

HEAR MY VOICE

STRENGTHENING THE COLLEGE PIPELINE FOR YOUNG MEN OF COLOR IN CALIFORNIA



The Education Trust–West

P-12 BEST PRACTICES

PRACTICE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	
Having leaders dedicated to transformational change	Strong individual leaders set long-term goals, stick around long enough to see them through, and aim to bring about lasting institutional change. Leaders often come from the community.	<p>"Most of us either went to school here or a place really similar to this. What we do and how we do it is guided by a lot of our background experiences."</p> <p>— Daniel, high school administrator</p>
Fostering a welcoming environment and maintaining high expectations	School staff develop personal relationships with all students, help connect them to the school community through clubs/athletics/events, and develop a culture that celebrates student achievement.	<p>"I have a personal relationship with all of my teachers. When I don't do well, they'll get on me and ask, 'What happened?'"</p> <p>— Felipe, high school student</p>
Enrolling all students in rigorous coursework	School leaders and counselors put all students on a college-preparatory track, making A-G the default pathway, and offer plentiful remediation opportunities and support during and after school. They make advanced courses like Advanced Placement open to all students. They encourage 12th graders to take rigorous math and science courses rather than "coasting" through their senior year. They offer meaningful, well-developed career pathways.	<p>"We learned about A-G in middle school. And then once we got to high school, we were already in A-G classes. Even if you go through your whole high school career without knowing if you want to go to college or not, at least you know you're on the road."</p> <p>— Gabe, high school student</p>
Providing broad academic and socio-emotional supports	Schools create abundant opportunities—in school, after school, on Saturdays, and in the summer—for students to access tutoring enrichment. They provide middle-to-high school transition programs. They also provide socio-emotional supports and services to nurture the "whole" student, such as adult and peer mentorship, and they interrogate discipline policies to understand their impact on students.	<p>"It's about providing [students] the opportunity to learn beyond the first time. Otherwise, kids feel like, 'you've given up on me, I give up on you.' Why not turn that around and make them feel like they have [another] opportunity?"</p> <p>— Jimena, high school administrator</p>
Supporting the transition to college	School leaders create a palpable college-going culture, evident in college and career centers, college preparation programs like Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), and free test preparation and testing. Staff raise awareness about college application and financial aid requirements and assist students in completing applications. This is done through college informational nights and one-on-one and group counselor meetings with students.	<p>"We are never turned away. The counselor walks you through the whole process of applying [for financial aid or to colleges]."</p> <p>— Justin, high school student</p>
Building relationships with families to support student success	School staff frequently communicate college readiness expectations with families by hosting college and financial aid presentations. They create family resource and engagement centers where parents can drop in for one-on-one support and ensure resources are available in languages other than English.	<p>"We didn't know a word of English, we didn't know anything about this country, how to go to college. With the help of staff here, our kids were not only able to adapt to the circumstances, but were taken by the hand: 'This is the first step, then the next...'"</p> <p>— Pablo, high school parent</p>
Analyzing data to identify and address needs	School staff analyze longitudinal data to identify where gaps exist, explore systemic and other barriers, and develop action plans for improvement. They use data to understand trends and shape decisions, working with feeder schools and colleges along the way.	<p>"We're now saying, 'What are we doing as a system or a classroom that's throwing up some hurdle for kids?'"</p> <p>— Steven, school district administrator</p>
Training staff on issues of bias and diversifying staff	School leaders and staff understand how implicit bias impacts educational systems, and they train staff around how to counteract implicit bias. Leaders strive to employ staff whose backgrounds mirror the student population, including bilingual staff.	
Developing relationships with community partners and institutions	School leaders prioritize the development of relationships with other institutions and organizations to support student success and ease student transitions along the school-through-career pipeline. Partnerships facilitate dual-enrollment options with community colleges, early outreach, priority registration/admission, leadership development, and college preparation and transition programs.	

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POSTSECONDARY BEST PRACTICES

PRACTICE	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	
Having leaders dedicated to transformational change	Institutions hire strong leaders who are willing to stay and see through long-term goals in order to bring about lasting institutional change. Everything these leaders do is in service of a commitment to student success.	<p>"Our charge is to continue to bring in students from across the socioeconomic spectrum, across ethnic diversity. We really feel that that is a part of our goal in building a freshman class."</p> <p><i>—Amy, university admin.</i></p>
Fostering a welcoming environment	College leaders, faculty, and staff strive to make prospective, admitted, and enrolled students feel welcome through celebratory admissions events for specific student populations and by intentionally building a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse student class. They help students navigate the educational system and outreach to particularly vulnerable populations like undocumented students.	<p>"You have to be respectful of the institution and the culture of that family. Whether it's a piece that we're printing, something on the website or an event, we really consider the family as a whole."</p> <p><i>—Carlos, university admin.</i></p>
Building relationships with families to support student success	College leaders and staff view families as critical partners in students' education and ensure they are informed about financial resources to pay for college. They build relationships with families and are sensitive to diverse cultures in communications and promotional materials.	<p>"Sometimes it has to come down to a very real level. I see a STEM student and I literally walk them over to the [support office for that program]. We have to make sure all students have equal access to resources and services."</p> <p><i>—Stefan, community college admin.</i></p>
Supporting the transition to and through college	Colleges raise awareness around, and help students access, financial and other resources in high school and once enrolled. They identify ways to streamline processes and systems to improve access to resources, from guided pathways and onboarding processes to summer bridge programs that help students acclimate to college. Colleges also reduce hurdles in course registration, financial aid, and counselor access.	<p>"The African Student Programs and the residential Pan-African Theme Hall [at this university] made me think, 'Ok, I'm going to be comfortable here.'"</p> <p><i>—Darius, high school student</i></p>
Providing broad academic and socio-emotional supports	College faculty and staff provide enrolled students ongoing supplementary, personalized academic and non-academic support services. They identify students' needs and ensure they don't "fall through the cracks" by using academic early alert systems and structured interventions. And, they support affinity groups and multicultural centers.	
Streamlining and expediting the academic experience at community colleges	Colleges use multiple measures to streamline course placement and remove other barriers preventing students from transferring and/or completing their degree. They redesign developmental education courses as corequisite courses that are college-level while providing targeted supports to boost student learning. And, they revise course prerequisites and create new course sequences to ensure early student success.	
Analyzing data to identify and address needs	Administrators and faculty analyze data to identify gaps between student subgroups. They evaluate potential institutional obstacles to student success and areas for improvement. They create action-oriented equity plans with goals based on identified disparities. Colleges also develop student and advisor dashboards to improve communication and coordination, and they use predictive analytics to support early intervention.	<p>"You want people to come to the table. We are really looking at how we continue to not make them feel okay but also not make them feel judged."</p> <p><i>—Michael, community college administrator</i></p>
Diversifying faculty and training faculty/staff around bias	College leaders employ faculty and staff who reflect students' backgrounds and experiences. They provide trainings that "set the table" for conversations that support diverse learners and close achievement gaps, including facilitated inquiry into culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum.	
Developing relationships with community partners and institutions	College leaders develop relationships with other entities supporting the school-through-career pipeline. Leaders from community colleges and universities partner to facilitate transfer preparation. Postsecondary leaders partner with nonprofit organizations and municipalities to improve college preparation and access, financial aid, and mentorship.	