Bridging the Future to Postsecondary Readiness

Graduate School of Education:
Bridging the Future:
Postsecondary Readiness for Public Schools

May 5, 2014 | Portland, Oregon
Introduction

**WHY THIS GUIDEBOOK**

As an educator, I have had the opportunity to travel around the country to visit different educational models. I do this because I believe that there are many ways to approach education, and I don’t have the market cornered on excellence. I also do this because I believe that any opportunity to collaborate will greatly help our educational process. This is no more evident than in the quote by Nelson Mandela, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

I am the principal of a middle college and wanted to research best practices from around the country and apply them to my school. While traveling to Texas to visit a school model similar to ours, I was hoping to return with new, unique and innovative approaches to education. Upon my return, I had the opportunity to reflect on what I had learned. While the intent of my visit was to gain knowledge on how to best serve students transitioning to postsecondary options, which I was able to do, I also realized that educational systems that share similar missions can be disconnected and lack successful best practices and approaches in preparing their students for postsecondary success.

When I first arrived for my visit, I was welcomed by the principal who was in his first year with the school. As soon as I was greeted, the first thing he asked me was: “Why are you here?” I responded that our two schools were similar in their mission and that I wanted to see what they were doing that was effective, and what obstacles they have encountered along the way. He seemed surprised.

His reaction to my presence was disappointing. If the culture of education in our country was collaborative and connected, his response to my visit would have been different. He would have welcomed me, and our two schools would have formed a professional partnership. We would have shared our obstacles and best practices in order to best serve our students.
While walking away from my visit, I began to think about how I could maximize my work and experience in education. I realized that I have a great deal to share with this principal, and I am confident that by creating a guidebook for educational leaders, avenues will open up between educational institutions that are interested in preparing students for postsecondary success.

It is through this work toward my dissertation that I am eager and willing to build a network of collaboration between educational institutions that are intent on preparing students for postsecondary success. This can begin through the creation of a postsecondary readiness guidebook that will help school leaders prepare students for postsecondary success through a comprehensive approach. Through the creation of this guidebook, I can begin to lay a foundation of collaboration. Hopefully, through my work, I can help to build a systematic sharing of knowledge among schools aimed at successfully helping transition students from secondary schools to postsecondary options. It is through this work that I am committed and motivated toward helping other educational leaders.

**AUDIENCE**

The audience for this guidebook is large. When I field tested this guidebook, an elementary educator replied: “I learned that a K-12 postsecondary readiness program needs to be put in place at our school.” Educating students is complex and because of this many people need to be involved in this process. If you are a district or building administrator, teacher, parent, community member, community college or university representative, or serve in an educational role at the state level; this guidebook is for you. Another participant of the field test stated, “Students need an awareness of college in younger grades.” The information in this guidebook is pertinent to teachers of all levels in our educational system. We all have a role to play in preparing our student for postsecondary success.

**WHAT IS POSTSECONDARY READINESS and POSTSECONDARY FRAMEWORK**

As one can imagine, the research on preparing students for postsecondary success is complex and comprehensive. Because of this, the school system must have a structure and mechanisms
put in place where students can understand and/or become integrated into both the academic and social systems of postsecondary options.

For this guidebook, the term postsecondary readiness is synonymous with the term “college and career readiness”. It is defined as: the completion of entry-level or core courses at a proficient level that allows students to take the next course in the sequence or the next level course in the subject area, or completion of the certificate (Conley, 2010).

In order to prepare all students for postsecondary education, schools must look to a postsecondary readiness framework in order to provide academic and social mechanisms to help all students transition successfully to postsecondary options. Within this framework, there are many aspects that must be addressed to help students make this transition successful. The following framework was created from research in order to help educators successfully prepare students for postsecondary success. The postsecondary readiness framework centers on three key elements: (1) structural elements, (2) academic elements, and (3) social elements.

As the transition from secondary schools to college is a complex one for many students, schools would better serve students if they looked into improving current systems or creating systems that address structural, academic, and social elements aimed at addressing this transition for students. Creating a postsecondary readiness framework would ensure a systematic process to successfully prepare students for postsecondary options.

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook contains sections which address a fundamental problem to postsecondary preparedness along with data supporting the problem. After the problem has been presented, the guidebook focuses on the postsecondary readiness framework aimed at helping solve this fundamental problem. The framework is broken down into three key elements: (1) structural elements, (2) academic elements, and (3) social elements. Table 1 below reflects the components within the three key elements.
### Table 1-Postsecondary Readiness Framework Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSTSECONDARY READINESS FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>Structural Elements</th>
<th>Academic Elements</th>
<th>Social Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. the mission/vision of schools</td>
<td>1. creating a rigorous curriculum</td>
<td>1. including parents and school staff in educational planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. transitions and infrastructure</td>
<td>2. college and career readiness standards and practices</td>
<td>2. identifying and building academic behaviors of students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. academic preparedness</td>
<td>3. quality instructional practices</td>
<td>3. improving both students’ and parents’ transition knowledge and skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. academic tenacity</td>
<td>4. identification of skills and progress</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. developing college knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. college-going culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. developing a partnerships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each section is guided by a design question related to above framework. For example: What structures are currently in place to successfully prepare students for postsecondary success? Within each design question there are targets or themes which serve to help readers reflect on current practices as well as to assess current knowledge. Assessing Current Knowledge (survey) will provide a brief summary of the target content, and understanding and comfort level regarding key strategies and processes presented within each target. The targets in each section present information in small manageable paragraphs. Robert Marzano (2007) refers to these as “chunks.” Presenting the information in chunks keep with the basic principle of effective teaching to help readers effectively interact with new knowledge (Marzano, 2007). Each chunk of information is attached to an activity circle that asks readers to react to the information that has been presented, or to describe how readers use this information in their practice. These activity circles (discussion/reflection exercises) help guide and reform current practice.

Reflecting on Current Practices will help to review what background knowledge and practices are used related to the target, but also to frame the material presented in each target. At the end of every section, there is checklist of recommendations to put the reader on the right path toward postsecondary readiness along with a rubric for the reader to assess progress toward each element within the postsecondary readiness framework. After the rubric there is an action template from National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) aimed to help
schools create a culture of postsecondary readiness specific to each element of the postsecondary readiness framework.

This guidebook also contains an opportunity to see the application of the postsecondary readiness framework in a middle college, as well as resources, programs and websites aimed at preparing all students for postsecondary success.

**HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK**

The guidebook is designed to be used by educational leaders in schools that are preparing students for postsecondary success. A team or committee should be formed to review this guidebook and reflect on current practices aimed at improving postsecondary preparation in school. To maximize the time and effort of the team, the guidebook should be introduced to coincide with professional development opportunities and integrated into the continuous school improvement plan. When these conditions are met, this guidebook can be used to plan and improve programs throughout the school year, or be broken down into sections to address current needs.

This guidebook is broken down by the following categories:

- **Section 1** provides research and data addressing the problem that many students graduating from secondary schools aren’t prepared for postsecondary success. This will help to show the significance and purpose of the guidebook aimed to provide educational leaders a comprehensive approach in preparing students for postsecondary success.

- **Section 2** describes the *structural elements* of the postsecondary readiness framework schools must have in place to help students move systematically toward college and career options.

- **Section 3** describes the *academic elements* of the postsecondary readiness framework schools must have in place to align rigorous academic standards with postsecondary institutions.

- **Section 4** describes the *social elements* of the postsecondary readiness framework schools must have in place to create a culture focused on a sense of caring, cultural
awareness, social and academic validation and support, and involvement of all stakeholders (students, staff members, parents, and community).

- **Section 5** describes best practices of a middle college within the postsecondary readiness framework.
- **Section 6** provides resources and programs focused on preparing students for postsecondary success.

**PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDEBOOK**

There are several types of promising programs that appear to help address the problem of students not being prepared to transition from secondary schools to postsecondary options. These are The Advanced Placement Program (AP), Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), The International Baccalaureate Programme (IB), and Early and Middle College High Schools. During the 2002-03 school year, 1.2 million students were enrolled in courses that awarded dual high school and college credit, 1.8 million students were enrolled in AP courses, and 165,000 students were enrolled in IB courses (Hoffman & Vargas, 2010). Some of these approaches increase the chances of postsecondary student success. These programs can exist within high schools, or they can be individual schools.

This guidebook was created to point out the significance and address the problem of high school graduates not being prepared for postsecondary success. It also informs school leaders of their current postsecondary readiness culture, and provides elements aimed to create an integrated system that provides postsecondary information to students in a progressive, developmentally appropriate fashion so that they have a continuous sense of how well they are being prepared and are preparing themselves for postsecondary success (Conley, 2007). This, according to David Conley, is considered the “holy grail” of college readiness.
SECTION 1:

THE PROBLEM—SUPPORTED BY RESEARCH AND DATA

"The problem is we are doing things that are relevant, but we have no formal guidance."
- James (High School Humanities Teacher)

"Schools need to have a plan in place for preparing students for college. All teachers need to be aware of the plan."
- Kathy (Middle School Science Teacher)
Design Question 1

How is your school preparing all students for postsecondary success?

Target 1

The Problem: Many Students Graduating from Secondary Schools Aren’t Ready for a Postsecondary Education!

- First year of college is the most important in regard to degree completion
  - 25% of these students drop out their freshman year
  
  Carey, 2004

- Some two-year colleges see 80% of their students taking remedial classes

- Nationally, only 17% of students who must take remedial reading receive a bachelor’s degree or higher

Conley, 2010

This target deals with the problem that many students graduating from secondary schools aren’t ready for a postsecondary education. Target 1 begins with the statement of the problem central to this guidebook, followed by an assessment of current knowledge, understanding and comfort level pertaining to the problem. Readers then have the opportunity to reflect on current beliefs and practices around the problem. After reflection, research is presented to give context and to support the problem. In this research there is a look into past practices, current practices, the problem, its significance, along with ways to help prepare students for postsecondary success. Finally, this section ends with a rubric for the reader to assess progress toward each element within the postsecondary readiness framework, along with an action plan template for next steps.
Assessing Current Knowledge

Use the following rating scale to assess your current knowledge, understanding and comfort level regarding background information and research presented in this target.

4= I understand the current research, and already use this data to create/improve programs aimed to address and help solve the problem.
3= I understand the current research, but I need to use the data to create/improve programs aimed to address and help solve the problem.
2= I can explain the current research, but I am not fully confident that I can use the data to create/improve programs aimed to address and help solve the problem.
1= I do not understand the current research, and I do not currently use the data in my school.

_____ 1. I can clearly articulate research on my state’s, district’s, and school’s approach to preparing students for postsecondary success
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 2. I look at research on the past and current context of education
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 3. I realize the problem and its significance in today’s society
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 4. I can refine the direction and approaches of postsecondary preparedness in my district/school
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:
Reflecting on Your Current Beliefs and Practices
Before examining the research, take some time to look at your current beliefs and practices by answering the following questions:

1. What knowledge do you have on the current research, along with federal and state involvement in helping schools prepare all students for postsecondary success? Where do you get your information/research/data pertaining to the aforementioned problem?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. How clear are you on your school’s programs and best practices of addressing postsecondary preparedness? List all of the approaches your school uses to address the aforementioned problem.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3. To what extent are you involved in these programs/best practices aimed at preparing students for postsecondary success? What systems are set up for all staff members to become involved in these programs/best practices?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

4. To what extent are the details of the programs/best practices aimed at preparing students for postsecondary success communicated regularly to the staff at your school? How often are these programs/best practices refined/modified with current research to best serve all students?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Recommendations

This target addresses the following best practices for Design Question 1:

- Form a study group to review and analyze the issue/data of postsecondary preparedness, along with schools and programs looking to help prepare student for postsecondary success.
- List current programs/best practices in your school/district for postsecondary preparedness.
- Administer perception surveys of students, staff and parents to measure effectiveness of current practices aimed at preparing students for postsecondary success.

Introduction to the Research

In November of 2009, President Barack Obama stated the necessity of making education America’s national mission (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). During tough economic times, education plays a critical role in helping our citizens obtain the necessary skills to become contributing members of the work force. The state of Oregon is realizing the importance of education and is committed to a “40-40-20” plan in which the state will: (1) ensure that at least 40 percent of adult Oregonians have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher; (2) ensure that at least 40 percent of adult Oregonians have earned an associate’s degree or post-secondary credential as their highest level of educational attainment; and (3) ensure that the remaining 20 percent or less of all adult Oregonians have earned a high school diploma, an extended or modified high school diploma or the equivalent of a high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment (State of Oregon, 2011).

Unfortunately, in our educational system, many students graduating from secondary schools aren’t ready for a postsecondary education, therefore making them unqualified to join the work force. Today, the goals of our educational system need to align with the goals of our society. We need to provide our students successful programs and schools that prepare them for a postsecondary education so that they can meet the demands of a global economy. Now more than ever, education must be the fabric for which the greatness of our country is defined.

This guidebook was created on the assumption that a postsecondary education will prepare students for the work force. A postsecondary education includes: community colleges (career certificates, associate’s degrees), universities (bachelor’s, master’s, professional, and doctoral degree).
*For the Activity Circles, engage in a conversation with your team around the topic to help connect your knowledge to practice. This is will help build context and improve understanding of each topic or theme.

**Activity Circle**

How is your district/state working with the federal government to help prepare students for postsecondary success?

**A Picture of the Past**

When looking at transitioning students from secondary schools to postsecondary options, it is necessary to first look at the public school system. The evolution of secondary schools in our society is linked directly with the growth of our nation. Secondary schooling was developed from traditional village schools in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries and was linked to the success of our country’s economic and political future (Lee & Smith, 1995). Large high schools were created for efficiency, differentiation, specialization, and standardization. This was done to prepare high school graduates to be productive members of the workforce, and was a successful model of the production of human capital until the late 1960’s (Lee & Smith, 1995). As students earn their high school diploma, their unemployment rates go down and their median weekly earnings go up compared to students who don’t earn a high school diploma. The more education one receives, the lower the unemployment rate and the higher the earnings, putting a greater importance on postsecondary education (Figure 1).
**Current Practice**

In secondary schools today, there are many students who aren’t learning the necessary skills to succeed after their public schooling. It is easy to avoid learning in today’s secondary schools and still graduate believing that one has learned (Powell & others, 1985). Students from low-income families and some ethnic and racial minority groups are most dependent on the ability of their secondary schools to prepare them properly for college success (D. T. Conley, 2010). Conley (2010), states that while many high school graduates exceed expectations, many do not, and there is no real way to know the minimal level of skill that all diploma recipients have attained. Secondary schools have continued to operate under older bureaucratic designs even though our society and workforce have placed a greater importance on postsecondary education. High schools should be directly connected to elementary and middle schools, higher education, industry and business, state and federal government and to their communities that surround them (Boyer, 1983). In reality, high schools often become independent educational institutions that are isolated from the aforementioned stakeholders. There needs to be a bridge to connect the systems of education so our children won’t suffer in the transition from one system to the next.

Because many students graduating secondary schools aren’t ready for college, the following questions need to be answered: *What can be done to our educational structure so that it*
successfully prepares students for a postsecondary education? What standards exist to help states, districts, schools and educators prepare students for a postsecondary education? What program/schools currently exist to help students make a successful transition from secondary schools to postsecondary education? It is up to educators to prepare public school students with the skills necessary to make a successful transition from secondary schools to postsecondary education. By doing so, students will be able to reflect on their public school experience as constructive and positive toward helping them grow as individuals in our society. By answering the aforementioned questions, we begin to make education (America’s national mission) a reality.

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question*

**Activity Circle**
How are your current mission and vision statements addressing postsecondary preparedness, and how are they creating buy-in from all staff members?

**The Problem**
In these uncertain economic times, parents from all racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds are looking to secondary schools more than ever to prepare their sons and daughters well for life after public schooling. Many parents are hoping that this life after public school entails a successful entry into an institution of higher education to ensure that their sons/daughters can live a life of happiness and prosperity. Studies show that students who earn a bachelor’s degree are 33% more likely to become employed over students who earn a high school diploma (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), also show that students obtaining an associate degree have a 9-17% advantage of employment over students with a high school diploma.
Research confirms that many students graduating from secondary schools aren’t ready for postsecondary education. In our educational system secondary schools aren’t adequately preparing students for postsecondary education. This lack of preparation requires remediation and can be attributed to the lack of alignment between secondary schooling and college regarding academic standards, communication and collaboration. Some two-year colleges see 80% of their students taking remedial classes. Moreover, only 17% of students who must take remedial reading receive a bachelor’s degree or higher (D. T. Conley, 2010). Better efforts must be made to transition students from secondary schools to colleges and universities. The first year of college is the most important in regard to degree completion; 25 percent of these students drop out their freshman year (Carey, 2004).

In my experience as a middle college principal, it has become a necessity for my high school to work closely with our local community college to provide a seamless transition from secondary to postsecondary education to ensure student success. Both educational institutions have an investment in these students who will determine the future development and prosperity of our country.

**Significance of the Problem**

While all students who finish high school don’t go to college, nearly 70 percent will actually enroll in colleges or universities within two years of high school graduation (Haycock, Barth, Mitchell, & Wilkins, 1999). As more and more students and families realize the importance of a postsecondary education, efforts must be made by both secondary schools and colleges to work on transitioning students successfully from one system to another.

In order to facilitate this transition, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has invested nearly $4 billion to transform the levels of college-readiness and success for America’s young people, particularly for low-income and minority youth. This foundation has helped demonstrate that with the right opportunities, all young people can achieve at high levels (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2009). Because educational leaders aren’t emphasizing skills students need to be successful in college, it makes it difficult for students to make the transition from the public
educational system (P-12) to the higher educational system (13-20).

The financial and economic implications of the current educational situation are difficult to ignore. The next decade will bring an economy where more than 60% of jobs will require a college degree, and in the state of Oregon, only about a third of students will enter college the fall after graduating, and only about 10% will earn a degree within 4 years (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2010). Because secondary schools and postsecondary institutions aren’t aligned, students aren’t acquiring the necessary skills to move from one system to another. When looking at students who are admitted and enrolled into postsecondary institutions, 40% of them take at least one remedial course costing $1 billion or more per year (D. T. Conley, 2010). An effective transition for these students would provide savings to states and families and provide economic stability for the country.

Culturally, issues of social justice arise when we look at serving all members of our society within the current system. Social justice can be defined as a dynamic state of affairs which is good for the common interest; this includes the good of each and all, in an acknowledgement that one depends on the other. The good depends on a right distribution of benefits and responsibilities (Griffiths, 1998, p. 302). It is important, when referring to the aforementioned definition, to acknowledge that all students should have access to a postsecondary education. Conley (2010), reports that only 60% of students from minority groups and low-income families can expect to graduate from high school, only one in three will enroll in college, and only one in seven will earn a bachelor’s degree.

