

Creating a College Going Culture Work Plan

Goals, Principles, and Strategic Steps on How
Spokane will Lead the State in College
Attainment

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2011

Preface

The mission of Spokane Public Schools is to successfully prepare all students for their post-secondary pursuits. Approximately 70% of all jobs are requiring some education beyond high school. Therefore, our agenda is a college and career readiness agenda. When we define college, we are including all training beyond high school. However, the research is clear; preparing students for rigorous post-secondary experiences means that all students need to have the best academic preparation possible regardless of their post-secondary plans. When students are adequately prepared, then they will have choices and will be able to enter into these choices without remediation. We believe that Spokane is poised to be a state-wide leader in this area. The Spokane School District has already passed the state average in terms of students going on to post-secondary pursuits. Now we need to refine our college and career readiness plan to improve student performance, increase the percentage of students accessing post-secondary plans of study, and evaluate our current programs to ensure that students are adequately prepared. This is our plan on how to proceed with this ambitious undertaking.

Goals

Much of the nation has recently been discussing the 9-9-9 plan in reference to political discussions and debate. Using this catchphrase, Spokane has developed its goals to guide our work plan over the next five years.

Spokane's 9-9-9 Goals

90%

90% of our students graduating from our school system (extended graduation rates).

90%

90% of our students entering post-secondary routes of study immediately after high school.

90%

90% of our students able to access their entry level post-secondary studies without remediation.

Principles

As referenced on the previous page, our three goals are clear. In order to accomplish these goals, we have outlined a set of guiding principles for our work. These research-based principles will help us to advance college and career access and success for all students in our school system and will guide our work plan on how to reach our goals.

1

Principle One: **Expect** that all students are capable of being prepared to enroll and succeed in college.

- All students must be challenged by high expectations.
- Shift towards thinking that post-secondary guidance is for all students and not just for some students.
- Shift toward thinking that college and career guidance should be a teacher-engaged and administrator-engaged effort and away from the “guidance counselor only” model.
- College-going culture creation is a key element in all schools.
- Shift towards thinking of students as drivers of school culture as opposed to recipients of school culture. If this is true, then it is imperative to create networks of student-adult relationships and student-student relationships that enhance post-secondary pursuits.

2

Principle Two: **Provide** a range of high-quality college and career preparatory tools and curricula for all students and their families.

- All students will complete a pathway of study that prepares them for multiple options after high school. The pathway should comprise core academic coursework for all students with specialized coursework aligning to pathways of study personalized for each student.
- Honors and college-credit courses will be available to all students.
- All students will successfully complete critical steps for college entry.
- All students will receive financial aid information early and in a regular manner. Lack of financial aid information should not be the limiting factor for any of our students’ college and career pursuits.
- All students will receive information about their preparation for college and career readiness beginning in elementary school and throughout high school.

3

Principle Three: **Assess** policy, program, practice, and institutional effectiveness regularly.

- Create metrics to establish progress towards a college and career readiness agenda.
 - Establish benchmarks and goals along to way to inform students and their families of their college and career readiness; this begins in early elementary school.
 - Align assessment program with college and career readiness and establish new benchmarks beyond minimum requirements based on college readiness standards.
- Shift to counting college enrollment rates as a measure of high-school success.
 - Establish college enrollment and proficiency rates as a key success measure of high schools.
 - Publish college-enrollment, persistence and completion rates by high school.

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Principle Four: College and career readiness is a **multifaceted** concept comprising numerous variables. Based on a review of the literature, we will focus on those that can most directly be influenced by schools. This includes teaching the following:

- Key cognitive strategies
 - Intellectual openness and inquisitiveness, Problem-solving, Precision/accuracy, Interpretation, Reasoning, Research, and Intellectual Openness
- Key content
 - Two Foundational Areas: Writing and Research
 - Content Domains: English, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, and The Arts
- Academic behaviors
 - Time Management Skills, Study Skills, How to Work in Study Groups, Use Goal Setting, Develop Persistence, and how to Prepare for Tests
- Contextual skills and awareness (College Knowledge)

5

Principle Five: College and career readiness hinges on powerful **instruction**: teachers matter.

