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# Welcome to Kids2College

Created with the support of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Alaska 529 and The Sallie Mae Fund, **Kids2College** is a user-friendly college awareness curriculum designed to make upper elementary students more aware of how education impacts their future life choices. Students will have the opportunity to:

- learn more about college and career training;
- explore careers;
- make the connection between college and job opportunities
- begin planning for their future.

Through their activities, documented in their *My Path to Success* Student Handbook, they'll learn how they can prepare for college in middle and high school, and the positive impact college can have on their future. Students will have the opportunity to learn more about themselves, their learning styles, and how their interests and skills can be transformed into a promising and fulfilling future.

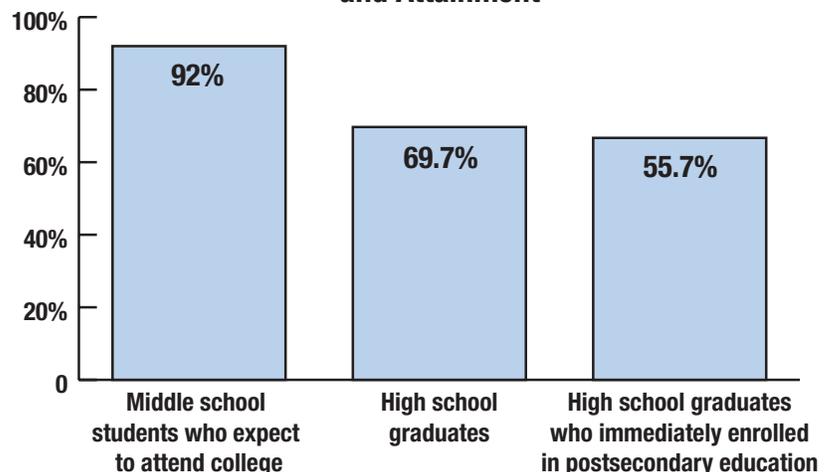
Kids2College is unique in its focus on developing partnerships between schools and higher education institutions. Students will have the opportunity to meet with college students, faculty, and staff through lessons taught by higher education partners and to visit a college campus either in-person or virtually. The in-class activities paired with the chance to experience college life firsthand will help students be aware of the path that will give them the greatest range of options for education beyond high school and see postsecondary education as a real possibility for their own future.

## Why Start in Elementary or Middle School?

Fifth or sixth grade may seem like an early time to begin college awareness outreach to students. Indeed, Kids-2College is currently one of the only national initiatives to focus on informing upper elementary students and families about the path to postsecondary education and what it takes to get there. However, research clearly shows that sixth-grade is an excellent time to begin raising college awareness, particularly in populations where college has not traditionally been an alternative.

A recent study shows that 92% of middle school students expect to attend college<sup>1</sup>; yet nationally, only 69.7% of students graduated high school in 2004, and only 55.7% of those who did graduate continued

**Student Postsecondary Aspirations and Attainment**



<sup>1</sup> Markow, Dana, Margot Liebman, and Jackie Dunbar. (2007) *Middle School Poll*. (Prepared for the National Association of Secondary School Principals and Phi Delta Kappa). Rochester, NY: Harris Interactive.

<sup>2</sup> The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS). *Public High School Graduation Rates, 2004*. Retrieved October 30, 2007 from <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?year=2004&level=nation&mode=map&state=0&submeasure=36>

on to postsecondary education immediately following graduation<sup>2</sup>. There is a clear disconnect between student aspirations and their postsecondary educational outcomes, much of which can be attributed to the fact that many students are not taking the necessary steps to achieve these goals during their middle and high school years.<sup>3</sup>

As students fall further behind on the preparation curve, their chances of being both academically and financially prepared for postsecondary education upon graduation diminish. This is particularly relevant for low-income and first-generation college bound students. These students are less likely to complete a rigorous high school curriculum than their peers who have at least one parent who completed college, and are less likely to take the SAT and ACT. First-generation students typically also lack “college knowledge,” meaning they do not understand the basics of navigating the college financial aid process, the admissions process, or the impact that academic and degree requirements have on potential career paths.<sup>4</sup> Early intervention is crucial to making sure that all students are taking the appropriate steps to be on course not only for high school graduation, but for postsecondary enrollment.<sup>5</sup>

### Why Include Parents?

Studies indicate that parents affect both the level of aspiration and college knowledge of their children. Consider the following findings from a 2007 report issued by the Institute for Higher Education Policy<sup>6</sup>:

- 87% of parents surveyed expect their child to go to college.
- Middle school students report that their parents are a key source of support for college planning, but 45% of parents surveyed did not take any of the college planning steps asked in the survey.
- More than one-third of parents surveyed reported having no sources of information on college preparation or admission.