In 2005, the nation’s governors held an educational summit to discuss the failure of secondary schooling to educate all students (Wolk & Jobs for the Future, 2005). In this summit, some alarming statistics were addressed. According to Wolk and Jobs (2005):

- Almost a third of students who start the ninth grade fail to graduate and two-thirds are not prepared for college; only half of African-American, Latino, and Native-American youth earn a high school diploma;
- A solid majority of high school seniors are not proficient in reading, math, or science, and their scores decline from fourth to twelfth grade; U.S. students usually rank in the bottom half along with underdeveloped nations;
• 75% of high school graduates enroll in college, more than a third need remedial courses, a third never make it to the sophomore year, and more than half do not complete the work necessary to earn a degree;
• 18% of African Americans and 10 percent of Latinos complete a four-year college degree by the time they are 29, compared to 34 percent of whites;
• The percentage of U.S. students who earn a college degree is the same as it was 30 years ago (2005, p. 2).

What Now?

It is clear from the research above, that a big representation of students moving to postsecondary education either aren’t ready, or there are specific groups of students who either never make it or are underrepresented in higher education. Leaders at the federal and state level are beginning to see the importance of creating an educational structure that successfully transitions students from secondary schools to college and/or careers, and that it is directly aligned to the growth of our country.

In February 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). This federal legislation was created to help stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The U.S. Department of Education (2009), created ARRA to move educational reform toward supporting investments in innovative strategies that will lead to improved student results, long-term gains in school and educational system capacity, and increased productivity and effectiveness. ARRA provided $4.35 billion to create the Race to the Top Fund. This was a competitive grant program for States to reward and encourage innovation in education. This innovation addressed the following conditions: achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers; and implementing ambitious plans toward educational reform (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

To prepare students for success in postsecondary education, Race to the Top encouraged the adoption of standards and assessments that prepared students to succeed and to compete in the global economy. Race to the Top was based on six priorities to improve the quality of education
in our country. Priority one and five addressed the successful transition from secondary schools to postsecondary education. Priority one, the Absolute Priority focused on a comprehensive approach to educational reform where the Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) or school districts will use the funds from Race to the Top to increase stakeholder involvement and the rates at which students graduate from secondary schools prepared for postsecondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Priority five, the Invitational Priority focuses on early preschool-through-graduate school (P-20) coordination, vertical and horizontal alignment. Priority five stresses the importance of vertical alignment where a transition occurs (K-12 and postsecondary/careers) to ensure that students leaving one level are prepared for success, without remediation, in the next (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). While the federal government takes more of an active role in public education to improve the quality of education, it is working with states to set unifying educational guidelines and curriculum.

In the state of Oregon, the state legislature created the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), an initiative and priority of Governor John Kitzhaber. The OEIB chaired by the governor is tasked with overseeing the effort to create a “seamless, unified system for investing in and delivering public education from early childhood through high school and college so that all Oregonians are well prepared for careers in our global economy” (Oregon.gov, 2011). The goals of OEIB are as follows: 100% of Oregonians will earn a high school diploma or equivalent- 40% of Oregonians will obtain an associate’s degree or postsecondary credential, 40% of Oregonians will obtain a bachelor’s degree or higher, and 20% will obtain a high school diploma, an extended or modified high school diploma or the equivalent of a high school diploma (Figure 2).

Figure 2
The process for achieving these goals will be achieved through a process of collecting, reviewing and evaluating the efforts of groups with expertise in the areas of early learning, educational finance, and increasing K-12 efficiencies (Kitzhaber, 2011).

Today, both the federal and state governments are taking active roles in addressing a successful transition from secondary schools to college. The policies at both levels should help to reduce remediation and successfully prepare students for a postsecondary education through the creation of a seamless educational system.

Checklist on “The Problem”

☐ Complete the rubric for postsecondary readiness on “The Problem” to assess current practices and programs.

☐ Form a study group to analyze “The Problem as it relates to your school and students

☐ Create an organizational chart diagramming programs and best practices aimed at preparing students for postsecondary success

☐ Administer surveys of students, staff and parents to measure effectiveness of current postsecondary readiness programs and practices
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
<td>Little to no understanding of “The Problem” or current research. Data or information about “The Problem” are not gathered in any systematic way. There is no way to determine what needs to change at the school, based on the data.</td>
<td>Basic understanding of “The Problem” and current research. There is no systematic process, but some information is collected and used to problem-solve current practice.</td>
<td>School researches and collects data on current practice, the capacity for change, obstacles, and resources for support. Sufficient understanding of “The Problem” and the research and data is used to drive the strategic quality plan for school change.</td>
<td>All facets of “The Problem” are understood as it relates to the school site. There is a systematic reliance on research and data on current practice, the capacity for change, obstacles, and resources for support as a basis for decision making. Accessible to all levels, data are comprehensive in scope and an accurate reflection of school quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td>No information is gathered with which to make changes. There is little to no communication among educators on “The Problem” as it relates to the school site. This is seen as an irritation, not a need for improvement.</td>
<td>Some data and information are tracked such as drop-out rates and enrollment. Only a few individuals are asked for feedback about areas as it relates to “The Problem.”</td>
<td>School collects information on current and former students, parents, and educators (student achievement and perceptions), analyzes and uses it in conjunction with future trends for planning. Identified areas for improvement are tracked over time.</td>
<td>Innovative practices and programs are implemented to the satisfaction of teachers, parents, and students. Information is analyzed and used to prevent “The Problem” at the school site. Root causes are known through analyses. Problems are prevented through the use of data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Only anecdotal and hypothetical information is available about “The Problem” as it relates to the school site. Problems are solved individually with short-term results.</td>
<td>Little data are available. Change is limited to some areas of the school dependent upon individual educators and their efforts.</td>
<td>Information collected on “The Problem” is shared with the school staff and used to plan for change. Information helps staff understand pressing issues, analyze information to identify “cause,” and track results for improvement.</td>
<td>Students are satisfied with the school’s approach to postsecondary readiness. Seamless college matriculation is the result for all students. No student falls through the cracks. School uses data to predict and prevent potential problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMMENTS</strong></td>
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</table>
Organize any new actions being considered for implementation at your school with this implementation template. Consider all general actions, those already begun as well as new ones, and then categorize them according to:

1. **Quick wins**-actions that can be implemented this semester or this school year
2. **Moderately difficult undertakings**-actions that need summer planning, professional development, or both
3. **Major tasks**-actions that will need two years or more for full implementation and may include quick wins and moderately difficult undertakings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Leadership Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
<th>Personalization Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
<th>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List quick wins</td>
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<tr>
<td>List one or two major tasks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Action Template**

**Professional Development and Communication Planning**
Consider your planned school improvement actions and strategies. Identify the teams and team members who will lead the implementation and the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for success. Discuss and list specific steps and actions that school staff members will take to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of each group below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership team/Steering committee</th>
<th>Actions to develop the requisite knowledge for success</th>
<th>Actions to practice the requisite skills for success</th>
<th>Actions to develop the requisite attitudes for success</th>
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<td><strong>Faculty colleagues</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Others (list them)</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 2:

POSTSECONDARY READINESS FRAMEWORK—STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

"The section nicely outlines key structural areas for schools to implement to prepare students for postsecondary success."

- John (Special Education Coordinator)

"We need to strengthen our partnerships with our local colleges."

- Pete (Elementary School Principal)
Design Question 2

What structures are currently in place to successfully prepare students for postsecondary success?

Target 2

Postsecondary Readiness Framework: Structure

- 70% of students will actually enroll in colleges or universities within two years of high school graduation

- More than a third need remedial courses, a third never make it to the sophomore year, and more than half do not complete the work necessary to earn a degree

Haycock, Barth, Mitchell, & Wilkins, 1999

To prepare students for postsecondary success, educational leaders must look at the structural makeup of their schools to address successful transitions for every secondary school student to postsecondary options. This target focuses on putting the proper structure in place to prepare students for postsecondary success. For the purposes of this guidebook, structure is defined as the organizational makeup of a school. It must be noted that strategy and goals shape structure, but the process is often complex and subtle (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The elements of this structure address: the mission/vision of schools, transitions and infrastructure, and the development of college knowledge. This target begins with an assessment of current knowledge, understanding and comfort level pertaining to the problem. Readers then have the opportunity to reflect on current beliefs and practices around the problem.
Assessing Current Knowledge

Use the following rating scale to assess your current knowledge, understanding and comfort level regarding structural elements presented in this target.

4= I understand this structural element, and it is fully implemented in my school.
3= I understand this structural element, but it isn’t fully implemented in my school.
2= I can explain this structural element, but I am not fully confident that it can be implemented in my school.
1= I do not understand this structural element, and it is not being implemented in my school.

_____ 1. Building the school’s mission and vision on shared core values and beliefs of the staff
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 2. Looking at sufficient data of all students to identify students showing proficiency or mastery of standards, along with students needing extra supports
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 3. Realizing the infrastructure of my school is built around strategies within the dimensions of academic preparedness and tenacity
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 4. Developing a sufficient partnership with a partnering postsecondary institution to prepare all students for postsecondary success
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:
Reflecting on Current Beliefs and Practices

Before examining this target, take some time to look at your current beliefs and practices by answering the following questions:

1. Explain how the mission, vision and goals of the school were created? To what extent are these related to postsecondary preparedness?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. How well do you know the organizational structure of your school/district? Describe it to the best of your current knowledge.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3. How clear are you about the process of how students transition in and out of your school/district; out of programs within your school? List what you know of these processes (Try to address the how, why, where, when and who).

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

4. What resources and partnerships are currently in place to support a postsecondary readiness culture?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

5. Describe the data infrastructure that is currently in place for continuous school improvement.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Recommendations

This target addresses the following best practices for Design Question 2:

- Form a committee around the structural elements of the postsecondary readiness framework to review, analyze, and plan for a seamless approach to postsecondary preparedness.
- Create an organizational chart containing all of the programs/best practices in your school along with the person in charge of each program. These programs/best practices should be aimed to prepare all students for postsecondary success, and include an action plan for evaluation and review.
- Create a mission/vision statement along with school goals for your school based on collective shared values and beliefs of all staff members. These statements should include a systematic approach to prepare students for postsecondary success.

Mission/Vision

*Shared visions emerge from personal visions. This is how they derive their energy and how they foster commitment . . . If people don’t have their own vision, all they can do is “sign up” for someone else’s. The result is compliance, never commitment.* (Senge, 1997)

To help prepare students for postsecondary success, one of the main structural elements is to embed the goals and expectations of college and career readiness for *all* students into the mission and vision of the school. The mission and vision should be shared and created around individual values and beliefs of all staff members. These individual values and beliefs should be integrated into the core values and beliefs for the school. Once the core values and beliefs are agreed upon, then the purpose for the school is created. The purpose of the school should include the goals and expectations of college and career readiness for *all* students. This purpose is important for creating a mission statement that everyone see, knows, and uses (Bernhardt, 2002). Creating a shared mission and vision is important for a healthy “college-going” culture and is necessary to prepare students for postsecondary success. Everything that is done in an organization should be aligned to its guiding principles. Guiding principles help to build a system of fundamental motivating assumptions, principles, values, and tenets that leads to a tangible vision (Figure 3).
Transitions and Creating the Infrastructure

Research suggests that the major transition points in the educational continuum present students with particular social and academic challenges that can throw students off course (Bloom, 2011). ACT (2008) reports the transition from elementary to middle school is important and challenging especially with regard to behavior. This same study suggests that eighth grade is the most advantageous in a student’s academic achievement and progress toward college and career readiness than any measure of high school achievement (ACT, Inc., 2008). Schools must address the social and academic elements of these key transitions and integrate them into the structure of the school so that students can navigate these transitions successfully throughout their educational experience.

When students get to secondary schools, the social and academic elements for success should be ingrained. However, there are many students who don’t have these elements in place for success in secondary schools. Because of this there must be an infrastructure in place to address the transition from middle school to high school. At the same time, this infrastructure must exist for students who are proficient and show mastery of the social and academic elements of high school, and are ready to begin the transition to postsecondary options. Careful focus must be placed on the process of transitioning students to high school from earlier grades and/or schools, as well as transitioning students to college from high school programs aimed at preparing them for postsecondary success. Setting the infrastructure for postsecondary success should follow current research and best practices, and requires commitment and buy-in from all staff members.
From fall 2010 through summer 2011, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform received a three year grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to develop the College Readiness Indicator System (CRIS). This initiative researched and collected indicators that measure the dimensions of college readiness. It helped districts develop supports connected to these indicators (McAlister, Mevs, Lee, Rodriguez, & Kim, 2012).

Using CRIS as a guide to build an infrastructure, Table 2 below shows strategies and dimensions aimed at addressing postsecondary success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Preparedness</td>
<td>• Use data to drive postsecondary readiness policies&lt;br&gt;• Align standards, curricula, and assessments to college-ready expectations&lt;br&gt;• Intervene early to keep students on a college-ready track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Tenacity</td>
<td>• Expose students to tenacity-building activities&lt;br&gt;• Provide accelerated learning opportunities that promote persistence and attainment&lt;br&gt;• Restructure schools into personalized learning communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(McAlister et al., 2012)

**Infrastructure: Academic Preparedness**

**Diagnostics and Data**

“Schools that gather, analyze, and use information about their school communities make better decisions, not only about what to change but also about how to institutionalize systemic change.” (Bernhardt, 2005, p. 2)

Bloom (2011) states that schools need to be able to identify students who are struggling and who lack the necessary skills as early as possible to provide targeted and research-based interventions.
I assume that when this mechanism is put into place in every secondary school, and the structure is aligned to the goals and expectations of college and career readiness for all students, then remediation will be less frequent and the transition to postsecondary options will be more successful.

In order to prepare students for a successful transition to postsecondary options, schools need to embrace diagnostics (assessments) and data. For this to happen, a data system needs to be created or adopted to understand multiple measures of school data. As Bernhardt (2005) states, using multiple methods of assessment allows students to show both social and academic growth. A school must gather multiple measures of data to not only improve, but to show if it is achieving its mission, vision, purpose and goals. Figure 4 on the next page illustrates the different types of information along with the levels of analysis that can be gained from the intersection of the data.

The next step would be to form a data committee. One person should be in charge of collecting the data (data collector), and one person in should be responsible for presenting it to the committee (educational leader). Both the data collector and educational leader must coordinate and collaborate to collect and present information pertinent to the mission, vision, purpose and goals of the school.

Here is an example of what this would look like. A data committee is formed prior to the beginning of the school year. When students enter secondary schools (at any grade), diagnostics are administered to see the skill level of each student. This data is collected by the data collector and recorded in a data system. This data is shared between the data collector and educational leader. The educational leader then analyzes the data and meets (regularly) with the data committee and uses the data for skill development toward postsecondary success?
Multiple Measures of Data

- **Demographics**
  - Enrollment, Attendance, Drop-Out Rate, Ethnicity, Gender, Grade Level
- **School Processes**
  - Description of School Programs and Processes
- **Perceptions**
  - Values and Beliefs, Observations, Attitudes
- **Student Learning**
  - Standardized Tests, Norm/Criterion-Referenced Tests
  - Teacher Observations of Abilities, Formative Assessments

- **Allows the prediction of actions/processes/programs that best meet the learning needs of all students.**
- **Over time, demographic data indicate changes in the context of the school.**
- **Tells us:** What processes/programs different groups of students like best.
- **Tells us:** If groups of students are “experiencing school” differently.
- **Tells us:** The impact of demographic factors and attitudes about the learning environment on student learning.
- **Tells us:** If a program is making a difference in student learning results.
- **Over time, student learning data give information about student performance on different measures.**
- **Tells us:** The impact of the program on student learning based upon perceptions of the program and on the processes used.

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*For the Activity Circles, engage in a conversation with your team around the topic to help connect your knowledge to practice. This is will help build context and improve understanding of each topic or theme.

**Activity Circle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your school/district have a data team?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does it measure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often does it meet?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Standards and Expectations**

Teachers need to look at their lessons and align them to standards aimed at helping students with postsecondary readiness. Schools and teachers, who are serious about preparing students for postsecondary success, must also coordinate and align their lessons with standards used at colleges and universities. Teachers must align the aforementioned standards in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. For example: *Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.* Identifying this standard is step one, but after the identifying process, planning must begin for pre-assessments, assessments, and post-assessments to measure progress. Once these assessments are created, then standards must be integrated into the curriculum, and must directly influence instruction. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must always be linked when creating and planning lessons. A more in-depth look at standards will be addressed again in Section 3 of this guidebook.
*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)

**Activity Circle**

How does your school/district implement a standard or consistent approach to the planning of curriculum, instruction and assessment for all teachers?

---

**Interventions and Support**

Once students’ skills are identified, then programs must be implemented to help students build their skills and keep them on track for postsecondary success. These interventions and support must be identified and applied early so that gaps don’t develop in learning. Coordination with learning and language specialists is key to providing struggling students the extra support they need to keep them on-track. Some examples of these interventions and support include but may not be limited to: learning centers, resource rooms, individual or group tutoring, mentoring etc…

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)

**Activity Circle**

What interventions are in place to support students and keep them on track for postsecondary success?

How effective are these?
Infrastructure: Academic Tenacity

Tenacity-Building Activities

Academic tenacity is defined as the mindsets and skills that allow students to look beyond short-term concerns to longer-term or higher-order goals, and to withstand challenges and setbacks to persevere toward these goals (Shechtman, DeBarger, Dornsif, Rosier, & Yarnall, 2013). There are three types of approaches used in schools today: the “character education” model, “project-based learning” model, and support for school-wide improvement.

Shechtman et al., explains the “character education” model as explicit articulation of learning goals for targeted competencies, clear and regular assessment and feedback of student progress, intensive teacher professional development, and discourse about these competencies throughout the school culture.

The “project-based learning” model is where students develop competencies through engagement in long-term, challenging, and/or real-world problems that require planning, monitoring, feedback, and iteration. Projects are often aligned with students’ interests and passions.

The third type of approach is through support for school-wide improvement. This includes but is not limited to teacher professional development, networks of school communities, and strategies to improve school organizational structure.

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)

Activity Circle

Are any of the above approaches used in your school/district?

How effective are these?

Explain your process...
Accelerated Learning Opportunities
As students show proficiency or mastery in content areas, they must have the opportunity to advance both socially and academically in their learning. Academically, this can occur through advanced placement programs, or through International Baccalaureate Programs (IB). To maximize advanced learning opportunities, however, schools and programs must not only address the academic growth of students, but also, the social growth.

In most early and middle colleges, matriculation is the expectation for all students. An example of this would be where groups of students, who show social and academic proficiency or mastery of high school culture and content, are allowed to take prescribed entry level college courses together in a cohort. When they become proficient or show mastery of these entry level courses, they then matriculate toward a college degree or certificate of their choice. It must be noted that schools/programs should give all students the opportunity to advance both socially and academically in their learning toward postsecondary opportunities.