Excellent instruction is dynamic and challenging. However, we know that effective teachers use consistent and research based techniques to improve student learning. These include the following high leverage teaching moves:

- Establishing clear learning targets.
- Accessing and assessing prior knowledge.
- Checking for Understanding (Assessment for Learning).
- Effective practice for students.
- Exposing students to content over multiple exposures.
- Building in self-reflection.
- Summarizing and Synthesizing.

1

Principle One:

Expect that all students are capable of being prepared to enroll and succeed in college and create a college-going culture in every school.

“All students are capable of being prepared for college and educators, families, communities, and policy makers have the responsibility to ensure that all students, including those from low-income backgrounds, graduate from high school ready for college success.” –The College Board CollegeKeys Compact

Recommendation 1: *Surround students with adults and peers who build and support their college-going aspirations.*

- Provide mentoring for our P-12 students by students who have enrolled in college and/or through other college-educated adults (e.g. advisories).
 - The district helps schools recruit and train mentors to meet the needs of high schools, especially those that, historically, have not sent many students to college.
 - The district recruits mentors from community agencies, business, and colleges and universities.
 - The district establishes mechanisms for these mentoring relationships to take place (e.g. advisories) so all students have a college vision.
- Facilitate student relationships with peers who plan to attend college through a structured program of curricular activities (and extracurricular if possible). Cultural capital development of students is critical for students who may not have adult resources available in their families on how to navigate to college and complete all of the application steps.
- Provide hands-on opportunities for students to explore a variety of careers and college aspirations, and assist them in aligning postsecondary plans with their college and career aspirations. These tools should provide all students in our system with the information they need to enter their postsecondary programs, adults information about each student’s progress along the way, and should be personalized and used for each student.

Recommendation 2: *Create a college-going culture in every school*

- Establish the expectation that all students are capable of success in rigorous college-preparatory courses in high school.
 - The district develops policies for increasing postsecondary access and communicates these policies to all administrators, specialists, and teaching staff, the district has staff with expertise in increasing postsecondary access and the district provides research-based guidance on fostering college aspirations.
- Create a recognition system of college admission and success in all schools.
- Implement the best research-based dropout prevention programs which include early identification of those students who are at risk of dropping out and subsequently providing them a safety net.
- Develop school-wide plans to send strong consistent-messages that every student is college material and surrounding them with college attainment messaging. (For example: signage, college banners, T.V. advertisements, PSA’s, college fairs, college of the week profiles, visits by community members, graduates, and college reps, alumni directories, etc...). The expectation of college readiness should begin as early as elementary school to ensure that students begin to develop college aspirations and appropriate academic plans.
- Provide professional development workshops for teachers, counselors, and other school staff about how their beliefs affect the college-going aspirations and achievement of students from low-income backgrounds.
 - The district provides teachers and counselors with professional development to expand knowledge and skills in promoting postsecondary success.
 - The district provides supervisory training to principals and teacher leaders who support teachers in providing a rigorous course of study and ensuring students understand the steps toward college enrollment.
 - The district provides schools with counselors trained in college advising, the completion of application processes for college admissions, and financial aid.

2

Principle Two: Provide a range of high-quality college and career preparatory tools for all students and their families.

“The ‘holy grail’ of college readiness would be an integrated system that provides all of this information for students in a progressive, developmentally appropriate fashion so that students have a continuous feel for how well they are being prepared...for college.” – Redefining College Readiness: David Conley.

Recommendation 1: *Offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work, and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade.*

- Create a core academic program that is aligned with and leads to college readiness by the end of 12th grade. This includes opening challenging courses to all interested students.
- Ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum and have students develop a four-year course trajectory with each 9th grader that leads to fulfilling a college-ready curriculum. The district and school’s goal is for all graduating seniors to have enough academic courses to qualify for college.
- Make the senior year meaningful and challenging.
- Use a yearly student-led conference at the secondary level to ensure that student-initiated course selection reflects student interests and aspirations for college and career readiness and to confirm the fact that college and career readiness steps have been completed.

