

Working with school partners to support students in the college process

There are many ways to work with school partners to support students in the college process. Depending on the level of college counseling supports available at a school, the experience and role of program staff may vary. The following are various ways that program staff can work with their school partner to support students throughout the college process.

Click on the links below to jump to the specific section.

- [Outline and delineate college process responsibilities between the school and program staff](#)
- [Align the curriculum with the school's college process](#)
- [Supporting the school's standardized testing process](#)
- [Financial aid](#)
- [Parental engagement](#)

Outline and delineate college process responsibilities between the school and program staff

The types of college counseling supports provided to students will differ across schools. It will be important for program staff to connect with partner school administration and the school college counseling office at the start of the school year to determine the types of supports that are available to students and specify the responsibilities that the school and program staff will assume. For example, program staff may be asked to help students register for the SAT or ACT, educate students and families about financial aid or chaperone college visits hosted by the school. Keep in mind that program staff responsibilities can change over time as students progress through high school and so it will be important to have ongoing conversations with the school regarding this.

Align the curriculum with the school's college process

iMentor's College Success Curriculum is designed to help students build the non-cognitive skills and college knowledge critical for success over the course of the program. Program staff should seek out opportunities to learn about their school's specific college process and work with the school each year to align the curriculum, when possible. For example, program staff can align the test preparation lessons with when the school recommends students take the SAT or ACT, college essay lessons with an English or writing class so students have more opportunities to work on their essays or financial aid lessons with when the school begins to educate students and families about the process.

Build relationships with the school's college counseling office

Program staff should make an effort to introduce themselves and get to know the school's college counseling staff. It is a great opportunity for program staff working with all grade levels to familiarize

themselves with the school's specific college process, be informed about college-related happenings, and be able to provide students and mentors with relevant resources. For example, program staff can plan lessons around the school's internal college application deadlines and share internal deadlines with mentors. Make sure to work with the school partner to identify priorities and needs in any given year, so that program staff know where to prioritize their work. Also, don't hesitate to ask the college counselor if it's okay for you to share their contact information with mentors or invite them to speak at a mentor-mentee event.

Supporting the school's standardized testing process

Schools provide varying levels of support for students when it comes to college admissions standardized tests. Supports typically include registering students for tests, providing test preparation or connecting students to test preparation resources in the community, and helping students to report test scores. Program staff should connect with the school's college counseling office prior to the start of the school year to learn more about the school's standardized testing process and ways to be involved. Ways that program staff can be involved include reminding students and mentors about test dates and registration deadlines, informing students about test preparation resources, helping students register for tests and send score reports, and sharing relevant resources with students and mentors.

Financial aid

Similar to standardized testing, schools provide varying levels of support for students through the financial aid process. Supports can include helping students complete FAFSA and state financial aid applications, educating students and parents about the cost of college and financial aid, hosting financial aid workshops, and helping students to understand their financial aid award packages. Program staff should connect with the school's college counseling office to learn more about the financial aid supports available to students and opportunities for mentors to be involved.

Parental engagement

The level of parental engagement will vary as students go through the different parts of the college process. As students build their college lists, they may share and discuss their preferences with their parents. As students work on their college applications and fill out their financial aid applications, they may need to ask their parents for information. As students make college acceptance decisions, they may seek out their parents' advice and perspective. As students and mentors engage in these college process conversations in class and at events, program staff can work with the school to connect with parents as necessary.