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)

Personalized Learning Communities
This strategy requires schools to break down large learning environments into small, personalized learning communities. These communities have a small group of staff members who focus on student success around a framework of postsecondary preparedness. These staff
members use data to inform them of student progress in the areas of culture and environment, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This data is also used to help staff members collaborate to improve their own practices in curriculum, instruction, assessment and helping set the culture and environment for their small communities. In schools, these small, personalized learning communities are often called: academies, houses, teams etc… They can be organized in different ways such as: by grade, by content area, career interests, themes etc… This sets up an educational environment and culture that is more personalized, and allows for better support for each individual student and staff member.

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)

**Activity Circle**

Does your school have personalized learning communities?

How effective are these communities in giving all students opportunities for postsecondary success?

Explain your process...

**College Knowledge: College-Going Culture**

**Creating the Culture**

David Conley (2007, p. 22) notes: “Many students fail to apply to college simply because the process seems so daunting, and they feel intimidates or overwhelmed by all of the requirements and activities associated with the application process.” In order to create this “college-going” culture, schools must go through a process of “reculturing.” Reculturing is defined as challenging current practices, patterns, and norms by examining them and implementing change when it is appropriate for the success of all students. Schools serious about creating significant changes that will positively impact student achievement and direction, especially in getting students ready for the postsecondary transition must go through this process (Chenoweth & Everhart, 2002).
A college-going culture should be visible and alive in each school. After creating the mission, vision and goals of the school around a shared set of core values and beliefs, then the table is set for high expectations and college-going culture. The next steps in creating a college-going culture in any school include but may not be limited to: setting high expectations for all students, measuring college skills, and credit/degree attainment, and setting a college awareness environment.

The goal for creating this culture is to raise the bar both academically and socially for all students. For example, in high school, students have the opportunity to take college courses on the high school campus to help students understand the rigor and structure of a college course. Supports are in place to help students who are placed in these classes to make their experience challenging, yet positive. All students must systematically focus on: short-term goals to help build college skills in each class, medium-term goals to plan out their path to college, and long-term goals to connect their skills with both a postsecondary education, and ultimately to a career.

Once a data system is in place, diagnostics or assessments must be able to measure the attainment of college-ready skills of all students. This not only helps to advance students who are proficient or master set standards, but to provide supports to students who need them. Data must also measure college credit and degree attainment. This data should be the focal point of school-wide improvement, awareness for current students and families, marketing for future students and families, and celebrations of student and school achievement.

Setting the environment for college or postsecondary awareness should be deliberate and systematic. Before entering the school, all students must take the partnering college or university placement exam in reading, writing and math. This is a powerful tool in setting the expectation of college. Once new students enter the school for the first time during the academic year, a visit to the partnering college or university is another great way of reinforcing the college-going culture. This helps to stress the importance of where their hard work and skills will take them during or after their public school journey.
Some easy, but effective ways of helping reinforce the college-going culture at a school is through visuals and displays. One idea that successful schools use is to post the mission, vision, and goals around the school which contain postsecondary preparedness messages. Another idea is to display the college or university pennant or banner of each staff member outside of or in each classroom. These gets students to see that we have gone through this process and are advocates in helping them get through their journey.

Creating a college-going culture will also be addressed later in Section 4. Specifically, the strategies of supporting students through the college planning process, along with engaging families in learning about and supporting the college-going process fall under the Social Elements of the Postsecondary Framework section.

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)*

**Activity Circle**

Is a college-going culture is created for all students?

How effective is this culture in preparing students for postsecondary success?

Explain the elements of the culture in your school...

**College Knowledge: Developing Partnerships**

One of the most important elements in the structural section of the postsecondary readiness framework is to develop a partnership with the local college or university. Because the process of preparing students for postsecondary success is a complex one, secondary schools can’t do it alone. This partnership or relationship with local postsecondary institutions is a must. It gives schools an opportunity to offer its students college-like experiences such as: senior seminars on college readiness, college placement tests, advanced placement classes, college campus visits,
and summer bridge programs to help prepare students for the transition (Conley & McGaughy, 2012). The partnership also allows schools to offer dual enrollment programs to students. This gives high schools an opportunity to align courses offered with college course expectations, and to share data for continuous school improvement.

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)*

**Activity Circle**

What kinds of partnerships exist with postsecondary institutions?  
How effective is this partnership?  
Explain the elements components of this partnership...

**Checklist for Structural Elements**

- Complete the rubric for postsecondary readiness on Structural Elements to assess current practices and programs.
- Form a committee to focus on the Structural Elements to review, analyze, and plan for a seamless approach to postsecondary readiness.
- Create an organizational chart outlining programs within the Structural Elements section. These programs should include an action plan for evaluation and review.
- Create a mission/vision statement along with school goals based on collective shared values and beliefs of all staff members.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS</th>
<th>Structural Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is either no mission or vision statement or its creation had little to no input from current staff members. There is little to no focus on data, college readiness expectations or early interventions. Academic tenacity isn’t a priority and integrated into best practices and programs. A college-going culture is non-existent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mission and vision statement exist but with little input from all staff members. One person is in charge of data. College expectations exist but only within certain classes and programs. Early interventions aren’t planned out for struggling students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mission and vision statement exists with input from staff. A small team review data for school improvement. There is an emphasis toward college expectation in each class and program. Early interventions are planned for struggling students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mission and vision statement exists and is connected to the continuous school improvement plan. A data team and system is in place for analysis and dissemination to all stakeholders. A data plan is integrated into the continuous school improvement plan and contains progress on college expectations and early interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students and staff operate independently within the school. There is a “business as usual” attitude with little cohesion and communication. All programs operate from personality-driven motivations. There is no systematic college-going culture.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small number of the same staff members lead meetings and professional development. Data is introduced randomly and without purpose. Minimum opportunities for accelerated learning and small learning communities exist. A college-going culture only exists among graduating seniors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is an opportunity for mission and vision creation/review during the year. Data is presented to students and staff throughout the year. Staff implements college expectations and standards into classes and programs. Interventions occur in each program for struggling students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mission and vision statements drive the direction of the school with input from all stakeholders. Data is systematically presented to all stakeholders and connected to the school’s mission and vision. Students have postsecondary readiness skills.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and staff don’t feel connected to the direction and daily operations of the school. Little pockets of culture exist only within each program or classroom. Students often question the relevance of school. Students and staff feel little to no connection to a unified system.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is confusion among students and staff on the connection between classes and school goals. There is pressure to perform to increase school scores. A college-going culture excludes some students and staff causing frustration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and staff feel connected to the direction of the school. Everyone can see how data fits into the goals and direction of the school. A college-going culture is created. Struggling students feel connected to the school and the college-going culture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a strong sense of purpose among all stakeholders toward the direction of the school. A focus on improving strengths and building skills is evident. Staff members are confident and students are prepared for college and careers. A college-going culture is evident to outsiders.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTS**
Organize any new actions being considered for implementation at your school with this implementation template. Consider all general actions, those already begun as well as new ones, and then categorize them according to:

1. **Quick wins**-actions that can be implemented this semester or this school year
2. **Moderately difficult undertakings**-actions that need summer planning, professional development, or both
3. **Major tasks**-actions that will need two years or more for full implementation and may include quick wins and moderately difficult undertakings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Leadership Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
<th>Personalization Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
<th>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>List quick wins</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List a few moderately difficult undertakings</strong></td>
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### Professional Development and Communication Planning

Consider your planned school improvement actions and strategies. Identify the teams and team members who will lead the implementation and the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for success. Discuss and list specific steps and actions that school staff members will take to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of each group below.

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SECTION 3:

POSTSECONDARY READINESS FRAMEWORK — ACADEMIC ELEMENTS

“We didn’t know how to implement quality instructional practices consistently across all grade levels until this guidebook gave us common language with common approaches.”

-Paula (Sixth Grade Teacher)
Target 3

Postsecondary Readiness Framework: Academic Elements

- The next decade will bring an economy where more than 60% of jobs will require a college degree

- In Oregon only about a third of students will enter college the fall after graduating, and only about 10% will earn a degree within 4 years
  Carnevale, N. Smith, & Strohl, 2010

- Forty percent of students enrolled into postsecondary institutions will take at least one remedial course costing $1 billion or more per year
  Conley, 2010

One of the most important aspects of the postsecondary readiness framework focuses on academics. In order for students to be prepared for postsecondary options, secondary schools must identify rigorous academic standards and align them with skills/standards students need at postsecondary institutions. If this is not done, then it is unlikely that the curriculum will be rigorous enough to prepare students for a successful transition. Once this is in place, then instruction and assessment must also be aligned in order to impact student learning and outcomes (Bloom, 2011). This target will focus on academic elements and practices that secondary schools can use to successfully transition students to postsecondary options. The academic elements center on rigorous secondary school standards, college and career readiness standards, quality instructional practices, and assessments to identify academic skill level.
Assessing Current Knowledge

Use the following rating scale to assess your current knowledge, understanding and comfort level regarding background information and research presented in this target.

4= I understand this academic element, and it is fully implemented at my school.
3= I understand this academic element, but it isn’t fully implemented in my school.
2= I can explain this academic element, but I am not fully confident that it can be implemented in my school.
1= I do not understand this academic element, and it is not being implemented in my school.

_____ 1. All courses offered at my school are aligned to Common Core State Standards or College Readiness Standards
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 2. All teachers design instruction with the same components consistently throughout the year
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 3. All teachers implement the same components of a lesson consistently throughout the school year
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 4. Summative assessments are used to identify student skill prior to enrolling and are used consistently throughout the school year to gauge student development
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:
Reflecting on Current Beliefs and Practices

Before examining this target, take some time to look at your current beliefs and practices by answering the following questions:

1. What standards are currently being used to determine student learning in your school/district/state? How are teachers using these in their classrooms? Are these standards being integrated into each classroom consistently? Describe this process to the best of your current knowledge (Try to address the how, why, where, when and who).

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

2. To what extent do your school and teachers implement college readiness standards? Are these college readiness standards aligned to current secondary school standards? What does this process look like (Try to address the how, why, where, when and who)?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

3. Explain how instruction is tailored around academic standards at your school? Is instruction consistent across content areas? Explain instructional practices at your school?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

4. What types of assessments do your school and teachers use to identify the academic skill level of each student? To what extent is the use of assessments in your school applied consistently across content areas? How well are assessments used to inform instructional practices?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
Recommendations

This target addresses the following best practices for Design Question 3:

- Form a committee around the academic elements of the postsecondary readiness framework to review, analyze, and plan for a seamless approach to postsecondary preparedness.
- Identify elements of effective instructional practice at your school. These elements should address consistent application of rigorous standards, assessment methods, and data collection and analysis to inform and improve instruction.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

In most states around the nation, teachers are aligning their lessons to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which aim to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. They are focused on literacy in each content area, math standards, and postsecondary readiness. They are designed to help teachers and parents support students in their educational journey. The CCSS are intended to be rigorous, relevant and reflect the knowledge and skills that students need for success in college and careers.

CCSS provide goals and benchmarks to ensure students are achieving certain skills and knowledge by the end of each year; help colleges and professional development programs better prepare teachers; provide the opportunity for teachers to be involved in the development of assessments linked to these top-quality standards; allow states to develop and provide better assessments that more accurately measure whether or not students have learned what was taught; and guide educators toward curricula and teaching strategies that will give students a deep understanding of the subject and the skills they need to apply their knowledge.

As teachers look to align their curriculum to CCSS, it is important to note that these standards can be complex and demonstrate many different skills students need to show in order to be prepared for college, careers, and citizenship. In order to navigate these standards and apply them to coursework and instruction, former administrator, educator turned author, Michael Schmoker identifies how educators must prioritize standards using the following criteria:

1. **Endurance**
   
   a. *Will the standard provide students with knowledge and skills beyond a single test date?*
2. **Leverage**
   
   a. Will the standard provide knowledge and skills that are of value in multiple disciplines?

3. **Readiness for the Next Level**
   
   a. Will the standard provide students with essential knowledge and skills that are necessary for their success in the next grade level?

*For the Activity Circles, engage in a conversation with your team around the topic to help connect your knowledge to practice. This is will help build context and improve understanding of each topic or theme.

---

**Activity Circle**

*How do teachers at your school identify what they teach in their content area?*

*Is this process consistent across all content areas?*

---

**College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR)**

After years of studying faculty members in many subject areas at two- and four year postsecondary institutions across the country, the Educational Policy Improvement Center, or EPIC, has developed four keys to college and career readiness. While all of these keys are interrelated, two of the four keys (key cognitive strategies and key content knowledge) fall primarily within the academic elements of the postsecondary readiness framework. The key transition knowledge and skills, and the key learning skills and techniques fit and are explained below in the social elements section of the postsecondary readiness framework and will be discussed at length in Section 4. As students move toward mastery in each of these keys, the
more likely students will be postsecondary ready (D. T. Conley, 2012). Table 3 below shows these keys.

Table 3-Keys to College and Career Readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Content Knowledge</th>
<th>Key Cognitive Strategies</th>
<th>Key Learning Skills and Techniques</th>
<th>Key Transition Knowledge and Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure of Knowledge</td>
<td>1. Problem Formulation</td>
<td>1. Ownership of Learning Techniques</td>
<td>1. Postsecondary Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Organizing concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Challenge</td>
<td>5. Role and Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Relation to Content</td>
<td>1. Attribution</td>
<td>6. Self-advocacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Effort vs. Aptitude</td>
<td>2. Academic Value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D. Conley, 2012a)

Each one of these keys contains skills which college-level students need to have in order to complete college-level work. These keys should serve as a guide or compass for educators to use in order to prepare students for postsecondary success.

**Key Content Knowledge**

Teaming the Key Content Knowledge with the CCSS will help to develop college and career readiness standards for all students. All students need to be provided with a credible curriculum that links knowledge and critical thinking. Critical thinking is highly dependent on content knowledge. To ensure critical thinking by students through content knowledge, educators must: *link texts to relevant issues, develop good questions with each text, and write research papers and make presentations* to display critical thinking skills in each content area.

Key Content Knowledge involves the conceptual ideas from core subjects. Teachers focus on key terms, factual information, linking ideas, and organizing concepts within their curriculum. For students to retain this information, however, connections must be created with their prior knowledge to build a structure of new knowledge (D. Conley, 2012b). Teachers associate emotions, positive or negative, with the knowledge being presented. They must use the knowledge in a variety of authentic situations, and receive timely feedback to effectively use this knowledge for growth. In this key, students should link core subject knowledge with career
aspirations to give relevance to each subject matter. Table 4 below shows an example of an authentic situation for learning.

Table 4-Authentic Assessment to Build New Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geometry City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>You have just taken your dream job of becoming an engineer and your boss has just given you your first project. You have been asked to build a three-dimensional model of a city. You can be as creative as you want and you may choose the materials you will use to build your city (clay, paper, etc.).</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In this city you should include at least 10 building and at least 5 streets. Within these 10 buildings, there must be clear representations of two similar figures, two congruent figures, and two geometric transformations. You are required to use a straight edge when constructing your city streets.**

**You must be able to describe the streets using the terms parallel, perpendicular, and intersecting. You are also required to determine the surface area of each building that you create. Along with this three-dimensional model of your city, you must also create a two-dimensional representation of your city.**

**This representation should be drawn to scale. You must also include a 1-2 page write-up the will include your process of creating both representations of your city, a description of what buildings represent what geometric concepts by using the ratio factor and the surface areas to prove that the buildings are similar, the city name, description of the streets (include street names), the advantages and disadvantages of two- and three- dimensional representation.**

**You will complete this project individually and you will have 2 weeks to complete the assignment. On the day that the projects are due, every student will present their project to the class explaining what they have created. Once everyone has presented, we will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each type of representation.**

It also must be noted that the two academic skills that are identified for college success are reading and writing. These important skills are also focal points with the CCSS. Students must be able to identify and understand different formats and different types of written materials. For example, students must be able to distinguish between an editorial and an informative article. High importance should be placed on decoding, identification of key elements and concepts, and interpretation. Students should be able to build up persistence as they reread passages to connect to deeper meanings in each text. Writing is the format which students are evaluated and which student thinking is expressed and assessed most frequently. To prepare students best for postsecondary success, a focus on expository, descriptive, and persuasive writing must be stresses in all classes. The skills of prewriting, editing, and rewriting must be repeated to build college writing habits. Students should present arguments clearly, stressing each point, and be able to use resources and manuals to construct papers free of errors.
Key Cognitive Strategies

Key Cognitive Strategies involve skills around thinking. These skills involve formulating hypotheses, developing problem-solving strategies, identifying sources and collecting information. They also involve analyzing the findings or conflicting viewpoints, organizing and constructing work products in a variety of formats. Once this process is done, then students must confirm the precision and accuracy of all the work they produced (D. T. Conley, 2012).

EPIC has done excellent work in identifying these strategies, and schools and teachers should develop skills within these strategies to prepare students for postsecondary success. The strategies and components teachers should focus on must be connected to Key Content Knowledge for optimal success.

Because the process of preparing students for postsecondary success is a complex one, assessing postsecondary readiness becomes more and more challenging. Conley (2012a) recognizes the complexity of postsecondary readiness and addresses it through the following thoughts and recommendations:

- No single test can gauge every standard needed for postsecondary readiness
- Test scores are appropriate at a system level, but become more error-prone and inappropriate at each sublevel- state, district, school, classroom, individuals
- Scores from a single measure of college and career readiness may be misused.
• Systems of assessment need to be set up (rather than one test or score) to address grades, student self-reports, complex curriculum-embedded performance tasks, behavioral assessments, non-content-based measures

To address some of the points listed above, EPIC, recommends that courses use embedded assessments tied to key cognitive strategies, key content knowledge and key learning skills and techniques. Examples of this include but aren’t limited to extended essays, demonstrations and culminating projects, research papers, and inquiry-based experiments and investigations (D. T. Conley, 2007)

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)

---

**Activity Circle**

Describe some authentic assessments being used in your school?

What are the components of these assessments?

To what extent are they preparing students for postsecondary success?

---

**Quality Instructional Practices**

*Improved classroom instruction is the prime factor to improve student achievement gains.*

(Odden & Wallace, 2003)

Preparing students for postsecondary readiness requires quality instructional practices. This is a complex process which requires teachers to think deliberately about how to build and develop skills so that students are prepared for a successful transition to postsecondary options. The following aspects categorize quality instructional practices and help teachers and students work together to maximize both teacher and student potential.

• **Designing instruction**- understanding and design
- **Classroom practice**- engagement, objectives, learning targets, teaching/modeling/demonstrating, guided practice (authentic literacy), and checks for understanding (formative assessment)

One of the most important factors to student success is designing instruction. This happens well before students enter the classroom. Extensive work by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe reveals best practices around understanding and design.

**Designing Instruction**

*Understanding*

In order to prepare students for postsecondary success, teachers must deepen and develop student understanding of important ideas and processes in each content area. Each big idea has an essential question that needs to be revealed. This is done when students apply their knowledge (old and new) through authentic assessments. To ensure student understanding in each class, Wiggins and McTighe list six indicators: (1) to explain, (2) interpret, (3) apply, (4) shift perspective, (5) empathize, and (6) self-assess. These overlap with the Key Cognitive Strategies and help to reinforce necessary skills in student development. Students need to go through this process to transfer their learning.