Clearly, students are not the only ones who need to increase their college knowledge. Families play a crucial role in the high school and postsecondary planning process. A recent survey found that 83% of middle school students said that they relied on family and friends to help them select the right courses in high school that would prepare them for college enrollment<sup>7</sup>. It is imperative that family members understand the minimum requirements for postsecondary eligibility to ensure that they provide their students accurate guidance as they chart their educational course.

Studies have shown that students who receive information about college, academic requirements, and financial aid are more likely to follow a college-bound path in high school<sup>8</sup>. The sooner students and their families learn about all of their educational options, the sooner they can begin to prepare for them. Sixth grade is a particularly critical point for decisions that affect a child’s future education as it is a time when many students begin to question the value of education and whether or not it holds any promise for them.

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<sup>3</sup> Wimberly, George L. and Richard J. Noeth. (2005). *College Readiness Begins in Middle School*. Iowa City, IA: ACT.

<sup>4</sup> Vargas, Joel H. (2004) *College Knowledge: Addressing Information Barriers to College*. Boston: The Education Resources Institute.

<sup>5</sup> Vargas, *College Knowledge: Addressing Information Barriers to College*; Wimberly and Noeth, *College Readiness Begins in Middle School*; Tierney, William G., Julia E. Colyar, and Zoe B. Corwin. (2003). *Preparing for College: Building Expectations, Changing Realities*. Los Angeles: Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis.

<sup>6</sup> Cunningham, Alisa F, Wendy Erisman, and Shannon M. Looney. (2007) *From Aspirations to Action: The Role of Middle School Parents in Making the Dream of College a Reality*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.

<sup>7</sup> Markow, Dana, Margot Liebman, and Jackie Dunbar. (2007) *Middle School Poll*. Prepared for the National Association of Secondary School Principals and Phi Delta Kappa. Rochester, NY: Harris Interactive.

<sup>8</sup> Vargas, Joel H. (2004) *College Knowledge: Addressing Information Barriers to College* Boston: The Education Resources Institute.

## A Comprehensive Program

The Kids2College curriculum includes everything an education professional needs to present the program. Spread over six lessons, the curriculum covers:

- What postsecondary education institutions and degrees are available to students.
- How individual skills and interests can be parlayed into successful careers.
- How postsecondary education opens the door to job opportunities and future success.
- How understanding their individual learning style can help students maximize their academic potential.
- What steps students need to take in middle and high school to be prepared for college, including which classes and college entrance exams to take.
- A brief introduction to financial aid.
- An opportunity to meet working professionals and hear about their academic and career experiences.
- The chance to take a virtual campus tour or visit a college campus and meet students, faculty, and staff.

Information is provided for three different audiences:

- **Teachers and Coordinators\*** receive a Teacher’s Edition that details the content, materials, resources, and preparation required to present each of the six lessons, as well as a Supplemental Activities Guide and College Visit Planning Guide;
- **Students** receive the *My Path to Success* Student Handbook filled with activities that allow them to follow along with the course; and
- **Parents and Families** receive letters home describing the program and encouraging them to support their student as they pursue college.

By providing information to students, families, and education professionals, the Kids2College program allows everyone to learn how a college education is the key to a successful future.

In addition to the curriculum, additional pieces are provided for Teachers and Coordinators to aid them in presenting the program. These include:

- Tips for creating a college-going culture in your classroom, school, and community (found on page 10 of the Teacher’s Edition); and
- A summary of the research on the benefits of parent and family involvement and tips for building relationships with families (found on page 12 of the Teacher’s Edition).

Collectively, these resources provide everything a program needs to present the curriculum.

\*For the purposes of this curriculum, the Teacher refers to the individual presenting the content and the Coordinator refers to the individual who is coordinating the overall program with the teacher, higher education partner(s), and school. All schools partner with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education’s Statewide Coordinator. Some schools may also have a local coordinator.

# How to Use the Teacher’s Edition

At the beginning of each lesson, teachers are provided information that will help them prepare to present it. This information includes:

- ◆ **Lesson Overview**

The lesson overview provides the overarching theme of the session. It briefly describes what the lesson aims to accomplish and what students will learn.

- ◆ **Lesson Objectives**

Each lesson has specific learning objectives that clarify what students will be able to do by the end of the lesson.

- ◆ **Vocabulary**

A list of vocabulary words covered during the lesson is included. Definitions for these terms can be found in the glossary included with the curriculum.

- ◆ **Required and Optional Materials**

A complete list of materials needed to teach the lesson is provided.

- ◆ **Supplemental Activity**

For programs that have more time to work with students, we have included at least one additional activity that reinforces the lesson’s goals (four for Lesson One). These activities enhance the curriculum and many activities help students prepare for their Lesson 6 presentation.

- ◆ **Resources**

A variety of web-based resources related to each lesson’s objectives are provided. These resources are intended to provide extra information that you may wish to share with students and families. Student appropriate links are provided in the Student Handbook.

