it to your counselor and ask for suggestions.	College list review required 1-1 for all 11th grade students and families.
	Start working on your college essay.	College essay writing integrated into academic courses so that students leave for the summer with a draft to work from.
	Choose the teachers who you will ask for recommendations at the end of the school year.	All teachers are trained to write effective recommendations for students.
	Sign up for an SAT Prep course that starts around January.	Test prep is made available to all students. Prep can be offered through partnerships and SAT skills can be integrated into course content.
	Take the SAT in the spring.	Schoolwide registration days organized. A staff person assigned to do test-day reminders. Fee waivers are made widely available.
Aim for an overall GPA of 80% or above to be eligible for the widest possible range of colleges.	1-1 advisement scheduled for all students at the mid-point and end of the school year.	
Money Matters	Do the FAFSA4Caster with your family and counselor to find out what types of financial aid you will be eligible for. Find out if you are H/EOP eligible.	Staff trained in the FAFSA 4Caster. Regular opportunities for professional development to keep staff updated on these programs and requirements. 1-1 postsecondary planning meetings required for all 11th grade parents. Tax returns collected from all families at this meeting to verify eligibility and introduce the importance of these documents in financial aid process. Forms will be used for FAFSA in 12th grade to ensure timely submission, then updated in Spring of 12th with more recent year's taxes.
	Make a plan for paying for your college applications and have your funds ready by September of your senior year: CUNY: \$65. SUNYL \$50/school UNLESS EOP eligible. Private schools: look up individual costs, and determine whether you are eligible for fee waivers.	Determine clear and consistently enforced criteria for distribution of CUNY fee waivers. Collect CUNY application fee from each family at spring family meetings so that application submission will not be delayed in the fall.

YEAR FOUR

		What Students Do	What Schools Do
College and Career Exploration	Research your options beyond the AA or BA training programs, internships, and “gap year” programs that include travel and work experiences. You should still take SATs and complete applications to have as many options as possible. And, you can defer enrollment at many colleges for up to a year.	Staff trained in up to date, accurate knowledge of these programs. All students participate in workshops and 1-1 meetings to learn about these programs and research their options.	
Getting In	Take the SAT a second time in the fall.	Schoolwide registration days organized. A staff person assigned to do test-day reminders. Fee waivers are made widely available.	
	Aim for an overall GPA of 80% or above to be eligible for the widest possible range of colleges.	1-1 advisement scheduled for all students at the mid-point and end of the school year.	
	Finalize your college list.	A trained college counselor reviews every student’s college list and/or postsecondary plan.	
	Request teacher recommendations from the two teachers you have selected.	All teachers trained in writing high quality recommendations.	
	Make a deadline organizer for all of the colleges on your list. October: Submit your CUNY application including a request to send SAT scores. November: Submit your SUNY applications, including supplemental materials and SAT scores. December: Submit your private school applications, including essays and scores. January: If you are EOP eligible, make sure that all of your forms and essays have been sent to your schools.	A data management system in place for your college access team to track all students and their applications. Systems are in place for frequent review of student progress (weekly through fall of 12th grade) and follow-up.	
	Start scholarship search.	Identify staff who will lead scholarship search workshops, train staff and plan schedule of workshops. Plan in place to track student applications and provide assistance with applications.	
	April: Review your decision letters with your parents and counselor and decide where to enroll.	1-1 acceptance review and enrollment meetings with all seniors.	
	May: Submit your completed registration forms to the school of your choice. Complete all necessary housing forms and medical forms, and submit any required deposit to secure your space.	Identify staff who will conduct matriculation follow-up with each student to ensure that enrollment activities are done. Postsecondary plans are entered into data management system.	
Money Matters	Complete FAFSA by Feb 1. If you do not have your most recent year’s taxes, complete FAFSA with the prior year’s taxes and update when you are ready.	Multiple FAFSA workshops and 1-1 meetings planned throughout January and February in evening hours.	
	Learn about budgeting, and make a sample college budget for travel, books, and entertainment.	Financial literacy curriculum integrated into 12th grade courses and/or workshops to ensure that all students are exposed to “transition skills.” Identify curriculum, staff who will implement, and training for staff.	
Summer Matters	Look in the mail for updated information about enrolling in classes, orientation, and any required testing. Review all the letters you get with your parents and counselor.	Have staff in place through summer months and a plan to contact all seniors. CUNY Test Prep resources are widely available to students.	
		Have an alumni contact system in place. Identify staff who will maintain. Plan alumni events, including college and career panels for current students.	