Recommendation 2: *Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry.*

Step 1: Ensure students prepare for, and take, the appropriate college entrance or admissions exam early.

- All students take college readiness assessments (ReadiStep in the 8th grade, PSAT in the 10th and 11th and exit exams (SAT, ACT, COMPASS, etc...)
- All students and parents are informed of how to understand their test scores, where they are at in college and career readiness, and how to accelerate if they are off track.
- Create an individualized plan for students who are not on track and provide tools to get them back on track quickly (tutoring, mentoring, summer programs, and study groups are designed to support students attempting to master challenging course content and to provide safety nets for students.
- Staff are trained on how to analyze and use the data and how to help families understand the data.
- All students have access to free test preparation tools for college readiness assessments (via direct tutoring, practice tests, training software, etc...).
- There is a clear communication plan on test schedules, deadlines, etc....

Step 2: Assist students in their college search

- Students should receive assistance in finding a post-secondary program that matches their qualification, interests and goals. Schools should deliver a curriculum to all students that ensures that all students receive and understand this information. Students should be encouraged to apply to multiple colleges and develop backup opportunities.

Step 3: Coordinate college visits.

- All students should be taken on college visits that match their aspirations beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school.

Step 4: Assist students in completing college application and financial aid barriers (and make this non-negotiable).

- Track and assist all students in completing college applications and financial aid steps.
- Build partnerships with and connections to postsecondary programs and institutions and community organizations.
- Develop a 6-12 scope and sequence that provides all students with a college knowledge curriculum, including: financial literacy, college applications, letters of recommendation, and barriers to admission (including creation of an email account to communicate with colleges).
- Organize workshops and instructional experiences for parents and students to inform them starting in 7th grade and prior to 12th grade about college affordability, scholarship and aid sources, and the financial aid process.

3

Principle Three:

Assess policy, program, practice, and institutional effectiveness regularly.

America faces many challenges...but the enemy I fear most is complacency. We are about to be hit by the full force of global competition. If we continue to ignore the obvious task at hand while others beat us at our own game, our children and grandchildren will pay the price. We must now establish a sense of urgency.”

— **Charles Vest,**
Former President
Massachusetts
Institute of Technology

Recommendations: *Create metrics to establish our progress towards a college and career ready completion agenda.*

- Create metrics to look at desired levels of academic preparation for post-secondary and plan backwards from there to create alignment and coherence (see Appendix B). Readiness must become the central driver. Include metrics on college attendance, completion and remediation.
 - The district should set challenging, research-based targets for increasing postsecondary access (e.g. completing college preparatory curriculum, submitting the FAFSA) and reviews each school’s progress toward those targets.
 - The district sets high expectations for all students’ achievement, even those not traditionally expected to attend college, and measures each school’s results against those expectations. Districts should treat the problem of poorly prepared ninth-graders as a P-12 problem, not just a high school problem (Dougherty & Rutherford, 2010). The district should develop content and performance criteria in the elementary and middle school grades to identify the extent to which each student is on track for college and career readiness and should emphasize the importance of accelerating students onto the “ramp to college and career readiness” in elementary and middle school (see Appendix A).
 - The district provides tools to schools to help them track their progress on these metrics.
 - The district provides professional development opportunities and structured time to evaluate progress against the metrics and best practices in meeting the metrics.
 - Collect and use data to track student performance in college-preparatory courses. Disaggregate data to ensure that all students are making progress. Transcript analysis should become a regular part of our district data analysis.
 - The district/school tracks graduates’ experiences and retention rates and stays in touch with graduates about how they are doing. Use this feedback to improve college preparation and planning resources.

4

Principle Four:

College readiness is a multifaceted concept comprising numerous variables. Based on a review of the literature, we will focus on those that can most directly be influenced by schools.