- ◆ **Before the Lesson Checklist**

This checklist will remind teachers of what they need to do to prepare for the lesson. A complete list of all six “Before the Lesson Checklists” can be found on pages 7-8.

- ◆ **Lesson Timeline**

This chart provides a detailed list of the activities in each lesson, including the length of time each activity should take, a summary of the activity, relevant page numbers, and the rationale behind doing the activity with the class. *Lesson Timelines can also be found under Curriculum Outline at: <https://acpe.alaska.gov/Kids2College>.*

After the lesson timeline, the lesson itself begins. Each lesson provides teachers with a script of what they can say during the lesson, as well as instructions on how to present the information throughout. Teachers do not have to read the script verbatim — in fact, it is strongly discouraged — but the script provides all of the background information teachers need to successfully present the lesson.

The Teacher's Edition is laid out in a clear, easy to use format. Instructions for the teacher are placed between lines using a bolder font. These instructions are interspersed with the scripted segments containing all the content the teacher needs to present. Throughout the curriculum, tips and suggestions are included to help teachers along as they prepare and present the material.

When students have a worksheet, journal page, or handout included in their Student Handbook, this page is reproduced in the Teacher's Edition for the teacher's reference. Whenever students have a corresponding page in the Student Handbook for taking notes, teachers are informed of the page number.

## Family Information Sheets

At the end of each lesson there is a family information sheet that can be reproduced and distributed to students. While this program focuses heavily on activities and information for students, these documents are included as a way to inform parents and families about postsecondary education as well. These information sheets, one for each lesson, summarize what was covered during the lesson and provide activities for families to do together to learn more about college. Please send them home after each lesson.

## The My Path to Success Student Handbook

**Review**

In addition to talking about learning styles, we also talked about the academic factors that are important for getting into college.

Q: What were the three important things we should focus on? Grades, class selections, and tests

Q: I shared with you some opportunities to get help if you were having difficulties in your classes. Can anyone name one of these opportunities?

**Paying for College**

Students may follow along and take notes on page 38 of their Student Handbook

We've talked about why college is important – how it impacts your future and provides opportunities for different careers. We've also discussed how you can prepare for college in middle school and high school. Today we are going to talk a little bit about the resources available to help you pay for college.

Q: What do you know about how much college costs?

Q: How many of you are worried that college might be hard to pay for or too expensive?

While you can contribute to your education yourself, you may also receive help to pay for college. The United States government devotes a large amount of money to help students and their families pay for postsecondary education, as do many state governments, colleges, and private organizations. All students who are applying to and attending college may apply for financial aid. Financial aid consists of different types of financial assistance for students who are in college.

There are four types of financial aid you should be aware of right now:

- **Grants** are financial aid awards that do not have to be repaid. Grants are usually given to the students who need the most money.
- **Scholarships**, like grants, are financial aid awards that do not have to be repaid. Scholarships are typically awarded to students based on their achievements and may be awarded by religious organizations, professional organizations, businesses, and schools. Some states also offer scholarship programs.
- **Work-study** is a program that allows students to work to earn money for their tuition. Work-study students have jobs on campus or at a local organization. Work-study jobs are often related to a student's major. All work-study money is earned, so you do not have to pay anything back after graduation.
- **Loans** are financial aid awards which must be repaid. Different organizations lend qualified students or their parents money that they will pay back after they leave school. The federal government provides loans with low-interest rates specifically for college students.



**KIDS COLLEGE**  
THE COLLEGE THAT FITS

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**Paying for College**

- The money available to help me pay for college is called \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ are financial aid awards that do not have to be repaid. They are usually given to the students who need the most money.
- \_\_\_\_\_ are financial aid awards that do not have to be repaid. They are typically awarded to students based on their achievements and may be awarded by religious organizations, professional organizations, businesses, and schools. Some states also offer this type of financial aid.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is a program that allows students to work to earn money for their tuition. Students in this program have jobs on campus or at a local organization. All the money is earned, so you do not have to pay anything back after graduation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ are financial aid awards which must be repaid. Different organizations lend qualified students money that they will pay back after they leave school. The federal government provides this type of aid with low-interest rates specifically for college students.
- In order to be eligible for financial aid, I need to fill out the \_\_\_\_\_ during my senior year of high school.

**Did You Know?**

- 63% of all college students pursuing bachelor's degrees received some sort of financial aid.
- 52% of public college students and 73% of private college students received grants.
- 45% of public college students and 56% of private college students took out educational loans.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2005, 2003-04 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04) Undergraduate Financial Aid Estimates for 2003-04 by Type of Institution (NCES 2005-163).