*Design*

Before instruction can happen, curriculum needs to be designed carefully to ensure student learning and skill development. Based on surveys of K-16 faculty throughout the world, the characteristics of the best learning designs contain the following components:

- **Expectations**
  - provide clear learning goals and performance expectations
  - cast learning goals in terms of genuine/meaningful performance
  - frame the work around genuine questions & meaningful challenges
  - show models/exemplars of expected performance

- **Instruction**
  - the teacher serves as a facilitator/coach to support the learner
  - targeted instruction and relevant resources are provided to “equip” students for expected performance
  - the textbook serves as one resource among many (i.e., text is resource, not
the teacher “uncovers” important ideas/processes by exploring essential questions and genuine applications of knowledge and skills

- **Learning Activities**
  - individual differences (e.g., learning styles, skill levels, interests) are accommodated through a variety of activities/methods
  - there is variety in work, methods and students have some choice (e.g., opportunities for both group and individual work)
  - learning is active/experiential to help students “construct meaning”
  - cycles of model-try-feedback-refine anchor the learning

- **Assessment**
  - there is no mystery as to performance goals or standards
  - diagnostic assessments check for prior knowledge, skill level, and misconceptions
  - students demonstrate their understanding through “real world” applications (i.e., genuine use of knowledge and skills, tangible product, target audience)
  - assessment methods are matched to achievement targets
  - on-going, timely, and descriptive feedback is provided.
  - learners have opportunities for trial and error, reflection and revision
  - self-assessment is expected

- **Sequence & Coherence**
  - start with a “hook”, immerse the learner in a genuine problem/issue/challenge
  - move back and forth from whole to part, with increasing complexity
  - scaffold learning in “do-able” increments
  - teach as needed; don’t over-teach all of the “basics” first
  - revisit ideas – have learners rethink and revise earlier ideas/work
  - are flexible (e.g., respond to student needs; revise plan to achieve goals)

(McTighe, 2010)

A very effective way to set up successful instruction and accomplish the aforementioned components is through a process known as “backward design,” or Understanding by Design (UbD). This process is used to plan single units, year-long courses, or an entire curriculum. UbD must be linked to both CCSS and CRS in order to maximize postsecondary readiness. It is best to work collaboratively with other educators to share key findings and ideas.

**Understanding by Design (UbD)**

UbD is a three stage process which helps teachers in thinking about effective instruction through curriculum planning. It is a fluid process and not rigid or prescriptive. The goal of UbD is
student understanding. UbD is linked to CCSS and CRS and transforms these into relevant elements and assessments. This happens when students transfer their learning through authentic performance or assessment. Teachers coach understanding and support these experiences by adjusting any necessary components for optimal learning. For effectiveness, the planning must be done “backward” to align the desired results, evidence, and learning plan. UbD must be monitored and adjusted around curriculum designed and student performance. Below are the stages of backward design.

**Stage 1 - Desired Results**
- What long-term transfer goals are sought?
- What meanings should students make in order to arrive at important understandings?
- What essential questions will students explore?
- What knowledge & skill will students acquire?
- What established goals/Standards are targeted?

**Stage 2 - Evidence**
- What performances and products will reveal evidence of meaning-making and transfer?
- By what criteria will performance be assessed, in light of Stage 1 desired results?
- What additional evidence will be collected for all Stage 1 Desired Results?

**Stage 3 - Learning Plan**
- What activities, experiences, and lessons will lead to achievement of the desired results and success at the assessments?
- How will the learning plan help students of Acquisition, Meaning Making, and Transfer?
- How will the unit be sequenced and differentiated to optimize achievement for all learners?
- Are all three stages properly aligned?

As schools and educators strive to prepare students for postsecondary readiness, designing instruction must be an integral part of this process, and it should be linked to the previous academic elements listed above in this section (rigorous secondary school standards, and college readiness standards), along with the following aspects of quality instructional practices, as well as assessments to identify academic skill level.
Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)

Activity Circle
How do teachers in your school design their curriculum and instruction?
Are these approaches consistent throughout the school?
Explain the process...

Classroom Practice

Engagement

In preparing students for postsecondary readiness, a consistent classroom approach must be used by all teachers. The goal of this classroom approach is to engage students to build and develop skills. Through my experience as a classroom teacher and as an administrator, engagement is observable and captures a learner’s thinking through writing, reading, speaking and doing in the safety of an accepting school culture. Students should be engaged to make meaning out of intentional opportunities created by the classroom teacher. Some examples of what engagement looks like in a college readiness classroom are listed below:

Students are:

- Reading, critically, annotating text with pen/pencil in hand
- Writing to learn, creating, planning, problem-solving, discussing, debating, asking questions
- Constructing new knowledge and skills by building on their current knowledge and skills
- Presenting, performing, inquiring, exploring, explaining, evaluating, experimenting
- Interacting with other students, doing, moving, gesturing
- Involved in the assessment cycle
Clear Learning Objectives

Because classroom practice can be a complex and difficult thing to master, it is important to go back to the basics of teaching as it will help to simplify the practice and ensure effective lessons and quality teaching. Mike Schmoker refers to this as “How We Teach” (Schmoker, 2006).

One of the most fundamental aspects of classroom preparation is to create learning objectives. However, these learning objectives must be clear and organized. As Schmoker (2006) points out, a clear learning objective allows teachers to link their lessons to a specific skill while providing background knowledge to create student interest in the topic. It must be pointed out that learning objectives are clear, carefully worded, and guide teachers through lessons. Each learning objective is a small step in what the learner is supposed to know or be able to do. Objectives should: (1) define specific outcomes with regard to skill development and content mastery, (2) help develop and design instruction materials, (3) aid in assessing instructional goals, and (4) give students a framework from which to organize their learning. Some examples of clear learning objectives are listed below:

- Solve first-degree polynomial problems.
- Write an effective introductory paragraph for an argument.
- Make inferences/draw conclusions about a character (literary or historical).
- Compare and contrast meiosis and mitosis.

(Schmoker, 2006)

Learning Targets

A learning target is a learning outcome that answers the question, "What is the specific goal of today's instruction?" In other words, a target states what each student will be able to understand or be able to do at the end of a lesson or a series of lessons. These need to be shared with students daily. Targets are not only posted but are also explicitly stated on student work and students can accurately discuss targets when prompted.

A learning target is not an instructional objective. An instructional objective connects a series of lessons. A target guides the lesson for today and connects this learning to tomorrow and future lessons. A target is the formative assessment for each class. Some examples of clear learning targets are listed on the next page.
Learning Targets (continued…)

- Students will be able to construct a bar graph.
- Students will be able to read aloud with fluency and expression.
- Students will be able to distinguish between historical fact and opinion.
- Students will be able to identify metaphors and similes.

Table 5 shows the difference between a learning target and an instructional objective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Target</th>
<th>Instructional Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guides learning</td>
<td>Guides instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written from the student point of view</td>
<td>Unifies outcome over a series of related lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a common focus for teaching</td>
<td>Written from the teacher’s point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly connects to the formative assessment for today, which impacts instruction for tomorrow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching/Modeling/Demonstrating

Dissemination of information is another important aspect of classroom practice. This dissemination should be differentiated to accommodate all learning styles. Teachers should use what Schmoker refers to as an “anticipatory set,” which is a hook or a question that will create interest into the information that will be disseminated (Schmoker, 2006). This helps lead to active student engagement.

Schmoker points to two effective ways to disseminate information in the classroom. They are through the following learning templates:

Two Learning Templates

- *Interactive lecture and direct teaching*: Information throughout the lecture is broken down into “chunks”—the teacher talks for no more than five minutes before giving students an opportunity to process the information by talking, writing, or sharing. The teacher must ensure that every student is responding multiple times, to questions through the lecture.

- *Literacy-based lessons*: To have students read, talk, and write while focusing on any applicable text.
Schmoker emphasizes the importance of the teacher’s role throughout both of these learning templates. Teachers should circulate when students write, underline, take notes, or quick write. Classroom discussion should connect directly to learning goals and targets. While students write or discuss, they should always reference a text.

(Schmoker, 2006)

*Guided Practice*

In my experience as an educator, Guided Practice is best defined as purposeful reading, writing, and discussing/analyzing with high quality texts in all subject areas. Guided Practice is a necessary classroom tool which allows students to practice or apply what has been taught or modeled. The teacher must observe and guide student work and blend perfectly with the aforementioned practice of teaching modeling and demonstrating, as well as with the following practice of checking for understanding. Schmoker (2006) points out that teachers should allow opportunities for students to work in pairs and occasionally in groups. Guided Practice lets students process what they have learned, and allows teachers the opportunity to assess both class as well as student progress. A form of Guided Practice is that of Authentic Literacy in which the following is done throughout all subject areas:

**Authentic Literacy**

1. *Task*- The purpose for the reading  
2. *Text*- The pages from the textbook that support the task  
3. *Talk*- Discussion about what was read

(Schmoker, 2006)

*Checks for Understanding/Formative Assessment*

The last piece of Classroom Practice that best prepares students for postsecondary readiness is to repeatedly check to see if students are progressing toward the learning targets. Once again, this concept isn’t new but needs to be completed with fidelity. Schmoker (2006) refers to this step as Checks for Understanding/Formative Assessment. This can best be categorized as “the practice” portion of the unit. Students should be afforded many opportunities to practice in order to become proficient or master the learning targets. Once these targets are have been developed by students, then students should be prepared for “the game” portion of the unit, or the Summative
Assessment. This step also allows teachers to use information gathered to inform instruction and instructional pace. Below are some common forms for checking for understanding:

**Checking for Understanding**

- Circulate, observe, and listen as students work in pairs
- Call on a sampling of students or pairs *randomly* between each step (*not* calling on students who raise their hands)
- Have students signal their understanding: thumbs up or down; red, green, yellow Popsicle sticks
- Have students hold up dry-erase boards with answers/solutions
- Exit slips/Quick writes that demonstrate student learning (Schmoker, 2006)

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)*

**Activity Circle**

*To what extent do teachers at your school implement the same component of a lesson?*  
**List these components?**  
**List the components that differ.**

**Assessments**

The Assessments component of the Academic Elements section focuses on standardized summative assessments which measure individual college readiness skills. This section doesn’t focus on designing and using specific classroom formative assessments. For the purposes of this guidebook, it is assumed that implementing the aforementioned quality instructional practices will build and develop college readiness skills through classroom formative assessments.

Resources on designing and using formative assessments in the classroom are found later in section six.
As students enter school (at any level), they should be assessed as to their readiness for each particular level. Schools need to look at sources of information to identify student skills, and track progress along the way for promotion or additional support. Secondary schools across the nation aimed at preparing students for postsecondary success use standardized assessments such as EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT as part of the educational planning. The three instruments are administered at three separate points in a student’s secondary educational experience. These assessments are part of ACT’s Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS). EPAS reflects the essential skills and understandings being taught in classrooms nationwide (ACT, Inc, 2009). A description of these assessments can be found below and in Table 6:

- **EXPLORE**: prepares eighth- and ninth-graders for their high school coursework and their post–high school choices. It includes four multiple-choice tests covering English, mathematics, reading, and science.

- **PLAN**: serves as the midpoint check of academic progress in high school. It is designed to improve students' preparation for education, training, and work after high school while they still have time to adjust their high school courses.

- **ACT**: is America’s most widely accepted college entrance exam. It assesses high school students’ general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The multiple-choice tests cover four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science. The Writing Test, which is optional, measures skills in planning and writing a short essay.

### Table 6-What is the EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Program</th>
<th>Target Grades</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Content Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| EXPLORE         | Transition to High School Grades 8 or 9 | • Student Planning  
• Assessment  
• Instructional Support  
• Evaluation | • English  
• Math  
• Reading  
• Science |
| PLAN            | Midpoint High School Review Grade 10 | • Student Planning  
• Assessment  
• Instructional Support  
• Evaluation | • English  
• Math  
• Reading  
• Science |
| ACT             | Final Measure of High School Outcomes Transition to College Grades 11 and/or 12 | • Student Planning  
• Assessment  
• Instructional Support  
• Evaluation | • English  
• Math  
• Reading  
• Science  
• Writing (optional) |

(ACT, Inc, 2009)
By beginning to evaluate students’ strengths and weaknesses early in Grades 8 and 9 and continuing to assess progress through Grade 12, educators gain the information necessary to monitor and guide students as they prepare for their high school and postsecondary goals. EPAS provides schools, parents, and students with:

- a student planning component that looks at career and educational exploration and planning, and prepares students for life after secondary schooling
- an assessment component which measures knowledge in areas of English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science (and Writing in the ACT)
- an instructional support component that offers instructional support to teachers in each content area related to core subjects and college readiness standards
- an evaluation component which provides information that allows schools to research and monitor student performance over time and to assess the strengths and potential weaknesses of school programs

These assessments serve many purposes. Teachers and counselors use these assessments to identify academic strengths and areas needing improvement. They also help teachers to develop challenging curriculum for all students, and link assessment results with corresponding skills (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005). Lastly, these assessments help to build student awareness of classes needed for diploma or degree completion. Most students (70%) taking the aforementioned assessments indicated that information from these reports helped them identify necessary high school classes (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005).

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)
Checklist for Academic Elements

☐ Complete the rubric for postsecondary readiness on Academic Elements to assess current practices and programs.

☐ Form a committee to focus on the Academic Elements to review, analyze, and plan for a seamless approach to postsecondary readiness.

☐ Identify elements of effective instructional practice at your school. These elements should address consistent application of rigorous standards, assessment methods, and data collection and analysis to inform and improve instruction.

☐ Schedule professional development around gaps in quality instructional practices and assessment.

☐ Create a bank of tools/resources that capture aspects of quality instructional practices and assessment methods.

☐ Focus on 1-2 of these per term for all teachers to integrate into their practice and classroom.

☐ Allow professional development time to reflect and discuss the use of these practices along with the challenges and obstacles and next steps.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS</th>
<th>Academic Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional and organizational processes critical to student and postsecondary success are not identified. Little distinction of student learning differences is made. Some teachers believe that not all students can achieve postsecondary success.</td>
<td>1. Some data are collected on student background and performance trends. Learning gaps are noted to direct improvement of instruction. It is known that student college readiness standards must be identified. 2. College readiness standards are identified, and a continuum of learning based on standards, quality instructional practices, and assessments is created throughout the school. Data on student achievement are used throughout the school to pursue the improvement of student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students are taught the same way. There is no communication with students about their academic needs or learning styles. There are no analyses of how to improve instruction.</td>
<td>3. Teachers study effective instruction and assessment strategies to implement standards and to increase their students’ learning. Student feedback and analysis of achievement data are used in conjunction with implementation support strategies. 4. There is a systematic focus on quality instructional practices and assessment. These are implemented consistently in each classroom. Teachers support one another with peer coaching focused on implementing strategies that lead to increased achievement and the attainment of the shared vision. A progression of learning exists for all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a wide variation in student attitudes and achievement with undesirable results. There is high dissatisfaction among students with learning. Student background is used as an excuse for low student achievement.</td>
<td>1. There is some evidence that student achievement trends are available to teachers and are being used. There is much effort, but minimal observable results in improving student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers converse often with each other about increasing postsecondary readiness for all students. Increased student achievement is evident school-wide. Students and teachers conduct self-assessments to continuously improve performance. A continuum of postsecondary readiness results. All students are prepared for postsecondary success.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organize any new actions being considered for implementation at your school with this implementation template. Consider all general actions, those already begun as well as new ones, and then categorize them according to:

1. **Quick wins** - actions that can be implemented this semester or this school year
2. **Moderately difficult undertakings** - actions that need summer planning, professional development, or both
3. **Major tasks** - actions that will need two years or more for full implementation and may include quick wins and moderately difficult undertakings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Leadership Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
<th>Personalization Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
<th>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List quick wins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List a few moderately difficult undertakings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List one or two major tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Professional Development and Communication Planning**

Consider your planned school improvement actions and strategies. Identify the teams and team members who will lead the implementation and the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for success. Discuss and list specific steps and actions that school staff members will take to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of each group below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership team/Steering committee</th>
<th>Actions to develop the requisite knowledge for success</th>
<th>Actions to practice the requisite skills for success</th>
<th>Actions to develop the requisite attitudes for success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (list them)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 4:

POSTSECONDARY READINESS FRAMEWORK—SOCIAL ELEMENTS

“One of the most valuable messages in this chapter touches on how this process needs to begin early on (middle school). Currently, our educational model focuses heavily on seniors and it is erratic and unrefined.”

-Mark (High School Science Teacher)

“Parental involvement and education is a must in educating every child. If we are just doing it at school, we are missing out on supports that can be in place at home to help us in our mission of preparing students for postsecondary success.”

-Noah (College Coordinator)
Postsecondary Readiness Framework: **Social Elements**

- Only half of African-American, Latino, and Native-American youth earn a high school diploma

- In Oregon only about a third of students will enter college the fall after graduating, and only about 10% will earn a degree within 4 years

- Eighteen percent of African Americans and 10 percent of Latinos complete a four-year college degree by the time they are 29, compared to 34 percent of whites

  Wolk & Jobs for the Future, 2005

This next target addresses social elements that need to be put in place to prepare students for postsecondary success. After putting structural pieces in place to set a foundation for postsecondary readiness, along with focusing on the academic elements that teachers/staff use to better prepare students for postsecondary success; social elements are the last pieces of the postsecondary readiness framework to create an integrated system that allows a school to provide a comprehensive approach to postsecondary preparation. The social elements consist of staff and family involvement, identifying and building academic behaviors of students, and improving students’ and their families’ transition knowledge and skills (*academic awareness, college admission process, college and career culture, and tuition/financial aid*) toward postsecondary success.
Assessing Current Knowledge

Use the following rating scale to assess your current knowledge, understanding and comfort level regarding background information and research presented in this target.

- 4= I understand this social element, and it is fully implemented at my school.
- 3= I understand this social element, but it isn’t fully implemented in my school.
- 2= I can explain this social element, but I am not fully confident that it can be implemented in my school.
- 1= I do not understand this social element, and it is not being implemented in my school.

_____ 1. Family involvement is systematic and creates a postsecondary readiness culture at my school
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 2. Staff involvement is systematic and creates a postsecondary readiness culture at my school
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 3. All staff is involved in identifying and building academic behaviors of students throughout the school year
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:

_____ 4. Improving students’ and their families’ transition knowledge and skills toward postsecondary success is systematic and creates a postsecondary readiness culture at my school
Based on my rating, I may need to revisit the following:
Reflecting on Current Beliefs and Practices

Before examining the research, take some time to look at your current beliefs and practices by answering the following questions:

1. What staff members are involved in systems/programs/classes of preparing students for postsecondary success? Describe what you know of this process (Try to address the how, why, where, when and who).

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. What systems/programs are in place to involve family members in the process of preparing students for postsecondary success? Describe the process currently in place at your school.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3. What systems are in place to identify and build academic behaviors in your school? Describe what you know of these behaviors, and if there is a process to identify and build skills in this area? (Try to address the how, why, where, when and who).

