

Planning a College Day

Introduction

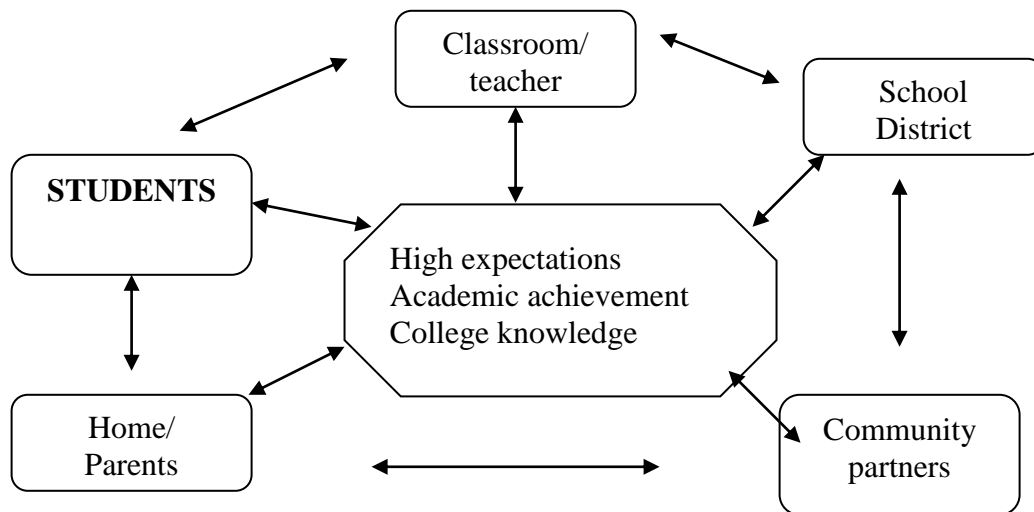
Planning and implementing College Days once a year, or even a few times a year, is an excellent way of strengthening college-going culture throughout the school.

This lesson will give you several different ways to plan and implement a college-day with several different themes to choose from. These events can range from something very short and simple to plan to more elaborate events which entail buy-in, planning time and implementation from the entire staff. It will also allow your school to create a circle of information which includes not only the students in the classroom, but the families in the home so that college-going culture is not just something students get at school, but is something that is encourage and supported at home.

During these events, staff, students and their families will create and learn more about the options in post-secondary education. The goal of this event is to create and strengthen a college-going culture of high-expectations, academic achievement and college knowledge.

Learning Goals

- Integrate and connect teacher, student and parent activities as we build college knowledge and strengthen college-going culture.



- Plan an event(s) which involves all students, staff and parents in a variety of different ways.
- Create a realistic calendar/timeline that is respectful of other priorities, professional development, testing etc.

Target Audience

All school staff, K-12 students and parents/families.

College Day Theme #1

The Educational Journey

Activities

One, or a combination, of the following activities can be planned and implemented to create a successful school-wide college day.

- All staff at the school site wear-t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. of their alma mater.
- Get buy-in from all teaching staff to take 20 minutes (or more if possible) out of the day to talk to their students about their educational journey. Include the good, the bad and the ugly to give students an honest account of your educational journey. Allow time for questions. If time allows and the teachers have time during their staff meetings to plan, teachers can switch classrooms in order for students to hear more than just one teacher's educational journey.
- Give students time to interview and ask a series of questions to staff members regarding their educational journey. (see Educational Journey Interview Questions in the handout section)
- Make posters of each staff member with a current picture, as well as pictures from college, with information from their education journey and post them around the school where students have access to read them.
- Have guest speakers with interesting educational journeys come speak on a panel to students. Also recruit guest speakers to speak at a Parent Night on College Day to connect parents to the information their students are receiving.
- Send a homework assignment to the home which the student must complete with a parent/guardian (see Education Journey Homework in handout section). This is another way to make sure that the message of the importance of higher education is getting home.
- Have teachers plan and implement a series of short workshops in different topics (see Educational Journey Workshop Topics in handout section) and have students rotate through the different workshops. This entails staff taking some time to think through how they would schedule and implement the workshops so it would need some professional development time in order to successfully implement this idea.
- Have teachers create a visual book or bulletin board representation of their educational journey.

College Day Theme #2

College Talk

Activities

One, or a combination, of the following activities can be planned and implemented to create a successful school-wide college day.

- All staff at the school site wear-t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc. of their alma mater.
- Create a College Alphabet Wall that is age appropriate for the students you teach and refer to it often throughout the school year, such as: A is for College Application, B is for Bachelor's Degree, F is for Financial Aid, I is for Intramurals etc. For each letter there should be a college-related word, a definition of the word or term and a visual representation of the word/term.
- Send a homework assignment of your College Alphabet home for students to do with their families. Ask students/families to come up with college-words, or have the students/families do the visual representation, or have them write the definition.
- Integrate College-Going Curriculum into the classroom for the day. There are many resources that are subject specific, as well as general college knowledge lessons that can be used in the classroom like Realizing the College Dream (see Resource section for the website).