**KIDS COLLEGE**  
THE COLLEGE THAT FITS

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In addition to the Teacher's Edition, students will each receive a handbook that contains all of the information they need to successfully complete the lesson. The Student Handbook includes the worksheets and handouts that are a part of the class as well as an outline of the lesson to follow along with their instructor. Students are prompted to identify key vocabulary words as the lesson progresses. The Teacher's Edition includes prompts so that they can alert students to which page in their handbook they should be using as they progress through the lesson.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to keep the *My Path to Success* Student Handbooks in the classroom until the course is over. This provides an opportunity for them to review what students are writing in their journal entries and find out about questions students may have. This allows teachers to customize the program to their students' needs.

At the end of the program, students will be able to take their *My Path to Success* Student Handbook home to keep as a resource for them during their middle and high school careers.

## Before the Lesson Checklists

For many of the lessons, teachers and/or coordinators will have some preparatory work to do to get ready for the session. While these checklists are provided in the beginning of each lesson, we've also provided a comprehensive list here. Many times, the pre-lesson work involves gathering customized information regarding local and state information that is important for your students to know. Teachers and Coordinators are strongly encouraged to modify the curriculum to be able to share information relevant to their school, district, and community.

### Lesson One: Education Options

- Throughout the class, take a picture of each student.** You may begin taking pictures as soon as students arrive. These pictures will be added to the “I’m Going to College!” worksheet students will complete during the lesson. Students might wear a t-shirt or sweatshirt from their local or preferred college, a cap and gown, or photoshop themselves standing in front of their college of choice.
- Create an “I’m Going to College!” bulletin board.** This board should have room for students to hang their “I’m Going to College!” pages, as well as information about local colleges such as pennants, posters, pictures, and brochures. It will remain up for the entirety of the program.
- Provide copies of the *My Path to Success Student Handbook*** to each participating student.
- Send parent information letter home**, then send **Family Information Sheets after each lesson.**
- If you have an overhead transparency projector, **create a KWL transparency** (page 24).
- Hang signs for the “What Degree Do You Need?” activity** along the front or back wall of the classroom. On the far end of the room, hang a sign that says “High School Diploma.” On the other end of the room, hang a sign that says “Doctoral Degree.” Spaced equally in between, post signs that say “Vocational Certificate,” “Associate Degree,” “Bachelor’s Degree,” and “Master’s Degree” (see the chart on page 37).
- If there are local industries that are popular and/or in high demand in your community or region, you may wish to include those careers during the “What Degree Do I Need?” activity.
- Lesson One Supplemental Activity (SA)** “Personal Identity Wheel” (page SA-2) helps students learn who they are and what education options are the right fit; “College Research” (page SA-4) helps students plan their Lesson Six presentation; “Local Colleges and Universities” (page SA-6) introduces public, private, and Alaska Native serving institutions in Alaska; and “Taking College to the Bank” (page SA-9) is a math activity highlighting average earnings based on levels of education.

### Lesson Two: Career Exploration

- Look through the Career Database.** If a prominent local industry or subsistence job is not listed as a career option, collect information about it to share with students (see page 51).
- Consider signing your class up for the free AKCIS online career exploration tool to use with this curriculum.** Contact [julia.renfro@alaska.gov](mailto:julia.renfro@alaska.gov) to confirm if your school or district is already signed up. Visit [https://acpe.alaska.gov/PLANNING/AKCIS/AboutAKCIS/AKCIS\\_Activation\\_Agreement](https://acpe.alaska.gov/PLANNING/AKCIS/AboutAKCIS/AKCIS_Activation_Agreement)
- Lesson Two Supplemental Activity**, “Making College and Career Connections” (page SA-11) helps students think outside the box and explore career fields around a central interest.

### Lesson Three: I'm Going to College!

- ❑ **Share state public high school graduation requirements/ecomendations** (page 82) and college & career readiness assessment recommendations (page 83) with your students. (Please supplement with additional district credit requirements as appropriate.)
- ❑ **Research the academic support and enrichment opportunities available in your school and community.** Create a document that lists all these opportunities, when they are held, and how students can get involved. Be sure to include relevant contact information and eligibility requirements (for example, your school's after school enrichment opportunities, church or community homework centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, ANSEP Middle School Academy, summer university-sponsored enrichment camps, local library programs, etc). For a sample, please see page 84.
- ❑ **Lesson Three Supplemental Activity** "Applying Your Learning Style" (page SA-14) helps students learn to perform their very best academically.

### Lesson Four: Paying for College

- ❑ Please **reewiv the Alaska specific scholarship and grant programs for students** (page 94), and share this information with students during the lesson. Learn more at: [www.acpe.alaska.gov](http://www.acpe.alaska.gov).
- ❑ **Print a copy of the Facilitator's Cards** (pages 97–101). Cut out each square, fold it, and place it in a container. You will draw the cards from this container during the game.
- ❑ **Gather BINGO chips.** (These may be squares of paper, actual bingo chips, or any other small object that will cover a student's square.) Students may mark on the BINGO cards in pencil, but doing so might prove confusing during multiple games as they erase and rewrite.
- ❑ **Lesson Four Supplemental Activity** "Visualize Your Future" (page SA-18) helps students think of what their future could look like as they prepare their own Lesson Six presentation.