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

4. When focusing on key transition knowledge and skills (see above) what resources/systems/programs are available to support students and their families? Describe the process that is currently in place at your school. Are these skills being built in a systematic manner?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Recommendations

This target addresses the following best practices for Design Question 4:

- Form a committee around the social elements of the postsecondary readiness framework to review, analyze, and plan for a seamless approach to postsecondary preparedness. Make sure to include parents, students, and staff to maximize input and participation from all stakeholders.
- Create an organizational chart with all of the resources/programs/best practices involving the social elements at your school along with the person in charge of each program. These resources/programs/best practices should be aimed to prepare all students for postsecondary success, and include an action plan for evaluation and review.

Staff Involvement

The involvement of school personnel is a critical element to help students with postsecondary planning. Counselors, teachers, principals often influence students’ educational goals and postsecondary planning. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) recommends that every secondary school have an individual adult coach to help students through their educational journey and transitions. These adult mentors monitor student’s academic progress and social development and guide them through the educational planning process.

As both economic and human resources are becoming increasingly limited in schools and school districts, it is necessary to use these resources in a different and unique manner. School counselors also play a significant role to develop educational goals, identify educational opportunities, and inform students and their parents about postsecondary options. Sometimes, however, counselors don’t get involved in postsecondary planning until twelfth grade which may be too late to help students. Unfortunately, due to the high counselor-student ratio in our high schools, counselor roles and time are limited, so their duties often are unrelated to college and career advising. Another difficulty is that counselors often lack the training and resources necessary to provide college and career advising. Because of this, teachers often help students with educational planning activities. Teachers develop strong relationships with students and advise them to take specific, challenging courses and to set educational goals to succeed both in and out of the classroom. In order to provide the proper support and guidance to students, we must redefine how we use personnel in schools. Getting students ready for postsecondary options shouldn’t rest on the counselors alone.
Creating a Culture of Interdependence

Because of the demands on school staff, the most effective way to prepare students for postsecondary success is to involve all personnel. How do you accomplish this with greater class/case loads, and increasing roles and responsibilities for all staff members? The answer lies in readjusting your view on education. Educators don’t have to work harder to accomplish postsecondary readiness, they need to work smarter. All stakeholders in education and their jobs/duties should be connected and not separated. This process needs to be deliberate. Educators need to embrace the concept of interdependence (a group of people/things depending on each other) and not independence. This creates connection from educator to another to best serve students’ needs. This begs the question: How can schools create a culture of interdependence?

Vision Compass

One method that helps educators get through obstacles in education is to simplify processes as much as possible. For example, all schools are responsible for educating students. This task can be daunting. How does one approach such a mammoth endeavor? One way is to simplify the process. As a principal of a middle college, I break the educational process in my school into four components; (1) environment and culture, (2) curriculum, (3) instruction, and (4) assessment. These components set up a vision compass.

In Section Two, or the Structural Elements of the Postsecondary Readiness Framework of this guidebook, I touched on embedding the goals and expectations of college and career readiness for all students into the mission and vision of the school. I also mentioned that the mission and vision should be inclusive of all staff members input, and contain their shared values and beliefs. This is very important to do within the vision compass to empower staff and create ownership. Categories or indicators within the vision compass should be compiled into a vision statement to help guide the school throughout the school year.

Once a shared vision is created within the vision compass, guidelines for the school year have been set. When people from outside the building walk into the school and each classroom, they should see the indicators of the vision compass come to life. This process begins to create a
culture of interdependence with the staff as they are all striving to accomplish what they value and believe within the *vision compass*.

After the *vision compass* and vision statement have been created, the work toward interdependence is just beginning. The next important step is to create committees or vision panels containing all staff members in the school. All staff members are required to pick one or more of the vision components they would like to focus on for the year. For example, counselors may choose the environment and culture component, while a teacher may choose the instruction component. By doing this, the vision of the school should come to life and not just be a statement posted on a wall.

Once the vision panels are created, the process toward interdependence is underway. Vision panels should meet bi-monthly or as needed to prioritize indicators within the *vision compass*. After members prioritize the indicators, they then will create goals, an action plan, a timeline, and an assessment tool to measure the effectiveness of their work. Their work and progress will be presented to the staff for input throughout the year at staff meetings. At the end of the year, members of each vision panel will meet to reflect on their work and progress throughout the year. Each vision panel will present their findings and reflections to the staff. The staff will collectively look at all of the components of the *vision compass* and modify them as necessary. If any modification occurs, then the vision statement will be rewritten with all staff input. It is important to note that this culture of interdependency is ongoing and should change to always fit the needs of the school.
*For the Activity Circles, engage in a conversation with your team around the topic to help connect your knowledge to practice. This is will help build context and improve understanding of each topic or theme.

**Activity Circle**

*How are your current mission and vision statements addressing postsecondary preparedness?*

*How are they creating buy-in among staff members?*

---

**Family Involvement**

The encouragement of parents is one of the strongest factors in helping students develop their educational plans (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000). Most parents expect their children to earn college degrees and enter rewarding careers (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005). Parents are key when it comes to their children’s college-going behaviors (McAlister, Mevs, Lee, Rodriguez, & Kim, 2012). A study done in the late 1980’s shows that more than three quarters (78%) of all parents surveyed expected their children to attend college and over half of them (58%) expected them to finish (Ingels, Curtin, Kaufman, Alt, & Chen, 2002). With this foundational piece in place, it is important to involve parents in the planning of the future of their child. Parents who have timely information about educational planning increase their child’s school success, facilitate college planning, and increase the likelihood that their child will attend college (Cota-Robles & Gordan, 1999).

The problem begins when students enter middle and high school. There is a disconnect between parents’ educational expectations for their children and their postsecondary planning activities (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005). This is especially true for parents who have not attended college. Wimberly and Noeth (2005) note that these parents may lack the necessary skills and resources
to assist their children with educational planning. Some parents are never or rarely informed or involved in educational decisions and as a result students have to rely on school personnel and peers to help them through this process of educational planning (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005).

Schools today are beginning to realize that parental involvement is critical in the development of students and are taking steps to inform and involve parents. This is happening through informational nights where schools provide students and parents information about workplace and college admission requirements, secondary school classes, and postsecondary options (Wimberly & Noeth, 2005).

While progress is being made to involve families in education, this process needs to become more inclusive with the educational system. Family involvement needs to be as important as classes required for graduation. To make this happen, educators need to realize that informational nights and newsletters are important, but shouldn’t be the sole factors in family involvement. This process is complex and needs development and time to become a quality program within the school.

**Developing a Family Involvement Program**

As schools begin to plan for systematic family involvement, the group of leaders responsible for this process should understand the school’s needs, and provide a framework for defining actions to address these needs. To begin with, each site should develop a logic model and needs assessment prior to any family involvement activities. As mentioned above, buy-in is critical to the success any program. This buy-in must include all stakeholders (including parents the program is intended to serve), as well as adequate time for implementation. Planning for successful family involvement requires selecting programs, activities and strategies that are effective, targeted and appropriate to the site and participants. Lastly, effective programming require both formative (periodic and ongoing) and summative (final or year-end) evaluation (Oregon Department of Education, 2006).

**Getting Started-Preliminary Steps**

The first step to improving parent, family, and community involvement in your school is to assemble a committee composed of:
• Parents who represent any major groups at the school
• Community members and agencies
• The principal
• Teachers
• Students
• District staff

The next step for the committee is to assess the situation. Data should be collected to inform the members of the committee about the status of partnerships. After the school has looked carefully at the information gathered, the committee will prioritize, assign tasks, and plan to evaluate the progress of the program. The data that is collected should address the following questions:

• Is this a school with a high percentage of single-parent homes?
• Is this a school with many English language learners?
• Is this a school with a high mobility rate?
• Are there many families where at least one parent is predominately in the home?
• Is there a high percentage of homes where violence, abuse, addiction, physical or mental illness is present?
• What educational goals do families have for their children?

After assessing data pertaining to the families of the school, the school’s achievement data should be reviewed by the committee, and then it should be put into a clear, easy-to-understand report. This report should be sent to family members for input on successes, improvements, and contributions they can make to help move the school in the right direction. Once this is completed, then the committee can move forward to look into the following questions:

• What are our school’s goals for improving our school, family, and community partnerships over the next three years?
• How can we effectively involve families and the community in the decision-making process?
• Do decision-makers have the appropriate research and training to make informed decisions?
• Do materials need to be translated?
• Do translators need to be provided at meetings?
• Does childcare need to be provided while parents attend meetings or volunteer at school?
• Should school personnel be making home visits? If so, how?
• Is student attendance a problem?
• What kind of support do teachers need?
• What are the achievement trends?
• How can outreach to families and the community link to the academic needs of the school?
• What do parents say about past successful events?
• What activities do parents feel would be most beneficial?
• How can we most effectively use community resources?

Types of Family Involvement

After these preliminary steps have been taken, the foundation to family involvement is set, and now the committee can move forward and look deeper into the different types of family involvement. Table 7 shows the types of family involvement in schools.

Table 7-Types of Family Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Involvement</th>
<th>Engaging Parents of Students With Disabilities</th>
<th>Reaching Out to Families</th>
<th>Ongoing Communications</th>
<th>Special Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communicating With Families</td>
<td>• Create a School or District Advisory Council for Special Education</td>
<td>• Early Fall Mailings</td>
<td>• Newsletters</td>
<td>• Involving Parents With Limited English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volunteering</td>
<td>• Create a Mentor Parent Program</td>
<td>• Home-School Handbooks</td>
<td>• Positive Phone Calls</td>
<td>• Involving Single and Working Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning at Home</td>
<td>• Create a Parent Transition Program</td>
<td>• Open House</td>
<td>• Homework and Home Learning</td>
<td>• Involving Fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing Parents’ Participation in Decision-making and Leadership Roles</td>
<td>• Offer Community Education Courses</td>
<td>• Special Practices and Programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing Parent Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborating With the Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Oregon Department of Education, 2006)
Activity Circle
Does family involvement at your school represent all groups of students?

To what extent does data drive the decision-making of this involvement?

Academic Behaviors
Another social element important to postsecondary readiness focuses on academic behaviors. Academic behaviors can be defined as noncognitive skills or a set of qualities that includes persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit and self-confidence (Tough, 2009). Casillas et al. (2011) state that these noncognitive factors include a range of attitudinal, behavioral, emotional, and personality characteristics that are necessary to function well in school and work. Conley (2012) includes these academic behaviors as one of his four keys to college and career readiness. He refers to them as key as learning skills and techniques. This key involves the ownership of learning (goal setting, persistence, self-awareness etc…) and specific learning techniques (time management, study skills, collaborative learning etc…). For the purposes of this guidebook, I will use the term “academic behavior” to categorize the full range of noncognitive factors.

Research shows that a combination of noncognitive factors, academic performance, and standardized achievement factors are predictive of first-year college academic success and retention (Robbins et al., 2004). The first step toward building academic behaviors in schools is to identify at-risk students and provide supports to assist them in their educational development.
Assessing Academic Behaviors

What happens when students come to school for the first time? How do educators know what behavioral skills they have acquired? Do schools have an educational profile of each student? These questions and more reveal that schools aren’t prepared for the social development of each student. Many schools implement quality instructional practices, and in these practices, teachers assess student skill throughout the class period/term to indicate individual academic skill. These assessments inform instruction so that every student can grow in skill level. If this is true in many classrooms and considered a quality instructional practice, then why aren’t we assessing academic behaviors of each student when they enroll, so we can measure the effectiveness of the school for student growth? One way of assessing academic behaviors is through ENGAGE.

ENGAGE

A tool has been developed to identify these academic behaviors and help educators to build these skills. Schools across the nation are using ENGAGE developed by ACT to identify youth who are at academic risk by supplementing standardized achievement testing with measures of important academic behaviors (Casillas et al., 2011). Casillas points out that ENGAGE is a low-stakes, self-report inventory organized into three categories shown to be indicators of academic performance and persistence (Robbins et al., 2004). The three categories are:

- **Motivation** includes personal characteristics that help students to succeed academically by focusing and maintaining energies on goal-directed activities.
- **Social engagement** includes interpersonal factors that influence students’ successful integration into their environment.
- **Self-regulation** includes the thinking processes and emotional responses of students that govern how well they monitor, regulate, and control their behavior related to school and learning.

(Casillas et al., 2011)

ENGAGE is available for use with grades 6-9 and grades 10-12, and captures students’ perceptions of themselves, their families’ commitment to education, school-related factors, and important behavioral indicators (Casillas et al., 2011). Results from ENGAGE (grades 6-9) produces a report that provides an academic success index which estimates the probability that a student will be academically successful (defined as obtaining a high school GPA of 2.0 or above) (Casillas et al., 2011). Results from ENGAGE (grades 10-12) provides a report that offers an
academic success index which estimates the probability that a student will earn a college GPA greater than 2.0 and a retention index which estimates the probability of a student returning to college for a second year. Casillas et al (2011) note that with the student-level information provided by ENGAGE, educators can identify students who may be at-risk of experiencing academic difficulties and connect them to interventions based on their areas of need.

**Key Learning Skills and Techniques**

Conley realizes the importance of building academic behaviors to prepare students for postsecondary success. As noted above, he refers to these behaviors in his key learning skills and techniques. Conley breaks up key learning skills and techniques into two broad categories: *student ownership of learning*, which includes goal setting, persistence, self-awareness, motivation, progress monitoring, help seeking and self-efficacy; and *learning techniques*, such as time management, study skills, strategic reading, memorizing techniques, collaborative learning, technology skills, and self-monitoring (D. T. Conley, 2012). Postsecondary instructors at a wide range of two- and four-year institutions stress the importance of these key learning skills and techniques across subject areas and programs (D. Conley & McGaughy, 2012). Tables 8 and 9 below show this categorization of key learning skills and techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8-Key Learning Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership of Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Know Yourself</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Be self-aware: Find out your interests, passions, skills, and ambitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Know what you need to achieve based on self-awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Motivated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have the mindset to achieve your goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Don’t give up, especially when something does not come as easily to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitor Performance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Know how well you are really doing. Gauge your true skill level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ask for Help</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Know when you are stuck, then get help. Don’t view this as a weakness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Show self-efficacy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learn how to control the things you can control. Then control them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D. Conley, 2012)
Application

The Academic Behaviors should be addressed at each school level from elementary through to college. These skills must be developed and refined every year in a systematic way. The most effective way to build these skills is to have a comprehensive approach toward building academic behaviors in both the classroom and throughout the school. Students who struggle in school not only have to build these skills in their classes, but they need to be reinforced through support classes and with support personnel such as learning specialists. If the approach to these academic behaviors in each classroom is limited, then programs must be created to address these skills with all staff buy-in and participation. An example of this would be a learning center where students with low academic and/or behavioral skills would receive extra support to help build these skills through: individual tutoring, guidance and support, small group mentoring, and by creating an awareness of student ownership, and explicitly practicing individual learning techniques.

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)

Activity Circle

How does your school assess academic behaviors?

To what extent does your school build these skills in a systematic manner?

Table 9-Key Learning Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Learning Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manage Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study for Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Strategically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn Collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D. Conley, 2012)
Key Transition Knowledge and Skills

The last aspect of social elements within the postsecondary readiness framework is working with parents and students to build knowledge and skills around the theme of life beyond high school. Conley (2012) refers to this as key transition knowledge and skills. This key is necessary to navigate the transition from secondary school to postsecondary institutions. This information is knowledge that isn’t often accessible to all students (D. T. Conley, 2012). Families, which are often historically under-represented in higher education or certain career pathways, are who usually get left out of this knowledge. The themes within this key are: Academic Awareness, College Admissions Process, College and Career Culture, and Tuition and Financial Aid. Table 10 below shows these themes, their definitions and components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10- Key Transition Knowledge and Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Academic Awareness**

Students understand the range of expectations and structure of college coursework. They engage in preplanning and get experiences needed to apply and be admitted to college.

- **College and Career Expectations**
  - Plagiarism, knowledge of college placement tests, requirements to get into university in my state, high expectations for all students, knowing professors will have different expectations than secondary schools

- **College and Career Preparation**
  - HS graduation requirements, transcript review, studying for PLAN/PSAT, challenging work given

**College Admissions Process**

Students gather information, navigate the admissions process, and take steps to apply to college.

- **College Application Process**
  - Application essay, college applications, understand own strengths and weaknesses in relation to application essay

- **College Selection**
  - College research, campus visits, difference between 2 and 4 year colleges

**College and Career Culture**

Students understand how to navigate the social environment of college and careers, including how to secure resources they need to manage emotionally, socially, and academically (e.g., writing center, health center, social organizations).

- **Career Awareness**
  - Types of careers, education needed for my career, resume, cover letter, career interest survey, set career goals based on interests,

- **College Awareness**
  - How college is different from HS, talked with college students, diversity in college life, coping strategies for when they go to college

**Tuition and Financial Aid**

Students gather information, navigate the financial aid process, and take steps to apply for aid.

- **Financial Aid Awareness**
  - Research scholarships, FAFSA

- **Tuition Awareness**
  - Knowledge of costs of attending state universities, in-state vs out-of-state tuition, 2 year vs. 4 year costs, private vs. public

(D. Conley, 2012)
Assessing Key Transition Knowledge and Skills

What data do schools collect to measure Key Transition Knowledge and Skills? Is this data indicative of a systematic approach? How are the approaches to build these skills assessed? Are these assessments measuring some or all of the aforementioned knowledge and skills? These are questions that must be answered in order to create a postsecondary readiness culture. Due to limited resources, many schools provide a scattered approach toward building this knowledge and these skills. This scattered approach isn’t woven into the fabric of the school and aligned with proper assessment methods to help inform the school of its effectiveness in preparing students for postsecondary success. This process should be researched and include all school personnel to create a culture of postsecondary success. One way of providing a comprehensive approach to assessing college readiness skills is through CampusReady.

CampusReady

CampusReady looks at skills needed for students to succeed in college. It helps schools identify areas of strength in addressing these skills, along with providing feedback to implement strategies not yet being used. CampusReady gives schools an opportunity to:

- Gain an understanding of what students do within the dimensions of college readiness.
- Learn what knowledge and skills associated with college readiness are currently part of the school’s processes, practices, and curriculum.
- Identify specific ways to increase the alignment of the curriculum with the content and skills that students must know and be able to master for college success.
- Receive individualized, actionable recommendations to foster improvement, including connections to targeted resources.
- Obtain knowledge of how individual school’s practices compare to the best practices identified in other schools nationwide.
- Provide faculty and staff with new ideas for developing college readiness among students as they respond to the diagnostic items, which were identified as effective practices in a nationwide study.

Application

Key Transition Knowledge and Skills are critical to build in schools, and are often left to the counselors. All school staff and parent involvement is necessary to the postsecondary success of every student. Schools must find systematic ways to include this involvement into its educational programs. These skills are as important as both academic and behavioral skills. If the approach to the transition knowledge and skills in schools is limited to volunteers in college
and career centers, informational nights, and counselor meetings, then programs must be created to address these skills with all staff buy-in and participation. An example of this would be an advisory program.