College Day Theme #3

College Information Day

Activities

One, or a combination, of the following activities can be planned and implemented to create a successful school-wide college day.

- Staff can write a letter (see Teacher Sample Letter to Request Materials in the handout section) to their alma mater and request brochures, pamphlets, college trinkets, banners and such in order to have materials to use in their classroom to teach their students about their campus and/or decorate their classroom in order to have visuals to make reference to.
- Staff can take the materials they have received from their alma mater and plan a college fair where they act as the college representatives.
- Teachers can have their students research a campus of their choice and write a letter requesting materials (See Student Sample Letter to Request Materials in the handout section). When they receive materials, they can give an oral presentation about the campus or plan a college fair where the students are the college representatives. For a lesson plan on researching colleges, refer to Realizing the College website in the Resource section.

Planning a College Day Handout Section Educational Journey Interview Questions

- 1) What feedback did you receive both negative and positive about your own ability and your potential to go to college?
- 2) When you were in high school, did you easily see yourself as a college student?
- 3) Did you go to a 4 year university right out of high school?
- 4) Were you the first in your family to go to college?
- 5) Did you work to pay for school?
- 6) What was your college experience like?
- 7) What types of activities were you involved in?

Planning a College Day Handout Section Educational Journey Homework

Please have your child ask you the following questions and discuss the answers.

1. Where did you go to elementary school? Middle school? High school?
2. What did you like the most about school? The least?
3. Were you encouraged to do well in school? What messages did adults (parents, teachers) give you about your education?
4. Did you go to college? Why or why not?
5. If you had a chance to further your education, what would you study?

Now ask your child the following questions and discuss the answers.

1. What do you like the most about school? The least?
2. Why do you want to go to college? Where do you want to go to college?
3. What job do you want to do when you grow up? Try to find out how many years of college you need for this job.
4. What feedback about your own potential to attend college are you getting at school? At home?
5. What can we do as a family to help you do well in school?

Planning a College Day Handout Section Educational Journey Workshop Topics

This activity does take a bit of planning and possibly materials and resources depending on the ideas that teachers may have. Make sure teachers have ample time months before to plan this event, especially if students are going to rotate from teacher to teacher in order to experience as many of the different topics as possible. The following are some ideas for teachers to have a short presentation or workshop on. There are many resources available through the UC Berkeley Center for Educational Partnerships in order to enhance these activities.

College Budget

Study Abroad

Housing

Sports

Majors

Community Service

Fraternities/Sororities

Student Groups

Careers

Planning a College Day Handout Section Teacher Sample Letter to Request College Material

To: University of California, Berkeley
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
University of California, Berkeley
110 Sproul Hall #5800
Berkeley, CA 94720-5800

Hello, my name is _____, and I am an alumnus who is currently a _____ teacher at Empire Gardens Elementary School in San Jose, California. My school is working very diligently on strengthening our college-going culture and would like to request that you contribute to our College Day activities.

We are planning to host a College Fair on Tuesday, December 11, 2007 for our students and parents and know that universities have limited personnel to send out to school events so our staff has decided to ask each of our alma maters for any materials (handouts, brochures, etc.) and/or college gear (pennants, t-shirts, pencils, mugs, etc.) they can donate to our school in order for each of us to proudly represent our school. We would love to have every school our staff attended represented, and as a graduate of UC Berkeley, I sincerely ask for your support in helping us make our event a great success.

Please send any materials and/or college gear to the following address:
Empire Gardens Elementary School
ATTN: _____
1060 East Empire Street
San Jose, CA 95112

I can be contacted via email at _____ or by phone at _____ if you have any questions. Go Bears!

Sincerely,

Teacher's Name

Planning a College Day Handout Section Student Sample Letter to Request College Material

To: University of California, Berkeley
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
University of California, Berkeley
110 Sproul Hall #5800
Berkeley, CA 94720-5800

Hello, my name is _____, and I am a student who is currently attending _____ School in San Jose, California. My school is working very diligently on strengthening our college-going culture and would like to request that you contribute to our College Day activities.

My school will be having a College Day on Wednesday, November 26 2008. In preparation for this event, my teacher has assigned a college research project, and I chose UC Berkeley because it is the university I hope to attend when I graduate from high school. I am requesting informational materials and any college gear like t-shirts, caps, banners, that can be sent to me in order to showcase UC Berkeley in a student run college fair where we will promote our campus to the entire school on College Day. We would love to have every school that we researched represented, and as a future Cal Bear, I sincerely ask for your support in helping us make our event a great success.

Please send any materials and/or college gear to the following address:
_____School

ATTN: _____
Any Street
San Jose, CA 95112

I can be contacted via email at _____ or by phone at _____
if you have any questions. Go Bears!

Sincerely,

Student's Name

Resources

College-Going Culture Resources and Materials

<http://collegetools.berkeley.edu>

Realizing the College Dream Curriculum

<http://students.berkeley.edu/outreach/9-20-06-RTCD.pdf>

Fast Forward to College Newsletters

<http://students.berkeley.edu/outreach/ffwd.htm>