### Lesson Five: Connecting College and Careers

- ❑ **Speak with your coordinator about who will presenting on your panel.** Your coordinator will help recruit panelists. Please review pages 115–116 to see what panelists will receive prior to presenting. This information may also help your students prepare their own questions for the panelists.
- ❑ **Panel Coordinators:** Please refer to pages 112–116 and <https://acpe.alaska.gov/Kids2College> for information on recruiting, preparing, and following up with your guest speakers. If there is a prominent local industry, or if there are certain fields that are projected to be facing shortages in the next ten years, these could be potential areas to highlight on your panel.
- ❑ **Determine how long each student will have to present their Career Day presentation.** This will vary based on the number of students in your class. See page 117 for more information. You might consider having students record presentations using Flipgrid (Flip). Learn more in the Teacher Resources section at: <https://acpe.alaska.gov/Kids2College>.
- ❑ **Lesson Five Supplemental Activity** "Career Interviews" (page SA-20) provides guidelines to help students interview a trusted adult.

### Lesson Six: Career Day

- ❑ **Speak with your Coordinator to gather information about the College Visit,** including date and times, location for pick up and drop off, transportation, chaperones, sack lunches, etc.
- ❑ **Lesson Six Supplemental Activity** "College Knowledge" includes a Game & Quiz (page SA-22).

## How Can our Higher Education Partners Be Involved?

There are multiple opportunities for higher education partners to be involved in the program.

- Lesson One:** This is an excellent lesson for a higher education partner to talk with students about postsecondary education opportunities. This is also an opportunity for the partner to promote their university by donating a school t-shirt or sweatshirt and other paraphernalia for the college bulletin board.
- Lesson Three:** This is a great lesson to have a higher education partner talk with students about the postsecondary education admissions process.
- Lesson Four:** This is a great lesson to have a higher education partners talk with students about financial aid opportunities.
- Lesson Five:** In this lesson, Kids2College Program Coordinators work with teachers to select a presentation date, then recruit career panelists to talk with students about their college and career experience.
- Lesson Six:** The Teacher or Coordinator may wish to invite the Campus Coordinator that he/she is working with to come watch the presentations and formally invite students to campus.

## Student Surveys for Program Evaluation of Efficacy

Assessing the effectiveness of the program is a crucial part of Kids2College. Evaluating student learning will allow both the instructor and the curriculum development team to determine how successful the program is in reaching its stated goals. We have included a pre- and post-program survey to gather information about student knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. This information will not only be helpful to the instructor as they prepare the lessons, but will also help to show what information students have mastered during their participation in the program. Instructions on how to administer the surveys as well as a copy of the pre- and post-program surveys can be found on pages 14-18. These surveys are a crucial part of the program.

## Supplemental Materials

The complete curriculum includes six one-hour lessons and a campus event or virtual campus tour. To enrich the lessons, we have included Supplemental Activities at the end of the workbook. These materials include nine additional in-class or homework activities, as well as two campus event activities. Each activity is designed to take approximately 30 minutes and enhance what students gain from the six-lesson curriculum. Multiple activities help students prepare for their Lesson 6 presentations.

## Traveling Together on the Path to Success

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Alaska 529, and Sallie Mae Fund applaud your efforts to educate students and families about their postsecondary options. We hope the materials provided here will help as you undertake this important task.



## Tips for Building a College-Going Culture

### What is a College-Going Culture?

College-going culture refers to an environment that nourishes aspirations and behaviors that lead to preparing for, applying to, and enrolling in college<sup>9</sup>. A strong college-going culture is made palpable in a school by its faculty, students, and families.

There are key conditions that are important in turning the notion of a college-going culture into a tangible reality in a classroom. All educators are essential partners in this endeavor. For example, teachers may spend up to 35 hours per week interacting with students and are familiar with the K–16 pipeline.

### Tips for Building a College-Going Culture in Your Classroom

The following research based principles are important in building a college-going culture in your classroom:

**1. Expect that all students are capable of being prepared to enroll and succeed in college<sup>10</sup>.**

Research demonstrates that the more we expect of our students the better they are likely to do. Students respond to high expectations and want to hear that their educators and families believe they have the potential to do better.

**2. Encourage your students to do well in school.**

Instill in your students the importance of getting good grades, participating in extracurricular activities, and working hard to excel. Emphasize the need to build strong study skills that will help them in middle school and thereafter.