“Every student in every school deserves equal access to the information and skills that will prepare them for the opportunities in the future.” -Navigation 101

Recommendation 1: *Infuse into the school experience opportunities for students to develop the key cognitive strategies, key content, academic behaviors, and contextual skills and awareness that will allow them to succeed in their postsecondary pursuit. These key self-management skills should be explicitly taught and students should be expected to use them.*

- Academic Behaviors:** A detailed plan is developed on how students will learn time management skills, study skills, how to work in study groups, use goal setting, develop persistence, and how to prepare for tests.
- Key Content:** Create a writing program that aligns to the expectations for the research writing process in postsecondary pursuits. Because the research paper is the dominant vehicle for post-secondary writing, the writing program should approximate the expectations of a college writing program (including timed writes, research writing, and synthesis of ideas).
- Key Content:** Create assignments in high school that more closely approximate college expectations. (Schools work with college faculty to align their syllabi and course expectations).
- Key Cognitive Strategies:** Create middle/high school teacher teams to facilitate understanding of competencies students need for success in high school college-preparatory and advanced level courses. The key cognitive strategies describe the ways of thinking that are necessary for college-level work and include the following: problem-solving, inquisitiveness, precision/accuracy, interpretation, reasoning, research, and intellectual openness.
- Key Content:** Students are offered a robust college prep and AP program as well as Career and Technical courses with strong academic content aligned to post-secondary expectations.



5

Principle Five:

College and career readiness hinges on powerful **instruction**: teachers matter.

Recommendation 1: *Teaching is a craft that can be learned, improved upon, and perfected. This means that school systems need to use the research on effective teaching practice to have clear ideas of what effective instruction look like, develop professional development programs and evaluation systems to support effective instruction, and gather information about the instruction to constantly refine and improve the quality of the work.*

(More information will be added in this section.....)

“Give a kid two years with a powerful instructor, and you can greatly mitigate the effects of poverty.”

—Stephen Fink,
University of Washington

Glossary

Academic Behaviors- This consists largely of study skills and self-monitoring. Examples include time-management, awareness of one’s current level of mastery, and the selection of the learning strategies.

Career readiness- involves three major skill areas: *core academic skills* and the ability to apply those skills to concrete situations in order to function in the workplace and in routine daily activities; *employability skills* (such as critical thinking and responsibility) that are essential in any career area; and *technical, job-specific skills* related to a specific career pathway.

College- Students pursuing post-secondary degrees and credentials that align with their career aspirations. This includes credential programs, technical programs, two-year degrees, four-year degrees, and advanced degrees.

College and Career Readiness- Students leaving Spokane Public Schools with the ability to pursue the career and/or college option of their choice that leads to a post-secondary credential such as high-skill certificates, work-readiness credentials, apprenticeships, associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree and/or military service. These options should prepare students for entry-level jobs that pay a wage sufficient to support a family and offer the potential for career advancement.

College –Going Culture- Researchers tend to define a college-going culture as having the following four characteristics: 1) Rigorous academic curriculum and programs; 2) Clear college-going mission and expectations; 3) Comprehensive college information and resource services; 4) Coordinated and system college support.

College Persistence- The percentage of a student’s graduating class persisting to their second year of postsecondary preparation.

College Readiness- The level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program. “Succeed” is defined as completing entry level courses at a level of understanding and proficiency that makes it possible for the student to consider taking the next course in the sequence or the next level of course in the subject area.

Contextual Skills and Awareness- This is also referred to as “college knowledge.” This refers to the understanding of college admissions processes, college culture, tuition and financial aid, and college-level academic expectations.

Key Content Knowledge- This refers to the need for students to master writing skills, algebraic concepts, key foundational content, and “big ideas” from core subject areas in order to be college ready.

Key Cognitive Strategies- This describes the ways of thinking that are necessary for college-level work. They include the following: problem solving, inquisitiveness, precision/accuracy, interpretation, reasoning, research, and intellectual openness.

Readiness- The level of academic preparation and development of personal attributes necessary for a student to enroll and succeed without remediation in both credit-bearing college courses and/or entry into the workforce or military service ready to learn and succeed at job specific skills. This level of academic preparation is the same in all options.

References

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- Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/reports/readingmatters.aspx>
- https://www.epiconline.org/texas/college_readiness_perspectives_video
- <http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ForgottenMiddle.pdf>
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- Dougherty, C., & Rutherford, J. (2010). *Six guiding principles for school improvement efforts*. Austin, TX: National Center for Educational Achievement.