An advisory program is defined as an effort to ensure that all students have at least one adult who knows them well and that all students belong to a small interactive group (Manning & Saddlemire, 1998). In these advisory programs, Manning and Saddlemire (1998) point out that educators and counselors work collaboratively to improve the educational experiences and overall well-being of the students. Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) have done work on designing and implementing effective secondary school programs. Advisory programs play an important role in a school’s overall academic and student support services plan (“Advisory Programs,” 2012). They help to create a personalized learning environment where all students are well known by at least one adult. ESR (2012) stresses the importance of how advisory provides a structure and a set of practices for monitoring and supporting students’ academic progress and college and career readiness throughout their time in secondary schools. Advisory programs allow opportunities for parental involvement through student-led conferences, where the focus is on the student and his/her educational and postsecondary planning. When programs like this are implemented, then volunteers in college and career centers, informational nights, and counselor meetings help to enrich and supplement the growth of every student.

**Support Outside of School**

**Grants**

Grants are available to address the lack of knowledge and support (key transition knowledge and skills) some students have around applying for, funding, and enrolling in college. The U.S. Department of Education launched the College Access Challenge Grant Program which aims to increase the number of low-income students who are ready for college (McAlister et al., 2012). McAlister et al. (2012) notes that other programs such as Project Grad USA and College Goal Sunday look to develop the college knowledge students and their families need for postsecondary success.
Community

Community-based organizations (CBOs) play an active role in supporting students with key transition knowledge and skills (McAlister et al., 2012). As McAlister et al. (2012) note, CBOs step in to bridge gaps in college knowledge for students in high-needs schools where few of their peers apply to college. The College Board also does a great job of addressing the key transition knowledge and skills by keeping parents informed and equipped to make college decisions (McAlister et al., 2012). Partnership between The College Board and the American Council on Education, and the Ad Council have developed the KnowHow2Go Initiative, which serves as a resource to help students and parents plan for postsecondary success (McAlister et al., 2012).

*Take some time and engage in a conversation with your team around the following question(s)
Checklist for Social Elements

☐ Complete the rubric for postsecondary readiness on Social Elements to assess current practices and programs.

☐ Form a committee to focus on the Social Elements to review, analyze, and plan for a seamless approach to postsecondary readiness.

☐ Create an organizational chart with all of the resources/programs/best practices involving the Social Elements at your school.

☐ Identify staff members and their involvement with systems/programs/classes of preparing students for postsecondary success. Identify how other staff members can become involved in this process.

☐ Identify a parent(s) and community member(s) to serve on this committee to create a system involving families and community members.

☐ Prioritize a list of academic behaviors to focus on throughout the school year. Create a system for integration and evaluation of building these skills.
## Rubric for Postsecondary Readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approach</strong></td>
<td>There is no system for involvement of parents, staff and community. The focus of learning is toward academic standards and not building academic behaviors of students. Transition knowledge and skills are left up to parents and students to figure out for themselves.</td>
<td>School has knowledge of why parental education and community involvement are important, but there is no effort to build a structure for this. Academic behaviors are seen as important but aren't implemented systematically. Transition knowledge and skills are left up to a few school members.</td>
<td>School seeks effective win-win parental and community involvement to implement the school's vision. Systematic approaches are made toward building academic skills school-wide. Desired outcomes are clearly identified. A solid plan and timeline for building transition knowledge and skills among students and families exists.</td>
<td>Parent, staff, and community partnerships become integrated across all student groupings. Students begin to help students build academic behaviors among all student groupings. The benefits of these partnerships are known by all. Student learning regularly takes place beyond the school walls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation</strong></td>
<td>Barriers are erected to close out involvement of outsiders. Staff believes that students should have acquired academic behaviors prior to enrollment at the school, and if students don’t possess these skills it will show up with lower grades or referrals. Staff refers parents and students to community resources on transition knowledge and skills but don’t provide it.</td>
<td>A team is assigned to look into parental education and community involvement. Academic behaviors are implemented through a personality-driven process. Newsletters and informational nights are sparse and infrequent to disseminate transition knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>There is a systematic utilization of parents, staff, and community to build postsecondary readiness. Areas in which academic behaviors are implemented and benefit student learning are clear. Parents, staff, and community begin to realize how they can support each other in achieving school goals. Staff understands what parents and the community need from the partnership.</td>
<td>Partnership development is articulated across all student groupings. Parents, staff, and students work together in an innovative fashion to increase student learning and to prepare students for postsecondary success. Partnerships are evaluated for continuous improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>There is little or no involvement or education for parents. Stakeholders see school as a knowledge factory for students limited to academic standards. School is a closed, isolated system based on subject content knowledge.</td>
<td>Effort is given to create programs and best practices around the Social Elements. Some spotty trends emerge and stakeholders recognize that improvements are being made.</td>
<td>Some substantial gains are achieved with the partnership of parents, staff, and community. Gains in student satisfaction with learning and school are clearly related to partnerships. Postsecondary readiness increases can be attributed to this systematic approach.</td>
<td>Previously non-achieving students enjoy learning with excellent achievement. Community and home become common places for student learning, while school becomes a place where parents come for further education. Partnerships enhance what the school does for students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organize any new actions being considered for implementation at your school with this implementation template. Consider all general actions, those already begun as well as new ones, and then categorize them according to:

1. **Quick wins** - actions that can be implemented this semester or this school year
2. **Moderately difficult undertakings** - actions that need summer planning, professional development, or both
3. **Major tasks** - actions that will need two years or more for full implementation and may include quick wins and moderately difficult undertakings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Leadership Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
<th>Personalization Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
<th>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Specific Strategies/Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>List quick wins</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List a few moderately difficult undertakings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>List one or two major tasks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Professional Development and Communication Planning**

Consider your planned school improvement actions and strategies. Identify the teams and team members who will lead the implementation and the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for success. Discuss and list specific steps and actions that school staff members will take to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of each group below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Actions to develop the requisite knowledge for success</th>
<th>Actions to practice the requisite skills for success</th>
<th>Actions to develop the requisite attitudes for success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership team/Steering committee</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty colleagues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District personnel</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community leaders</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(list them)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 5:

APPLICATION OF POSTSECONDARY READINESS

“It seems clear from this chapter that a broad approach is required. All three elements must be implemented and evaluated at once.”

-Sarah (High School Language Arts Teacher)

“Understanding by design!!!!”

-Amy (High School Math)
Design Question 5
What does a comprehensive approach to college and career readiness look like?

Target 5

Application of Postsecondary Readiness

“The holy grail of college readiness would be an integrated system that provides all of this information to students in a progressive, developmentally appropriate fashion so that they have a sense a continuous sense of how well they are being prepared—and are preparing themselves for college.”

Conley, 2007

This next target addresses the application of the three elements of the postsecondary readiness framework within a high school. This section gives the reader examples and ideas on how a high school provides a comprehensive approach to college and career readiness. Because a comprehensive approach to college and career readiness is complex, this section highlights the elements of the postsecondary readiness framework in one school that may or may not be applicable to other schools. However, if a school’s mission is to prepare students for postsecondary options, many of the best practices in this section can transfer to any school regardless of the level or size.

This target is broken down into the three elements of the postsecondary readiness framework: structural, academic, and social. Within these elements, are best practices that a middle college implements to prepare students for postsecondary success. This section will provide readers the opportunity to see practical applications of the postsecondary readiness framework.
Clackamas Middle College

Clackamas Middle College (CMC) is a four-year high school college transition program enrolling 300 students in grades 9-12. It is accredited by AdvancED. CMC is designed to give students the opportunity to earn both high school and college credits simultaneously with the goal of earning a high school diploma, a transfer degree, or certificate of completion.

CMC students are diverse. Students enrolling in Clackamas Middle College are interested in success beyond high school. There is a personal interest in college or career-related programs while completing high school graduation requirements. Students know that when they leave our school, they will be prepared for post-secondary success. This is evident as all of our graduates leave with college transcripts, college credits and college transfer degrees or college certificates.

Structural Element: Best Practices

Mission, Vision, Purpose, Goals, Shared Values and Beliefs

Creating the mission and vision, along with determining the shared values and beliefs, and core purpose of the school is guided by Education for the Future (EFF), and Victoria Bernhardt’s (Section 6) work on Continuous School Improvement. It is through this work and attendance at EFF’s Summer Institute that guides CMC’s direction.

Core Values

Prior to the first week of school for students, staff at the school participates in an activity that will set the course and direction for the school. Staff will begin to brainstorm and document personal values and beliefs about: What are the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and environment factors that support effective learning for Clackamas Middle College students? Once consensus around the core values and beliefs for the school is reached, then they should be documented.

Core Purpose

The next step in developing a mission and vision for the school is to identify the core purpose of the school. Staff should brainstorm and document personal ideas about the purpose of the school. Make sure to look for commonalities, reach consensus, and document the core purpose for the school.

Mission Statement

After the core values and beliefs, and the core purpose have been created by the staff, the next step is to create a mission statement for the school. The first thing to do is to review the current mission statement. The staff will use the core values and beliefs, and purpose to draft the mission of the
As long as the purpose is clear, the process can proceed without the mission statement completely written out. It is the purpose that is most important. Form a committee to write the actual mission statement. Once the statement is created, review it with the whole staff for buy-in.

Vision Statement
To create the vision statement, staff members brainstorm and document personal visions for the school in terms of what the school would look like, sound like, feel like if we were living our core values and beliefs, purpose, and mission. These visions should be broken down into the following components: curriculum, instruction, assessment, and culture and environment. Once these are listed, look for commonalities, reach consensus, and document the vision for each category. After this process is complete, someone will need to draft a shared vision statement for the school.

School Goals
Once the shared vision is completed, attention must be turned to school goals and the outcomes of the vision. For each school, there should only be two or three school goals. It is recommended to have an academic goal and a social goal. For example, CMC’s goals are: (1) Every student feels emotionally and academically safe and is part of an accepting school culture. (2) Every student progresses academically toward college and career-related opportunities systematically throughout the year.

Tips for Creating a Shared Vision
In order to make the vision come to life in the school, make sure to document the shared vision and post it around the school. Make sure all staff members have a copy. A rubric or assessment tool needs to be developed that will describe the evolution and implementation of the vision in the school and in classrooms.

Develop a plan to implement the vision. Include an action plan along with professional development required to implement the vision, materials to purchase, and support mechanisms for implementation, such as peer coaching.

When integrating the shared vision into the curriculum and instruction of the school, grade level/subject area teams adapt the vision into real terms for each teacher. Check across grade level teams to ensure a continuum of learning that makes sense. Determine a structure and time for grade level meetings and across grade level meetings.
School leaders need to determine a leadership structure to implement and monitor the vision. For example, at CMC, we have broken our vision into the four components of *curriculum, instruction, assessment, and culture and environment*. Each staff member in the school signs up to be part of at least one component. These groups are called vision panels and the members are responsible for monitoring and implementing the shared vision. They meet weekly and use the following questions to help guide their work:

- What professional development is needed and when?
- What materials are needed to implement the vision?
- What other things need to be done to implement the vision?
- How will the implementation of the vision be supported?
- How can progress be measured?
- How do we document changes in the vision from year to year?

**Diagnostics and Data**

The first week of school, all students take part in diagnostics/assessments to help identify each students’ social and academic skills. All students participate in ACT’s ENGAGE, EXPLORE, and PLAN to give staff an idea of student skill pertaining to academics, behavior, and transitional knowledge. This information is put into a student profile to help assess the growth of skills in their time at CMC. Every student at CMC has a profile and portfolio that marks not only the progress of their skills but their movement throughout our system. This data allows us to provide extra support for students struggling in specific areas, while recognizing the students who need to matriculate to college and career programs within our system. Figures 5-7 on the next page show examples of the ENGAGE and EXPLORE diagnostic used at CMC.
Sample Student
Tested on August 30, 2011
11th Grade - ID 926098433

SAMPLE HIGH SCHOOL Class/section: 006

ENGAGE Grades 10-12 measures personal, behavioral, and academic skills critical to high school and college achievement. Low scores on ENGAGE represent areas that, when improved, may increase your grades and make it easier to focus on being successful as you transition into college. This report is designed to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses in order to ensure that you are successful in your academic career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCALE</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>PERCENTILES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic self-confidence</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to college</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal striving</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activity</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steadiness</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social connection</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic discipline</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General determination</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study skills</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **ENGAGE INDICES**
  - Probability estimates range from 0 to 1; indices do not appear on student reports.
  - **Academic Success Index**: 0.49 (17% ile)
  - **Retention Index**: 0.66 (27% ile)

**Figure 7-EXPLORE**

- **Composite Score**: 15
  - **English**: 16
    - Usage/Mechanics (1-12): 09
    - Rhetorical Skills (1-12): 08
  - **Mathematics**: 14
  - **Reading**: 16
  - **Science**: 15

- **In the U.S. (Fall 2011)**
  - In Your School: 60%
  - In Your State: 63%
  - 75% (76%)
  - 81% (84%)
  - 84% (77%)
  - 40% (51%)
  - 78% (77%)
  - 36% (44%)
After student skill has been initially identified at CMC, students who have been diagnosed with low social and academic skills are placed into a Learning Center for one hour a day for extra support and receive elective credit. The Learning Center was created to help students build and reinforce postsecondary readiness skills.

The Learning Center is staffed by an academic mentor who conducts lessons and discussions designed to help build college readiness skills and techniques. The mentor monitors and collects data on student grades, attendance, and homework completion. This information is analyzed weekly and presented to both students and staff of CMC. This data will inform any changes that need to occur in the structure and content of the Learning Center. To support each student, the mentor attends meetings involving students, parents, staff and learning specialists.

Lessons in Learning Center are student driven while the academic mentor provides prompts and facilitates discussion. Students should regularly utilize reflection. In general, the format should be:

- Mentor poses a question or topic.
- Students reflect on the topic through writing
- Students re-read their response, highlighting key information
- Students share with a partner or small group
- Pairs or groups share with the larger class

In the Learning Center, the academic mentor should model college readiness behavior. For example: reflecting students, and participating in student groups. This creates buy-in from participants in the Learning Center and personalizes the learning and skill building.

**Goals of the Learning Center**

The goals of the Learning Center are to develop key learning skills and techniques students need to be successful at the college level. These skills and techniques are listed on the following page in Table 11 and 12.
Table 11-Key Learning Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Learning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know Yourself</td>
<td>• Be self-aware-Find out your interests, passions, skills, and ambitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Goals</td>
<td>• Know what you need to achieve based on self-awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Motivated</td>
<td>• Have the mindset to achieve your goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persist</td>
<td>• Don’t give up, especially when something does not come as easily to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor Performance</td>
<td>• Know how well you are really doing. Gauge your true skill level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask for Help</td>
<td>• Know when you are stuck, then get help. Don’t view this as a weakness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show self-efficacy</td>
<td>• Learn how to control the things you can control. Then control them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D. Conley, 2012)

Table 12-Key Learning Techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Learning Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Manage Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Study for Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Memorize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Read Strategically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn Collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D. Conley, 2012)

Assessments and Evaluations

Ongoing assessments will be used to properly monitor and assess the success of the Learning Center. Daily, students fill out brief check-in forms. To encourage monitoring performance, students check their grades and attendance online and address the following:

• Classes enrolled
• Grades in classes
• Absences
• Missing assignments

Data from these check-in forms are shown to students the first day of the week. The academic mentor and students reflect on this data to continue progress or make any necessary changes. The data also serves to measure whether the goals of the Learning Center are being met, to inform decisions for improvement, and to increase student performance.
**Academic Element: Best Practices**

**Understanding by Design (UbD)**

As mentioned in Section Three, designing lessons and units are at the heart of curriculum and instruction. A very effective way to set up successful instruction and accomplish the aforementioned components is through a process known as “backward design,” or Understanding by Design (UbD). This process is used to plan single units, year-long courses, or an entire curriculum. UbD must be linked to both CCSS and CRS in order to maximize postsecondary readiness. It is best to work collaboratively with other educators to share key findings and ideas.

The design process involves teachers planning in three stages, each with a focusing question:

1. **Stage 1** - What is worthy and requiring of understanding?
2. **Stage 2** - What is evidence of understanding?
3. **Stage 3** - What learning experiences and teaching promote understanding, interest and excellence?

Figure 8 below is a tool used by staff at CMC to help guide teachers in creating a postsecondary readiness curriculum.

**Figure 8-Understanding by Design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1 — Desired Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Established Goals:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What relevant goals (e.g., content standards, course or program objectives, learning outcomes) will this design address?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understandings:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will understand that...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the big ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What specific understandings about them are desired?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What misunderstandings are predictable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential Questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students will know...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What should they eventually be able to do as a result of such knowledge and skills?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 2 — Assessment Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Tasks:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Through what authentic performance tasks will students demonstrate the desired understandings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• By what criteria will performances of understanding be judged?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Evidence:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Through what other evidence (e.g., quizzes, tests, academic prompts, observations, homework, journals) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How will students reflect upon and self-assess their learning?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 3 — Learning Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Activities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What learning experiences and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results? How will the design:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W</strong> = Help the students know Where the unit is going and What is expected? Help the teacher know Where the students are coming from (prior knowledge, interests)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H</strong> = Hook all students and Hold their interest?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong> = Equip students, help them Experience the key ideas and Explore the issues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong> = Provide opportunities to Rethink and Revise their understandings and work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong> = Allow students to Evaluate their work and its implication’s?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong> = Be Tailored (personalized) to the different needs, interests, and abilities of learners?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O</strong> = Be Organized to maximize initial and sustained engagement as well as effective learning?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(McTighe, 2010)
**Key Cognitive Strategies**

Below is a college ready task created by EPIC where students connect the Key Cognitive Strategies with Key Content Knowledge. Staff at Clackamas Middle College have taken authentic assessments like these and modified them to fit into their vision of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

**Task**

*Students will research adolescents’ financial literacy and will identify one area of personal finance that adolescents should understand more clearly. Topics might include budgeting, saving for college, planning for taxes, or investing one’s income wisely. Students will then conduct research to educate themselves about this topic and identify the most important knowledge and information to share with other adolescents. They will create a brochure designed for ninth graders at their school to educate them about this topic and will also write a speech to teach the ninth graders about it.*

**Time Frame**

*Plan about one to two weeks for students to complete the task. Schedule in-class time for students to complete their research and word process their book reviews. Other work may be in or out of class, at teacher discretion.*

**Common Core State Standards Addressed**

**Standards for English Language Arts Practice**

**Grades 11-12, Reading Informational Text**

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
Grades 11-12, Writing

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Grades 11-12, Speaking & Listening

- Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Prerequisite English Language Arts Knowledge and Skills

Use the following list of assumed knowledge and skills to determine the appropriateness of this task for your students, in order to make it a fair assessment.