**3. Motivate all of your students to aspire to attend college.**

Exposing your students to college and encouraging them to be college ready entails creating, sustaining and reinforcing college messages. To do so, it is recommended that both verbal and nonverbal tactics be used:

*Verbal* — by sharing about your own college admission process. You may start by sharing your own college experience. Many students do not have a college graduate in their family. Learning about your experience will help demystify some of their misconceptions. To be fully prepared to answer their questions it is recommended that you stay informed about the current college admissions process.

*Nonverbal* — it is often said that nonverbal communication is the most powerful form of communication. Having information visible in the classroom such as posters with college-going messages helps emphasize a college-going culture.

<sup>9</sup> Blumberg Corwin, Zoë and William Tierney. (2007) *Getting There — and Beyond Building a Culture of College-going in High Schools* Los Angeles: USC Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis.

<sup>10</sup> Pathways to College Network

#### **4. Explain how they can find the resources to pay for college.**

As research continues to show, students and their families often see college as unattainable for financial reasons. Help explain the many options they will have to solicit financial support for their university studies and urge them to plan ahead. It is recommended that you keep abreast of changes to the financial aid protocol nationally and in your state.

#### **5. Inject college & career exploration activities into the curricula.**

By incorporating the Kids2College program into your existing work, you are providing your students college & career exploration activities and information essential for their success. As you implement the program, we recommend you consider the different social, cultural, and learning-styles among your students.

Here are some additional suggestions:

- Put up posters of colleges and universities in your classroom.
- Wear a sweatshirt or t-shirt with the name of your alma mater. Organize a “College Day” when all faculty and staff wear their college gear.
- Conduct classroom trivia — take popular characters from TV shows (CSI, etc.) and highlight the degrees (knowledge and skills) that are needed for that position. For example: CSI — a forensic scientist needs, at minimum, a bachelor’s degree in forensic science, biology, or chemistry. But there are multiple branches of forensic science, such as psychology. Have the students research universities that offer those degrees.
- Have brochures, applications, viewbooks, and course catalogs freely available in your classroom.
- Write a local college or university and ask if they can send pens or other small items with their institutions name on them to hand out in your classroom.
- Introduce a “college of the week” in your classroom. Every week, place the name and interesting facts about a new college or university on your white-board.
- Put up your diploma in the classroom.
- Start a college day/month in which the school promotes college awareness.
- Put up the charts titled “Taking College to the Bank” (Supplemental Activities Guide, page 8).
- Invite high school alumni who have completed their college degree to speak to the class.
- Rename popular places around the school, like hallways, with college-related names.

# The Role of Family Involvement in Academic Achievement and Postsecondary Access

As you know, decades of research indicate that when schools, families and community groups work together to support learning, children of all backgrounds benefit. According to *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, students with involved families, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to:

- earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs;
- be promoted, pass their classes and earn credits;
- attend school regularly;
- have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school; and
- graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

The positive effects of family involvement in children’s education are multiplied when that involvement is linked to student learning and achievement and is designed to engage families and children in developing specific skills.

These studies found that families of all income and education levels, and from all ethnic and cultural groups, are engaged in supporting their children’s learning at home. White, middle class families, however, tend to be more involved at the school. These findings have implications for the strategies Kids2College educators should consider in their efforts to reach out to and engage families.

## So What Can Educators Do to Facilitate Family Involvement?

Research indicates that students and schools will benefit from special efforts to involve all families in the education of their children. The following are some of the strategies Kids2College educators can use to facilitate that involvement. The common element in all of these strategies is **communication with rather than to families**.

### ■ Build trust and respect with families by nurturing relationships with them. Some activities might include:

- creating a school environment that is welcoming to families;
- taking time to communicate one-on-one with families about both positive and less-positive aspects of student progress; and
- recognizing and building on families’ cultural values and the variety of ways they are already involved with their children’s learning.

### ■ Recognize and address family needs by asking what they need to be more involved at school and at home. Some activities might include:

- finding interpreters;
- scheduling conferences and events at times that are convenient for families; and
- encouraging family members to send a substitute to a meeting or activity if one parent cannot attend.

- **Bridging class and cultural differences by recognizing and building on them. This could include:**
  - asking families to share their cultural traditions and norms to build understanding, trust, and reveal commonalities; and
  - being open to the possibility of changing some common practices to account for varying points of view and cultural perspectives.
  
- **Validate families’ ability to contribute to their child’s education by asking how they would like to be involved at school. Some activities might include:**
  - asking for input via parent-conducted surveys (of other families) and making it easy for families to meet and discuss concerns with educators; and
  - offering information on how to communicate with their children about a variety of topics.
  