SPS SEVEN STEPS to College Readiness

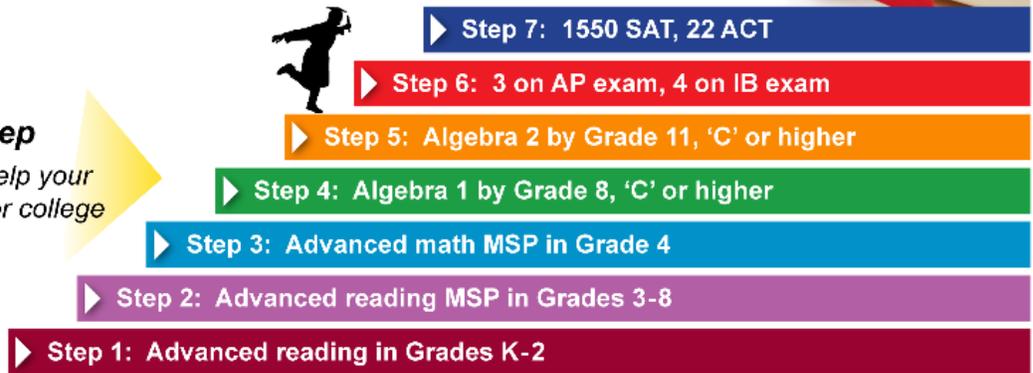
A pathway for students to follow that will increase their chances of being ready for and successful in college.

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Choose a step

Learn how to help your child prepare for college



Appendix B: Spokane School District Metrics and Progress on College and Career Readiness Goals	Latest Results		Trend	SMART Goal
	2010	2011		2012
Performance of students calibrated to college readiness standards				
Elementary School				
Third grade students reaching Reading CCR goal: DRA				
Grade 4 Reading: % of students scoring in advanced range (425) on MSP^				
Grade 6 Reading: % of students scoring in advanced range on MSP				
Grade 4 Writing: % of students scoring in advanced range on MSP				
Grade 4 Mathematics: % of students scoring in advanced range on MSP				
Grade 6 Mathematics: % of students scoring in advanced range on MSP				
Middle School				
Percent of eighth grade students enrolled in Algebra I and passing with a C or higher				
Percent of students enrolled in Accelerated Language Arts and Math in grades 7 and 8				
Percent of students in eighth grade meeting CCR reading standard				
Percent of students in eighth grade meeting CCR math standard				
High School				
Rigor of Curriculum (Ready)				
Percent of students meeting college readiness math target *			-	-
Percent of students meeting college readiness reading targets *				
Percent of students getting a 1550 SAT; 22 ACT				
Intensity of Curriculum (Ready)				
Percent of students graduating with a college ready transcript			-	-
% of sophomore, junior, and senior students taking one or more AP courses in high school				
% of graduating seniors passing one or more AP examinations in high school (3 or higher)				
Students entering and succeeding in post-secondary routes of study (In and Through)				
Percent graduating from high school (extended)				
Percent of students going to post-secondary routes of study directly after high school				
Percent of students requiring remediation in college mathematics			-	-
Percent of students requiring remediation in college reading			-	-

By the Numbers

3 Million

Because 70-80% of new jobs in 2018 will require some postsecondary education, it means there is a need for 22 million new workers with postsecondary degrees in the U.S. Without a dramatic change of course, we will be short 3 million workers.

1 Million

The amount of money that a person who has a bachelor's degree can expect to earn over the course of their professional career compared to a high school dropout or a person who attains their GED.

#1

In a recent survey, parents rated college preparation as their top priority for high schools. (High school graduation came in fourth....clearly showing that parents have their priorities beyond the K-12 experience).

80%

The percentage of jobs today that require some advanced training. These jobs are rated as "middle and high" skilled and require education beyond high school (e.g. associate's, bachelors, and professional, industry-recognized certification).

14

The reading grade level that a Pioneer Institute study found for auto mechanics, plumbers, and those that repair appliances have to be able to read to understand the manuals. This has changed so much due to changes in technology and computers.