- How to create a brochure (using page-layout software or physical cut-and-paste techniques)
- How to interpret data that is represented in graphs and charts
- How to identify relevant sources
- How to identify the main idea and most relevant pieces of information about a technical topic for a particular audience

Each authentic performance task is broken down into sections to help teachers and students chunk specific skills toward college readiness. As each student gradually moves throughout each task, they are consistently checking for precision and accuracy to ensure college ready skills through the final draft. The performance expectations to guide this task are as follows:

Problem Formulation

- Hypothesize
  - Write a hypothesis that contains a cause-and-effect or thesis statement.
  - Be sure that your hypothesis or thesis is written so that it might be able to solve the problem in the task.
  - Be sure that your hypothesis or thesis makes sense and is complete.
- Strategize
  - Be sure that these strategies work with the subject area.
  - Be sure that your strategy or strategies address the problem in the task.

Research

- Identify
  - Decide on a method for searching for information that you think will work with the problem outlined in the task.
Be sure that all the sources you might use are related to the problem.
Be sure that you have chosen enough sources to address your hypothesis or thesis

- **Collect**
  - Decide on a method for searching for information that you think will work with the problem outlined in the task.
  - Be sure that all the sources you might use are related to the problem.
  - Be sure that you have chosen enough sources to address your hypothesis or thesis

**Interpretation**

- **Analyze**
  - Be sure that your analysis method will work well with the problem outlined in the task.
  - Use an analysis method you remember using or one you develop to complete this section.
  - Check that your analysis helps you support or challenge your hypothesis or thesis.

- **Evaluate**
  - Select your findings that you think will help you complete the task.
  - Put your findings together in a way that you think will address your hypothesis or thesis.
  - Be sure that you have enough findings to support or challenge your hypothesis or thesis. Describe any changes in your thinking and your reasons for them.

**Communication**

- **Organize**
  - Use a logical organizational structure to create your final work product.
  - Make sure your work product is organized the same way throughout the product.
  - Use formats and conventions that fit with the subject area, as you create your final work product.

- **Construct**
  - Be sure that you use the results from Problem Formulation, Research, and Interpretation in your final product.
  - Make sure that each of your drafts gets better with each version. Double check that you have considered all the feedback you received.

**Precision and Accuracy**

- **Monitor**
  - Be sure that your work is precise and follows the rules and conventions.
  - Properly record or document your references.

- **Confirm**
  - Check for technical and grammatical accuracy.
  - Double check that you have followed all directions.
To assess each task EPIC has developed a scoring guide to set expectations. The scoring guide is intended to develop student skill throughout high school to help students be college ready by the end of high school. The guide is based on a Novice-Expert scale. The following describes the indicators under each performance expectation.

**Emerging Novice-1** Complete at least most of the work and make a good effort to follow directions.

**Novice-2** Complete the task and follow directions and rules well. Make sure that the information you provide in your task is correct.

**Accomplished Novice-3** Show that you really understand what you are being asked to do. Start to go beyond just following directions, and use your understanding of the topic to be more efficient in the way you complete the task. Start to use some of your own ideas on how to solve the task. Begin to link up the various parts and pieces of the task.

**Emerging Strategic Thinker-4** Use the directions as a guide to complete the task, rather than following them literally. Use your solid understanding of the subject area to efficiently complete the task. Explain things correctly and start to add some of your own ideas. Produce work that reads well and makes sense, with the pieces all fitting together.

**Strategic Thinker-5** Show that you understand the nature of the task so well that the directions just help you identify a more efficient and complete strategy. Show elements of originality in your approach, and connect all the parts of the task together to create a strong sense of the whole. Choose a strategy that yields a full and complete solution to the task.

**Accomplished Strategic Thinker-6** Demonstrate a more intuitive use of subject-area rules to go beyond their literal application. Be very efficient and creative in how you approach the task, showing strong evidence of original ideas. Structure your work around a set of core concepts to explain findings and create a well-integrated and connected final product. Develop a cogent and coherent solution strategy.

**Emerging Expert-7** Show strong evidence of an intuitive and insightful use of subject-area rules. Be extremely efficient and use novel or creative ideas. Consciously organize and explain findings
around a set of core concepts. Effectively integrate and connect all task elements. Provide a very cogent and coherent solution strategy.

The goals for the Novice-Expert scale to prepare them for college success is shown below in Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark Level</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Novice-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Accomplished Novice-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Emerging Strategic Thinker-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Ready</td>
<td>Strategic Thinker-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quality Instructional Practice

Clackamas Middle College belongs to The North Clackamas School District (NCSD), and uses NCSD’s model for active engagement. One of the goals of NCSD is to focus on quality instructional practices through active engagement. Like the other tools in this section, staff at Clackamas Middle College have taken this instructional model and modified it to fit into their vision of curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Instructional Model for Active Engagement

Engagement at CMC and within the NCSD is defined as the observable evidence of a learner’s thinking through intentional opportunities to write, read, speak and do in a safe and risk-free environment. Educators need to engage students in making meaning. In classrooms, engagement looks like:

Students are:

- Reading, critically, annotating text with pen/pencil in hand
- Writing to learn, creating, planning, problem-solving, discussing, debating, asking questions
- Constructing new knowledge and skills by building on their current knowledge and skills
- Presenting, performing, inquiring, exploring, explaining, evaluating, experimenting
- Interacting with other students, doing, moving, gesturing
- Involved in the assessment cycle

The following components of active engagement are implemented in classes at CMC.

- **Shared Learning Targets/Learning Objectives**
  - What do we want students to learn?
• **Build Academic Background Knowledge**
  ○ Through Direct Vocabulary Instruction

• **Guided Practice to include:**
  ○ Purposeful Reading, Writing, and Discussing

• **Check for understanding**
  ○ Formative Assessments to inform practice
  ○ How will we know if they have learned it?
  ○ What will we do if they have?
  ○ What will we do if they haven’t?

---

**Learning Target**

A learning target is a learning outcome that focuses on the specific goal of each day’s instruction. A target states what each student will be able to understand or be able to do at the end of a lesson or a series of lessons. Targets are not only posted but are also explicitly stated on student work and students can accurately discuss targets when prompted.

A learning target is not an instructional objective. An instructional objective connects a series of lessons. A target guides the lesson for today and connects this learning to tomorrow and future lessons. A target is the formative assessment for today’s meeting. The difference between a learning target and instructional objective is shown below.

**Learning Target**

- Guides learning
- Written from the student point of view
- Provides a common focus for teaching
- Directly connects to the formative assessment for today, which impacts instruction for tomorrow

**Instructional Objective**

-Guides instruction
- Unifies outcome over a series of related lessons
- Written from the teacher’s point of view

**Direct Vocabulary**

Direct vocabulary instruction includes the practice of identifying a small number of student/level appropriate terms that are imperative for students to own prior to reading a text, engaging in lecture, or participating in a demonstration.

**Guided Practice**

Guided practice involves purposeful reading, writing, and discussing. It refers to targeted opportunities for students to consistently read, write, and discuss/analyze in all subjects. Classes
implementing guided practice use high quality texts and provide both student and professional writing exemplars.

Checking for Understanding
Checking for understanding allows teachers to formatively assess learning. Examples of this practice include:

- Circulate, observe, and listen as students work in pairs
- Call on a sampling of students or pairs randomly between each step (not calling on students who raise their hands)
- Have students signal their understanding: thumbs up or down; red, green, yellow Popsicle sticks
- Have students hold up dry-erase boards with answers/solutions
- Exit slips/Quick Writes that demonstrate student learning
- Other formative measures to be determined by individual PLCs within buildings

Figure 9 on the next page is a tool used by staff at CMC to help guide teachers for active engagement in the classroom.
### Social Element: Best Practices

**College Readiness Seminar**

To address many of the Social Elements of the Postsecondary Readiness Framework, Clackamas Middle College created an advisory program aimed to prepare students for postsecondary success. This advisory program is called College Readiness Seminar and focuses on two of Conley’s (see Section Four) four keys to college and career readiness: *Key Learning Skills and Techniques* and *Key Transitional Knowledge and Skills.*
Purpose

The purpose of the CMC’s College Readiness Seminar is to develop a positive school climate and prepare students for success in CMC Pathways, post-secondary opportunities and career development.

CMC’s College Readiness Seminar is designed to:
- Provide peer mentoring and social support for a positive school climate and encourage a college-going school culture.
- Encourage student engagement by ensuring that every student has at least one adult, at school, who knows and cares about him/her. Research shows that student engagement is the best prevention against dropping out.
- Enhance student achievement by helping students evaluate and reflect on their own skills, interests, and accomplishments and then make plans to improve.

How it Works

All staff members will serve as advisors to students. The seminar will be sorted according to grade level (9th, 10th, 11th, 12th). Advisors in the seminar will stay with students until they enter CMC’s college programs.

CMC will conduct workshops for advisors before the College Readiness Seminar begins that will go over the role of College Readiness Seminar, along with monthly trainings on best practices. In addition, copies of articles and research on excellent advising and purpose-specific demonstrations (e.g., how to review ACT assessments) will be on-going and scheduled as needed. Advisors will participate in a bi-weekly check-in/reflection during CMC staff meetings.

Advisors will nominate one student from each College Readiness Seminar group to serve on CMC’s Student College Readiness Seminar Panel that will meet with the principal monthly to provide student input on school climate.

Content

The curriculum will include online and classroom-based lessons through CollegeBoard, CMC specific lessons, ACT and EPIC developed lessons and assessments.
Ninth Grade College Readiness Seminar
Ninth grade advisories are designed to give students a positive start in their high school careers. Emphasis will be placed on familiarization with the school and its resources, creating a college-going culture, and educational planning.

Tenth Grade College Readiness Seminar
Tenth grade advisories are designed to make sure students stay on the right track and grow as students. Emphasis will be placed on creating college-going culture, Pathways awareness and educational planning.

Eleventh Grade College Readiness Seminar
Eleventh grade advisories are designed to help students develop college knowledge and skills. Emphasis will be placed on self-reflection, educational planning and setting goals for life after high school.

Twelfth Grade College Readiness Seminar
Twelfth grade College Readiness Seminar is designed to guide students toward graduation and prepare for life after high school. Emphasis will be placed on career and college research, self-reflection and post-secondary planning.

Assessment
Individual students/advisees will receive .25 credit for College Readiness Seminar on a Pass/No Pass basis. To receive a Pass, students must demonstrate:

- 90% Attendance;
- Completion of grade-level portfolio checklist
- Meeting passing requirements on CMC Student Participation Rubric.
- Students, Parents, and Advisors will complete an evaluation survey of the CMC College Readiness Seminar program at the end of the school year.
- CMC will implement EPIC’s CampusReady assessment on an annual basis to determine student and staff perceptions of the school’s culture for college and career readiness. Student’s aspirations for college will also be assessed through this measure.
- CMC will assess long-term outcomes through by tracking annual changes in graduation rates, the number of students entering into college programs, the number of students completing an Associate’s Degree, and the number of students applying to post-secondary education.
Roles and Responsibilities

Principal
The principal, with the help of teachers in the school, is responsible for implementing the College Readiness Seminar program. The principal will:

- Provide encouragement and support for the program.
- Serve as an advisor.
- Communicate the goals and expectations of the College Readiness Seminar program to the school community.
- Assign teachers to be advocates and arrange for changes in student-advocates matches if necessary, in accordance with policy procedures.
- Arrange for the training of advocates.
- Oversee the communication of information to parents and the arrangements for parental involvement.
- Conduct program reviews as required.

Program Coordinator
The Program Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the logistics of the College Readiness Seminar program. The coordinator will:

- Provide support as needed.
- Provide supplemental curriculum, program materials and resources.
- Coordinate individual and team recognition, arrange for trainings and program evaluations.
- Create monthly parent newsletter to keep parents informed of College Readiness Seminar activities.

Advisors
Advisors’ responsibilities fall into the three main areas listed below.

1) Assist students with their Annual and 4/5 Year Education Plans
   - Help students set goals, develop action plans, and review their plans.
   - Help students prepare for transitions to a new grade, college programs, or their post-secondary destination.
   - Help students access a variety of information sources on post-secondary education and career options.

2) Monitor academic achievement
   - Monitor the academic progress of their students closely and refer them to school counselors, other staff, or intervention programs if needed.
   - Review grades of each student assigned to them.
   - Help students make connections among academic progress, their annual educational plans, and their future goals.
   - Attempt to know each student in the College Readiness Seminar group on a personal basis.
   - Provide an environment for the College Readiness Seminar group that will facilitate a cohesive, supportive, peer group.

3) Parental Involvement
Communicate with the parents of the students assigned to them at the start of each school year (letter to parents).
Participate in student-led conferences each year with students and their parents.
Refer parents to subject teacher, counselors, or the principal as appropriate.

**Students**

Students at CMC are responsible for:

- Attending regularly scheduled College Readiness Seminar sessions.
- Participating actively in College Readiness Seminar sessions.
- Developing and completing their student portfolios and online lessons.
- Participating in student-led conferences with their advisors and their parents each year.

**Parents**

Parental support is a key factor in students’ academic success. Parents can help their children by:

- Supporting them in reviewing their annual education plans.
- Participating in reviews of their children’s education plans each year by attending any scheduled conferences.
- Helping them identify their strengths, learning style, interests, talents, skills, and needs.
- Being supportive of their goals, pointing out their strengths and accomplishments, encouraging them to explore options for their future, and encouraging them to ask for help when they need it.

**School Resources and Supports**

**Counselors**

Advisors are encouraged to make referrals to the counselors as appropriate. Contact may be made with the counselor assigned to work with students in a specific grade or to any counselor individually. Seniors will also be assigned an Aspire Mentor that will meet with them regularly to help them complete senior internship requirements, college applications, etc.

**Student Achievement Planning (SAP)**

Advisors are encouraged to work with the other staff to make referrals to the Student Achievement Planning Program. An appropriate plan of action will be agreed upon. Interventions may include one or more of the following: modification or adaptations to the general education program, assessment, parental involvement, changes in behavior, monitoring, counseling, or community services. Advisors will bring the student’s portfolio file to SAP meetings as necessary.
Other Structural, Academic, and Social Best Practices

This section was designed to provide a few concrete examples from a high school on how they are educating students within the structural, academic and social elements of a postsecondary readiness framework.

Staff at Clackamas Middle College measures their successes through student attainment of college credit, and college degree/certificates. When these are accomplished, then CMC is preparing students for postsecondary success. Graduates will leave CMC with a sense of purpose, identity, accomplishment, and connectedness to their future. It is through this connection between school and their future that postsecondary skills are built.

In addition to the best practices listed above in this section, other best practices are listed on the next page. These provide a comprehensive approach and help students, staff, and families at CMC establish a culture of postsecondary success.
Other Best Practices at Clackamas Middle College

**Structural Elements**
- School leaders are assigned to capture data, record it into a data system, and analyze it to help influence culture and environment, curriculum, instruction and assessment. This data should be reviewed by committees and staff members regularly throughout the year.

- The Pathways to College Program allows students (in cohorts) to accelerate their learning both socially and academically through entry level college courses.

- College courses are contracted with the partnering college to offer dual high school/college credit.

- All students graduate with a high school diploma along with a college degree/certificate and/or a college transcript.

**Academic Elements**
- A bi-monthly student achievement planning session is held with all staff to identify individual student need and support for improvement.

- A service learning class requiring service to the community allows juniors the opportunity to serve the community and participate in civic engagement.

- A internship experience allows seniors the opportunity to explore future career choices.

**Social Elements**
- New students take college entrance exams for enrollment, tour the partnering college campus, and attend an awareness session of school expectations.

- Credit and degree attainment is measured, collected and presented to current/future students and families, educational leaders, and community members.

- An “I Am College” wall is created to display the postsecondary programs each graduating senior will be attending.

- Student-led conferences allow students the opportunity to connect with family and share personal, academic and career goals.
SECTION 6:

POSTSECONDARY READINESS RESOURCES

“This is a very valuable and strong section of the guidebook. Resources are well organized and accessible. The “when to use” section is very valuable and assists in the evaluation of the usefulness of each resource.”

-Leslie (Middle School Language Arts)

“This guidebook definitely provides a comprehensive framework around postsecondary readiness and gives educators a compass on how to navigate within this framework.”

-Clark (Middle School Math)
Target 6

Postsecondary Readiness Resources

This section is set up to help schools in their journey toward postsecondary readiness. After going through the first five sections of this guidebook, educational leaders may need further development of the elements within the postsecondary readiness framework. This section is to deepen the knowledge of the best practices within this framework. These resources were selected to support the learning, planning, and implementation of school programs and strategies required to prepare students for postsecondary success.

The collection responds to the structural, academic, and social elements listed in this guidebook. These components include:

- Smart use of data to address student needs and monitor progress
- A culture of postsecondary success for all at the school, district, and community level
- Adult learning and support, including professional learning and planning time
- Student learning and support for success in a rigorous, challenging curriculum
- Youth development supports to help connect aspirations to a plan
- Transition supports from secondary schooling to higher education

These resources will help school teams select tools most appropriate for their current work toward postsecondary preparedness. This section contains 13 descriptions of resources, lists the target users, and describes when to use the resource. Each description also contains, where appropriate, helpful tips and advice for using the resource. Please note that most of the descriptions are either paraphrased from or taken directly from the resource website.
Clackamas Middle College (CMC)

- [http://www.clackamasmiddlecollege.org/](http://www.clackamasmiddlecollege.org/)

**Target Users**
School leaders, teachers, and other practitioners, and district administrators

**When to Use These Resources**
Use this resource when looking at the creating a postsecondary readiness culture. This site provides the application of the structural, academic, and social elements within the postsecondary readiness framework discussed in this guidebook.

**Focus of These Resources**
Clackamas Middle College (CMC) is a four-year high school college transition program enrolling 300 students in grades 9-12. It is accredited by the Northwest Accreditation Commission. While CMC is sponsored by the North Clackamas School District, some of our students live in neighboring districts. Between 130-170 students are enrolled in our unique College Prep Program which prepares students for college classes. Around 35-50 students begin their transition to college classes in our Pathways to College Program. Over 115 of our students participate in our College Extended Options (CEO) program by enrolling in community college courses.

The school opened in September, 2003, and to this date, Clackamas Middle College has graduated over 400 students, all of which left us with college transcripts, college credits and college transfer degrees or college certificates.

CMC is designed to give students the opportunity to earn both high school and college credits simultaneously with the goal of earning a high school diploma, a transfer degree, or certificate of completion. Students begin their courses in our College Prep Program on our campus and transition to college classes through our Pathways to College (PTC) and College Extended Options (CEO) Programs at Clackamas Community College. Six on-campus teachers, two counselors, one school-to-careers coordinator, one administrator, and one secretary collaborate extensively with each other and our community college partners to maximize student success. Visiting instructors from Clackamas Community College come to the CMC campus daily and teach classes throughout the year. Other students take their courses exclusively at community colleges through our Pathways to College (PTC) and College Extended Options (CEO) Programs.