- **Build families’ skills and knowledge about academic and higher education requirements by integrating the Kids2College program into existing curricula. In doing this, educators will be providing hands-on experiences, written information and training opportunities for families. Some activities might include:**
  - providing learning kits, books, games and other materials for families to use at home;
  - encourage the school to offer classes or discussion groups for parents;
  - assigning interactive homework that involves parents with their children’s learning;
  - providing information about graduation requirements, test schedules, and postsecondary education options and how to plan for them;
  - encouraging families to schedule regular meetings with teachers and counselors to plan children’s academic programs so that they match goals for postsecondary education;
  - informing families about where to find extra academic support; and
  - offering information about financing postsecondary education and applying for financial aid.

Although many of the strategies mentioned above might most conveniently take place on-site at school, going directly to families may be the most effective way to reach them. This might mean making individual home visits, making presentations at community meetings or in places of worship, or accessing the informal social network that exists in communities to facilitate the dissemination of information among families.

Keep in mind that there is no “correct” approach to family engagement; consider implementing a variety of approaches that build upon the strengths and interests of your Kids2College families and schools.

The bottom line is that Kids2College educators must assume that all parents love their children and that all children can learn. The reasons families may not be involved in their children’s education vary but through two-way communication, educators and families can agree upon ways that families can play a role in their children’s education. Once the communication flow starts, be prepared to continually modify and expand that role based on input from families. As the relationship builds, be sure to thank and recognize families regularly for all they do for their children and for the school. Remember that families want the best for their children — and so do you!

# Pre- and Post-Program Survey Instructions

All Kids2College programs are required to measure the impact of the program by surveying all participating students. We have provided you with a pre- and post-program survey which must be administered prior to delivering the first lesson. A copy of the survey can be found on page 16.

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**Teacher Instructions:** This survey assesses students' opinions and plans about high school and college. You should give your students this assessment before you begin the Kids2College program and again at the end of the program. The purpose of the Kids2College program is to make your students aware of the higher education options that are available to them. You may find that your students do not think that college is a viable option for them. They may not feel that they will be prepared for college or that they have the financial resources to pay for college. They may also choose a different form of postsecondary education. We hope that by the end of this program your students not only believe that college is a possibility for them but also have the desire to pursue higher education.

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Monitor student progress as they are completing the survey. Be prepared to answer questions as students may be unfamiliar with some of the terms. Students may not have completed a survey before, so be prepared to answer questions about Questions 12–20. Explain to students that Likert-scale survey questions are designed to measure their attitudes. Students should read the statement, then think about whether they agree or disagree with the statements. Before students begin the survey, you may wish to review an example with them.

Examples:

- I love to read.
- Playing basketball is fun.

You may review other examples with students. Be sure that students understand how they should respond to these statements.

## Pre-Program Survey

The survey should be administered during a separate session held prior to Lesson One. There are several things that need to be accomplished during this preliminary session, including:

- Have students complete the pre-program survey. Be sure that each student completes the whole survey, including background information, as this is needed to compare their pre-program results with their post-program results.
- Distribute the welcome letter for parents, as well as any required field trip permission forms (see pages 17–18).
- This is an excellent opportunity to take student pictures for the “I’m Going to College” activity that is completed in Lesson One. For more information, see page 31.

## Post-Program Survey

Following the college visit, have students complete the program survey for a second time. Ideally, this can be done during an additional follow up session; however, students may complete the survey at different times if necessary (for example, during a visit to the counselor's office, before school, or during a lunch hour).

Comparing their results on the second administration of the survey with the first administration will allow you to see the areas where students have shown the most growth. Remember, if your students are not completing the surveys online, you will need to scan/email or mail each set of surveys to your Kids2College coordinator as soon as they are complete.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_



Pre-Survey  Post-Survey

	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Other
Your grade	<input type="radio"/>						

1. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? (Please check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native   
  Asian   
  Black / African-American   
  Not Hispanic or Latino  
 Hispanic or Latino   
  White   
  Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

2. I identify as ...  Male  Female  Non-Binary

	Some high school	High school	Vocational school	Community college	Four-year college	Graduate school	I don't know
3. What is the highest level of education your mother received?	<input type="radio"/>						
4. What is the highest level of education your father received?	<input type="radio"/>						

5. How many of your brothers and/or sisters have attended or graduated from a college or university?

- None   
  One   
  Two   
  Three +   
  I am the oldest   
  I do not have siblings   
  I don't know

6. Which of the following best describes your immediate plans after high school?

- I plan to enter the workforce.   
  I plan to attend a local community college.  
 I plan to attend a four-year college or university.   
  I plan to enter into an apprenticeship or vocational program.  
 I plan to enter the military.   
  I haven't decided what I want to do after I graduate high school.