46%

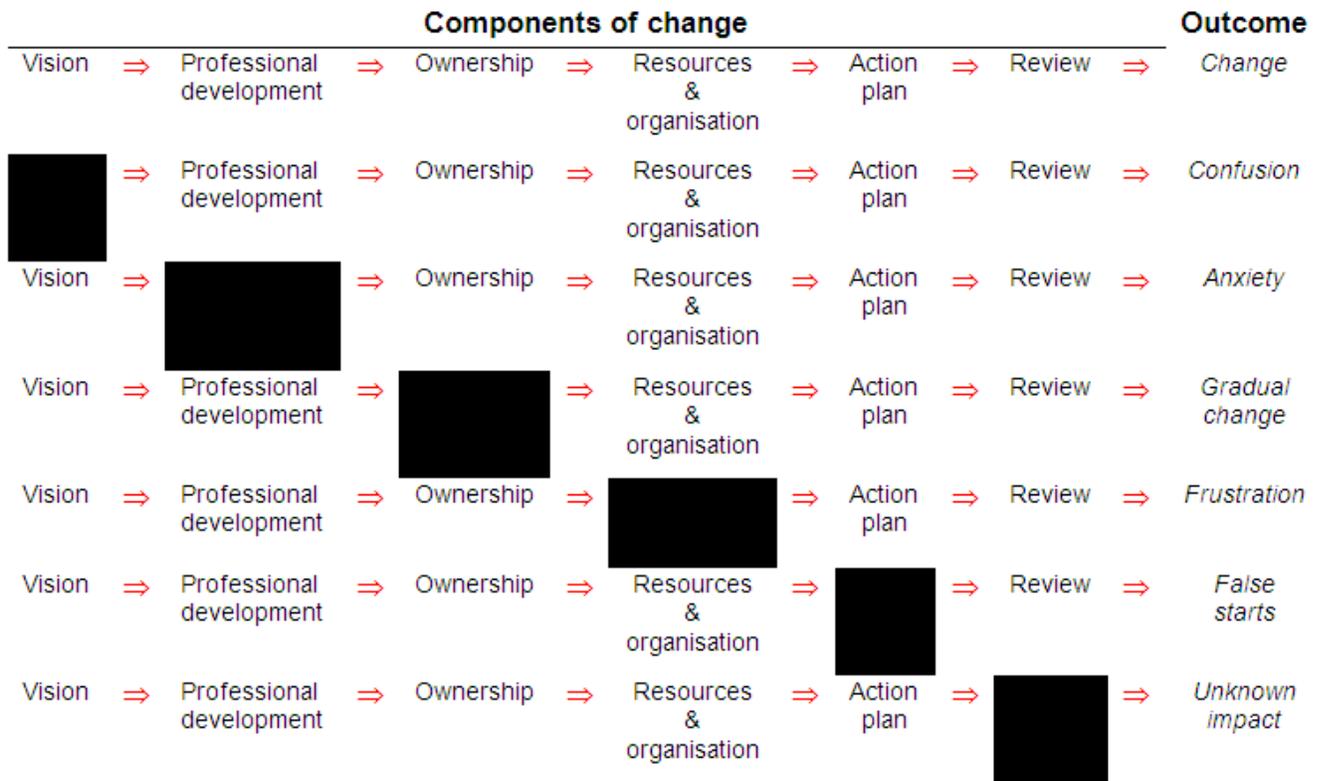
The percent of jobs in 1950 that were classified as unskilled (attainable by young people with high school diplomas or high school dropouts) was 60%. In 2005, only 14% of jobs were in this category. This # represents the difference between these.

83%

The percentage of voters in a recent survey that agreed with this statement, "all students should be pushed to take rigorous and broad academic requirements in high school to make sure they have as many options as possible upon graduation."

10%

Teachers are the single most important factor in student achievement. Having a teacher in the top quartile (of effectiveness) rather than the bottom quartile will results in a ten percentile test score difference.



Giuleri developed this model from a similar model developed by Enterprise Management Ltd (Knoster 1991).