**Recommendations**
To maximize the potential of this resource, it is recommended that schools interested in CMC’s approach to postsecondary preparedness contact school leadership for collaboration toward setting and maintaining a postsecondary readiness culture.
Education for the Future (EFF)

➢ [http://eff.csuchico.edu/html/home.html](http://eff.csuchico.edu/html/home.html)

**Target Users**
School leaders, teachers, and other practitioners, and district administrators

**When to Use These Resources**
Use this resource when your school would like to gather, analyze, and use data to continuously improve teaching and learning. EFF provides educational leaders with a framework for school improvement.

**Focus of These Resources**
Education for the Future staff works with organizations as large as the U.S. Department of Education/International Education Ministries, and as small as rural schools to facilitate the use of school portfolios and the use of comprehensive data analysis for continuous school improvement.

One of the many ways EFF works with people in implementing systemic change and comprehensive data analyses that lead to increased student learning is by providing a variety of professional learning services.

Professional Learning content has evolved naturally from their research and is created together with the end users. The research is typically focused on data-driven work that incorporates systems theory and practice. Over time, professional learning opportunities have expanded into deeper content that fuels change and meets new and evolving needs of educators and students.

**Recommendations**
To maximize the potential of EFF, it is recommended that schools interested in these resources should attend EFF’s Professional Learning Offerings such as:

➢ Workshops
➢ Data/School Improvement Institutes
➢ Train The Trainers Sessions
➢ Conference Sessions
➢ International Work
➢ Work With Universities
➢ Questionnaire Support Services
➢ General Consulting Services
Education Policy and Improvement Center (EPIC)

- [http://www.epiconline.org/](http://www.epiconline.org/)

**Target Users**
School leaders, teachers, and other practitioners, students, and administrators

**When to Use These Resources**
EPIC has created tools and resources to increase school’s capacity to prepare all students for higher education, based upon David Conley’s four facets (*Key Cognitive Strategies, Key Content Knowledge, Key Learning Skills and Techniques, and Key Transition Knowledge and Skills*).

Through research, EPIC designed a system of tools designed to equip educators with what they need to prepare students for success beyond high school. The College and Career Readiness System is comprised of three distinct categories: Calibrate, Create, and Connect.

**CALIBRATED**
Diagnostics that measure college and career readiness with greater precision
- **ThinkReady** - Developing thinking strategies for postsecondary success and lifelong learning.
- **CampusReady** - Analyzing school programs and culture for college and career readiness.
- **I’mReady** - Determining student readiness for college and careers.

**CREATE**
Applications that increase college and career readiness through changes to courses
- **CourseCreate** - Producing syllabi for college and career ready courses.
- **CourseAlign** - Aligning courses to college and career readiness expectations.
- **CoursePathway** - Creating school-wide course pathways aligned to college and career readiness.

**CONNECT**
Processes that strengthen linkages with postsecondary education
- **ReadinessBridge** - Connecting secondary school coursework to college-level expectations.
- **ReadinessConnect** - Connecting secondary school and college courses.
- **ReadinessPartner** - Connecting secondary and postsecondary faculty and administrators to college and career readiness.

**Focus of These Resources**
These resources are based on the research of David Conley, the CEO of EPIC, and his numerous publications about preparing students for college and careers.

**Recommendations**
Schools will develop an extensive profile using these tools. It is important for teams of teachers to design a process for reviewing the data and for targeting areas of high need and for assigning responsibilities for moving forward. For example, who will organize professional development sessions or professional learning community work to improve weak areas identified?
ACT (American College Test)

- http://www.act.org/
- http://www.act.org/engage/
- http://www.act.org/products/k-12-act-explore/
- http://www.act.org/products/k-12-act-plan/

**Target Users**
Leadership teams, teachers, central office staff, and parents

**When to Use These Resources**
- To help schools consider what programs are no longer useful or affordable, given their goals.
- To measure student skills in various areas
- To understand an instruction-centered approach for moving beyond the vision of the comprehensive high school as a model of excellence.
- As background reading for stakeholders concerned with improving student learning and ensuring that each student graduates ready for postsecondary success.

**Focus of These Resources**
ACT's range of assessments and reporting systems have been developed with more than 50 years of experience behind them.

Most know this nonprofit organization as being responsible for the ACT test—the college admissions and placement test taken by more than 1.6 million high school graduates every year. In addition, they provide more than a hundred other assessment, research, information, and program management services for education and workforce development. They serve elementary and secondary schools, colleges, professional associations, businesses, and government agencies—nationally and internationally.

Currently, ACT is developing a next generation assessment system designed to provide students, parents, and educators with the actionable information they need to measure and improve student performance from the earliest grades. This system, ACT Aspire, will help students stay on target to reach their full potential throughout their educational journey.

**Recommendations**
- Schools provide ACT diagnostics to measure student skills.
- Results from these assessments should be included in advisory programs to help students match up their skills to their college and career choices.
- Schools should critically examine the assessment results to provide a focal point for school improvement in curriculum, instruction and assessment.
Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s)

- [http://www.allthingsplc.info/](http://www.allthingsplc.info/)

**Target Users**
School leaders, teachers, counselors, and district administrators

**When to Use These Resources**
This site is a collaborative, objective resource for educators and administrators who are committed to enhancing student achievement. This site helps educators share their knowledge, ask questions, and get expert insight into the issues educators face each day in the classroom.

**Focus of These Resources**
The very essence of a learning community is a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student. When a school or district functions as a PLC, educators within the organization embrace high levels of learning for all students as both the reason the organization exists and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it. In order to achieve this purpose, the members of a PLC create and are guided by a clear and compelling vision of what the organization must become in order to help all students learn. They make collective commitments clarifying what each member will do to create such an organization, and they use results-oriented goals to mark their progress. Members work together to clarify exactly what each student must learn, monitor each student’s learning on a timely basis, provide systematic interventions that ensure students receive additional time and support for learning when they struggle, and extend and enrich learning when students have already mastered the intended outcomes.

A corollary assumption is that if the organization is to become more effective in helping all students learn, the adults in the organization must also be continually learning. Therefore, structures are created to ensure staff members engage in job-embedded learning as part of their routine work practices.

There is no ambiguity or hedging regarding this commitment to learning. Whereas many schools operate as if their primary purpose is to ensure that children are taught, PLCs are dedicated to the idea that their organization exists to ensure that all students learn essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions. All the other characteristics of a PLC flow directly from this epic shift in assumptions about the purpose of the school.
*(Source: AllThingsPLC website, cited above)*

**Recommendations**
Educators should only use these resources if they are interested in the following:

- Gathering evidence of current levels of student learning
- Developing strategies and ideas to build on strengths and address weaknesses in that learning
- Implementing those strategies and ideas
- Analyzing the impact of the changes to discover what was effective and what was not
- Applying new knowledge in the next cycle of continuous improvement
Common Core State Standards (CCSS)


**Target Users**
School leaders, teachers, and other practitioners, and district administrators

**When to Use These Resources**
Educators look to these resources when searching for a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. This will help teachers and parents know what they need to do to help provide support to students. These standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

**Focus of These Resources**
Building on the excellent foundation of standards states have laid, the Common Core State Standards are the first step in providing our young people with a high-quality education. It should be clear to every student, parent, and teacher what the standards of success are in every school.

Teachers, parents and community leaders have all weighed in to help create the Common Core State Standards. The standards clearly communicate what is expected of students at each grade level. This will allow our teachers to be better equipped to know exactly what they need to help students learn and establish individualized benchmarks for them. The Common Core State Standards focus on core conceptual understandings and procedures starting in the early grades, thus enabling teachers to take the time needed to teach core concepts and procedures well—and to give students the opportunity to master them.

With students, parents and teachers all on the same page and working together for shared goals, we can ensure that students make progress each year and graduate from school prepared to succeed in college and in a modern workforce.

**Recommendations**
- These resources: provide goals and benchmarks to ensure students are achieving certain skills and knowledge by the end of each year
- These resources: help colleges and professional development programs better prepare teachers
- These resources: providing the opportunity for teachers to be involved in the development of assessments linked to these top-quality standards
- These resources: allow states to develop and provide better assessments that more accurately measure whether or not students have learned what was taught
- These resources: guide educators toward curricula and teaching strategies that will give students a deep understanding of the subject and the skills they need to apply their knowledge
Authentic Education (UbD)


**Target Users**
Teachers, administrators, and students

**When to Use These Resources**
This site’s aim is to provide a framework for improving student achievement through Understanding by Design (UbD). This site emphasizes the teacher's role as a designer of student learning. It helps teachers to clarify learning goals, devise revealing assessments of student understanding, and craft effective and engaging learning activities.

**Focus of These Resources**
The mission of Authentic Education is to make schools better by providing our clients with state-of-the-art educational thinking, tools, and training. They aim to leave educators equipped to tackle challenging issues. They empower educational leaders to make school more learning-centered and results focused. Capacity is built through providing services, products, and fresh ideas for helping schools make student performance the central focus of school.

Their mission is informed with the following four beliefs:

- *Excellence in schooling requires a vigilant focus on learning - and, specifically, learning for understanding.*
- *All education is local.*
- *Schooling needs to be grounded in more authentic forms of learning.*
- *Education succeeds if and only if everyone in schools gets constant and powerful feedback, and is obligated to seek it and consider it.*

(Source: Authentic Education website, cited above)

**Recommendations**
To maximize the potential of Authentic Education, it is recommended that schools interested in these resources attend Authentic Education’s Professional Learning Offerings such as:

- Consultations
- Training
- Workshops
- Custom research and review of materials
- Teleconferences and video conferences
Learning Sciences Marzano Center

- http://www.marzanocenter.com/

Target Users
School leaders, teachers, and district administrators

When to Use These Resources
This site’s aim is to provide and develop next-generation teacher and leadership evaluation tools and training. It develops and disseminates cutting-edge resources in educational best practices. Their goal is to support teachers to be highly effective, lifelong learners, and in doing so, to significantly impact student growth and achievement over time.

Focus of These Resources
This site specializes in deep implementation of continuous-teacher-growth systems, focusing on best practices to support teachers in improving their daily instruction. These growth systems help ensure:

- Better students through better teachers
- Less underperforming teachers, improved morale and improved instruction
- Teachers and students moving toward meeting local, state, and national standards
- Specialization and support
- Educators working toward the same goals, with a common language
- A sustainable system through implementation
- Maximum buy-in.

Recommendations
To maximize the potential of Learning Sciences Marzano Center, it is recommended that schools form committees to research the best practices/literature involved in the continuous-teacher-growth systems. It is recommended that committees focus on the following literature to set a foundation of knowledge prior to implementation:

- Transforming Classroom Grading
- Designing & Teaching Learning Goals & Objectives
- Leaders of Learning: How District, School, and Classroom Leaders Improve Student Achievement
- District Leadership that Works: Striking the Right Balance
- Classroom Management That Works: Research-Based Strategies for Every Teacher
- The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction
- School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results
- Classroom Assessment and Grading That Work
- A Handbook for Classroom Management That Works
- Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art and Science of Teaching
Focus (Dr. Mike Schmoker)

- http://mikeschmoker.com/

**Target Users**
Teachers, administrators, and students

**When to Use These Resources**
This site’s aim is to help stakeholders in education who are straining under the weight of multiple initiatives, and who are frustrated with the latest movements in education. It helps them return to the basics of learning. The focal point of this site is Schmoker’s book, *Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning*.

The book helps new teachers focus on the essentials of curriculum and lessons, and will help veterans, weary of one solution to educating all, to rediscover the joy of teaching with purpose. The book also helps students who are depending on leaders and policymakers to listen to the evidence, and focus on learning.

**Focus of These Resources**
Schmoker helps to provide practical PLC tools and documents so that educators can better focus on learning. He provides resource within the following categories:

- Administrative Team Protocols
- Team Protocols and Norms
  - Lesson Plan Protocols
- Tips and Recommendations to Write More and Grade Less

**Recommendations**
To maximize the potential of Dr. Schmoker’s approach, it is recommended that educational leaders within schools read *Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning*. Focus on learning Committees to research the best practices/literature involved in the continuous-teacher-growth systems. It is recommended that committees focus on the following literature to set a foundation of knowledge prior to implementation:

- *Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning*
- More Argument, Fewer Standards
- When Pedagogic Fads Trump Priorities - *Education Week*
- Planning for Failure? Or for School Success? - *Education Week*
- The ‘Crayola Curriculum’ - *Education Week*
- Tipping Point: From Feckless Reform to Substantive Instructional Improvement-*Phi Delta Kappan*
- First Things First: Demystifying Data Analysis- *Educational Leadership*
- Realizing the Promise of Standards-Based Education- *Educational Leadership*
The College Board

- http://www.collegeboard.org/

**Target Users**
School leaders, teachers, counselors, and district administrators

**When to Use These Resources**
Educators looking to provide students with access to a high-quality education, and to prepare them for success in college. Their College Readiness initiatives promote curricula, assessment tools, district and guidance resources that help K-12 students prepare for the academic rigors of higher education.

**Focus of These Resources**
Educators looking to provide students with access to a high-quality education, and to prepare them for success in college. Their College Readiness initiatives promote curricula, assessment tools, district and guidance resources that help K-12 students prepare for the academic rigors of higher education. Their college readiness programs include:

- Advisory Programs
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- SpringBoard
- ReadiStep
- CollegeEd
- CLEP
- PSAT/NMSQT
- EXCELerator

The College Board helps students connect with and successfully complete a high-quality college education. They provide resources, tools and services to students, parents, colleges and universities in the areas of college planning, recruitment and admissions, financial aid, and retention. The SAT and Student Search Service programs alone have helped millions of students of diverse backgrounds learn about colleges, apply and enroll. The College Connection and Success programs and resources comprise:

- SAT, SAT Subject Tests and SAT Readiness Tools
- Student Search Service
- BigFuture (our college planning site)
- College Search
- CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE
- Scholarship Search

**Recommendations**
To maximize the potential of The College Board, it is recommended that schools familiar with the programs and resources listed above form a committee to research the website prior to the implementation of any new programs.
Target Users
Student leaders, school leaders, district administration, and policy makers

When to Use These Resources
This site’s aim is to provide student leaders, school leaders and district administration with resources, professional development, and advocacy to prepare students for postsecondary learning opportunities.

Focus of These Resources
In existence since 1916, NASSP is the preeminent organization of and national voice for secondary school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. The mission of NASSP is to promote excellence in school leadership.

School Leaders
NASSP provides members with the professional research-based and peer-tested resources, and practical tools and materials they need to serve as visionary school leaders.

Through award winning publications, professional development opportunities, ready access to relevant research, and persistence in advocating on behalf of school leaders, NASSP helps to advance secondary school education by:

- Promoting high professional standards
- Focusing attention on school leaders' challenges
- Providing a "national voice" for school leaders
- Building public confidence in education
- Strengthening the role of the principal as instructional leader
- Publicizing the issues and interests of our members in the news media

Student Leaders
NASSP also promotes the intellectual growth, academic achievement, character and leadership development, and physical well-being of youth. NASSP has founded the following student leadership programs:

- National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society
- National Association of Student Councils
- National Elementary Honor Society

(Source: Authentic Education website, cited above)

Recommendations
Membership into the NASSP provides resources and guidance for school and student leaders.
American School Counselor Association (ASCA)

- [http://www.schoolcounselor.org/](http://www.schoolcounselor.org/)

**Target Users**
Student leaders, school leaders, district administration, and parents

**When to Use These Resources**
This site’s aim is to provide school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, personal/social and career development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society.

These resources should be used by student leaders, school leaders, district administration, and parents for professional development, publications and other resources, research and advocacy.

**Focus of These Resources**
The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is the foundation that expands the image and influence of professional school counselors through advocacy, leadership, collaboration and systemic change. ASCA empowers professional school counselors with the knowledge, skills, linkages and resources to promote student success in the school, the home, the community and the world.

**ASCA's Mission**
The mission of ASCA is to represent professional school counselors and to promote professionalism and ethical practices.

**ASCA's Goals and Objectives**
- Professional development opportunities in areas of critical need are made available to all professional school counselors.
- Timely, relevant information exists to enhance professional school counselors' level of skill and professionalism.
- Legislative policy exists that supports professional school counselors and child advocacy.
- ASCA initiates and supports relevant research and evaluation in school counseling.
- Professional and ethical standards articulate the code of conduct and professional behavior for professional school counselors.
- Strategic partnerships with stakeholders exist to benefit professional school counselors and their students.
- Leaders at local, state and national levels champion and lead change initiatives.
- ASCA maintains an organizational structure and administrative functions that facilitate the accomplishment of the goals and objectives.

(Source: ASCA website, cited above)

**Recommendations**
Membership into the ASCA provides resources and guidance for counselors and educational leaders.
Gateway to College National Network

- http://www.gatewaytocollege.org/

**Target Users**
School and community college partners, and school counselors

**When to Use These Resources**
Use this resource when planning intervention strategies for high school dropouts and those at risk for dropping out so that these students may earn a diploma and get a jump-start on college credits. It could also prove very useful for schools and colleges trying to form effective partnerships to help at-risk students stay in and graduate from school.

**Focus of These Resources**
Portland Community College (Portland, Oregon) created the Gateway to College program in 2000 to help reconnect high school dropouts with their education. Through the program, students complete their high school diploma requirements at community and technical colleges while simultaneously earning college credits toward an associate’s degree or certificate. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded the replication of Gateway to College as part of its Early College High School Initiative. Since 2003, Gateway to College has evolved from a single-site program into a national network of 43 colleges in 23 states partnering with more than 125 school districts.

In addition to the Gateway program, the site also includes information about Project Degree, which helps underprepared college students (ages 18–26) accelerate their progress through developmental education courses in college and to transfer successfully to full-credit college courses.

Gateway to College also helps:
- Build partnerships that connect K-12 and higher education institutions and communities
- Influence systems by creating change agents who are transforming instruction and student support practices from the inside out
- Conduct research and share findings about how to successfully serve high school dropouts and academically underprepared college students
- Effect policy and regulatory changes to ensure that Gateway to College and other alternative education models are available in every community that needs them
- Provide customized consulting services to colleges and school districts

_The National Network also provides ongoing training, technical assistance, and professional development opportunities to Gateway and Project Degree programs across the country._

**Recommendations**
To be effective, high schools need to form partnerships with their local community colleges and co-design an appropriate intervention strategy for re-capturing dropouts and re-engaging those at risk. Schools and communities need to accept ownership of these students and be committed to their educational success.
About the Author

Brian Sien is the current principal of Clackamas Middle College outside of Portland, Oregon. He has over 18 years experience as an educator. During this time, Brian has worked in educational systems throughout three different states: Montana, Arizona, and Oregon. He has taught for ten years before going into administration. His experience is with both traditional and charter public schools. His passion is working with students, teachers, administrators and state leaders to help provide a seamless transition from K-12 education to postsecondary education for all stakeholders. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Montana with a major in English Education and a minor in Spanish. He earned a Master’s of Science degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction from Portland State University. He completed his degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership: Administration through Portland State University in June, 2014.
REFERENCES