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
7. How often do you talk with your parent(s) or guardian(s) about the classes you plan to take in high school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. How often do you talk with your parent(s) or guardian(s) about attending college?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. How often do you talk with your parent(s) or guardian(s) about your career goals?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Have you ever visited a college or university campus?  Yes  No  Virtual Tour Only

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	I don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
11. Making good grades in my middle school classes helps me achieve my future goals.	<input type="radio"/>				
12. A college education is important for me to achieve my goals.	<input type="radio"/>				
13. College graduates earn more money than people with only a high school diploma.	<input type="radio"/>				
14. I see myself graduating from college in ten to fifteen years.	<input type="radio"/>				
15. I can afford to pay for college.	<input type="radio"/>				
16. Knowing my learning style helps me do well in my classes.	<input type="radio"/>				
17. There are a variety of financial aid resources to help me pay for college.	<input type="radio"/>				
18. I am aware of the courses that I need to take in high school to be ready for college.	<input type="radio"/>				
19. The grades I make in middle school affect the courses I can take in high school.	<input type="radio"/>				



## Letter to Parent or Family Member

**[Date]**

Dear Parent or Family Member:

We would like to let you know of an exciting opportunity for your student.

The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education and Alaska 529 have partnered with **[Campus Name]** to bring the Kids2College® Program to **[School Name]**!

Kids2College is an early college & career exploration program designed to provide information on the importance of college by introducing students to college and career opportunities. Classrooms are paired with a local university, college campus, or technical school to participate in a unique six-lesson curriculum that combines hands-on activities with information on careers, college life, and preparing for college & career training. All sessions and activities are held at school or offered virtually, to emphasize the program's premise: *a college education is something you can achieve if you plan ahead.*

The program will end with a visit for the students on **[Visit Date]** to **[Campus Name]** — at no cost to the students or their school! Parents and guardians are invited to come as well. You will receive further information from the teacher at a later time.

While many colleges and universities already have educational awareness programs in place, Kids2College is unique in its focus on fifth and sixth-graders. The sooner you and your student learn about all of your educational options, the sooner you can begin to prepare for them. Sixth grade is a particularly critical point for decisions that affect a child's future education, a time when many students begin to question the value of education and whether or not it holds any promise for them.

Please return the enclosed Permission Slip to your student's teacher no later than **[Due Date]**.

We hope that you will talk to your child about their experience with Kids2College, and their future plans. Your encouragement and support can make a big difference in your child's success!

If you have any questions please contact your child's teacher. If you would like more information on the Kids2College program, please contact Shelly Morgan, K-12 Specialist with the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education at 907-269-7972 or by email at [shelly.morgan@alaska.gov](mailto:shelly.morgan@alaska.gov).

Thank you for being a part of your student's future success!

Sincerely,

The Kids2College Team

Your child’s class has been invited to participate in the Kids2College program. Kids2College is sponsored by The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, in partnership with Alaska 529 (AK 529), Alaska School Districts, and Alaska Postsecondary Institutions (collectively referred to as Program Sponsors & Funding Partners).

The primary objective of this program is to provide students with information and awareness on preparing and planning for college and career exploration. After completing a 6-lesson curriculum at school, the program will culminate with a 1-day campus visit.

Students will be provided with a college experience on campus with an inspirational opening ceremony, campus tour, engaging age-appropriate classes, and lunch. These activities should encourage dialogue about aspirations and goals, prepare students to visualize their own future, and instill the idea that going to college is possible.

**WHAT:** Kids2College field trip  
**WHEN:** [Date of Campus Visit]  
**WHERE:** [Campus Name] (Address)

**STUDENT NAME** (Print): \_\_\_\_\_ **GRADE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY CONTACTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ALLERGIES OR SPECIAL CONCERNS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MODE OF TRANSPORTATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Release of Liability and Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment**

I hereby give permission for my student to attend the Kids2College Campus Visit field trip.

I understand that supervision and chaperoning will be provided by the school/district, and agree that my student will abide by all rules and regulations of School District authorities.

I consent to any emergency transportation, medical treatment, care or hospitalization deemed necessary for the welfare of my student by a medical professional or medical facility in the event of injury or illness while he/she is participating in the above stated activity. I hereby waive, release and discharge Program Sponsors & Funding Partners from any and all claims for damages or personal injury, death, or property damage which I or my student may have, or which may hereafter occur as a result of my or my student’s participation in this field trip.

I understand that Program Sponsors & Funding Partners will assume no liability or costs for such emergency transportation and medical treatment. I understand that any medical expenses or insurance coverage are my responsibility. I hold harmless and indemnify Program Sponsors & Funding Partners from all liability on my and my student’s behalf, waive my and my student’s rights to sue Program Sponsors & Funding Partners, and assume all risks of my student’s participation in this Activity. I allow my student to participate in this Activity. I understand that I am responsible for the obligations and acts of my student as described in this document. I agree to be bound by the terms of this document.

My signature below authorizes my student to participate in this group education activity. By signing below I represent that I have the authority to sign this form on behalf of the minor listed above.

**Parent/Guardian Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship to Minor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_