ENRICHED PREP

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
College-Going and Career-Ready Culture			
Staff deliver consistent messages, from intake through graduation, that students are "college material" and postsecondary credentials and career success are attainable goals.	• Have staff devoted time to discuss the need for education beyond high school and come to an agreement about postsecondary and career success as aspirations for all students? • Have staff adopted a broad definition of postsecondary education to include four-year, two-year, and certificate programs leading to credentials with value in the labor market? • Are there specific structures for delivering the message that postsecondary and career success are attainable goals (through, for example, materials used in intake and orientation, college access strategies taught in advisory, or inclusion of college applications in graduation requirements)?	• YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School staff considered "college for all" as a goal by using local labor market, employment and earnings data, and decided to support the goal of postsecondary education/training for all students, using a broad definition of "college." • Through an extended intake and orientation process, CUNY Prep in the Bronx sets a strong message that college success is an attainable goal for all students. • South Brooklyn Community High School has developed a course sequence for entering students that walks them through exploring their career interests and identifying the postsecondary programs of study that lead to those occupations.	• [Rudy Lozano Graduation Checklist](#) • [CUNY Prep School Culture Video](#)
Staff continually assess progress through strategic use of data, using postsecondary access and completion and career	• Does the school/program set measurable goals in the areas of student graduation, postsecondary and career readiness, access, and persistence? • In addition to regular data collection on achievement and graduation, does the school/program collect key data on	• Portland YouthBuilders uses data on the performance of students entering community college to draw implications for alignment; postsecondary faculty and program staff have worked to develop a college ready curriculum for the program	• [Portland YouthBuilders's Promoting Academic Rigor Process](#) • [Youth Connections Charter School Measures](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
attainment as the key measures of program success.	postsecondary and career readiness, internship placement and work-related experience, transition and persistence (college placement test results, college enrollment without remediation, first year postsecondary persistence) • Does staff meet to review and discuss the data collected on a regular basis? Does staff use data for continuous improvement? • Does program staff involve employer and college partners to review data on academic and work performance and draw implications for programming?	including revamping a number of courses to better align with college expectations. • Youth Connection Charter School collects data on postsecondary readiness and shares it with its 20 campuses so that staff can determine, at the campus level, their strategies to improve postsecondary preparation and outcomes. • Youth Radio has developed a rubric for employment readiness that is used to assess students before, during, and after their internship.	
Staff create a climate focused on acculturation to academic and professional norms, mindsets, and practices as well as personal responsibility for one's own learning, career and life goals.	• Has staff identified key routines and practices that reinforce the school/program's academic and behavioral norms and expectations? • Have these routines and practices been institutionalized across the school/program? • Does the school/program have a robust orientation that establishes norms and practices (and emphasis on taking charge of one's life) from day one?	• YouthBuild sites are nationally known for their 'mental toughness' component to orientation that helps students develop resiliency and use their strengths to help them persist in the program. • Boston Day and Evening Academy has developed "seminar" as an intentional orientation process to help youth understand the school's academic and behavioral expectations. • College Bound Dorchester has identified socio-emotional and behavioral readiness competencies and benchmarks to determine college readiness on the attitude/motivation side of its work with students. A "checklist" of nine competencies – or character strengths – and corresponding benchmarks is used by students, teachers, and advisors to guide the development and the assessment of college/career-readiness.	• [Overview of Mental Toughness](#)
The physical setup and artifacts in the building, and opportunities to experience	• Do posters, banners, and other artifacts advertise the range of postsecondary and career options available to students and celebrate accomplishments of alumni?	• YESPhilly has expanded the number of college visits for its GED to College students, including both two- and four year colleges as well as selective and non-selective postsecondary institutions.	• [College, Career and Technology Academy Recruitment Poster](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
college classes and college life, enable students to perceive themselves as college students.	• Do students have organized opportunities to be on a college campus and at employer sites through use of the college library, internships, job shadowing and other resources? • Are there opportunities for students to tour colleges and employer sites as a cohort and debrief or reflect on the experience after visits?	• Bronx Haven High School has posted JFF-developed "best bet" profiles, which outline in-demand occupations that are attainable with less than a four-year degree, throughout the school. The posters prompt students to ask about a range of career options and postsecondary programs of study that they might not have considered otherwise. • Olive Harvey Middle College, a Back on Track school, is located on the campus of Olive-Harvey College, one of the City Colleges of Chicago.	• [Olive Harvey Middle School on the Web](#)
Staff support students to explore a range of career options and to understand their connections to postsecondary programs of study.	• Does the school/program set up college/career exploration activities such as visits to colleges and employer sites to give students a better sense of what it's like to train/work in a particular field? • Do college/employer visits and use of tools such as Career Cruising teach students about emerging and in-demand career fields? • Does staff have access to the most up-to-date information on labor market trends in the region and is that information used in designing career exploration activities? • Do students engage in projects such as research papers and PowerPoint presentations to explore various careers and share findings with teachers and peers?	• First Place for Youth conducted labor market research to identify viable health care career pathways in its region: medical assisting and dental assisting. • New York City transfer schools and HSE programs are making use of JFF-created "best bet" profiles that outline occupations that are projected to grow and that are accessible with a sub-BA degree or certificate. Staff in these schools and programs are using these profiles in career and college exploration lesson plans in advisory.	
College- and Career-Ready Curriculum & Instruction			
Curriculum emphasizes deep learning over test preparation, focusing on a	• Does the school/program have a transparent, publicly accessible curriculum plan that includes an articulation of key standards within each academic discipline,	• Boston Day and Evening Academy has developed a set of competencies and benchmarks that align with the Common Core and undergird all curriculum and instruction in the school.	• [Boston Day and Evening Academy Resources](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
solid understanding of key concepts within the core disciplines as well as in technical fields within high-demand career sectors and on key 21st century (meta-cognitive) skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, self-directed learning, collaboration, and effective communication.	metacognitive skills such as grit and self-regulation, technical skills, and essential concepts that will be explored across disciplines? • Do unit-based big themes or issues provide opportunities for students to draw connections to their own lives (e.g. identifying their strengths, using past experiences to inform present decisions and making more informed choices)? • Does the curriculum connect concepts in the disciplines to career and technical content?	• CUNY involves students deemed "ready" in a two-week, part-time GED test boot camp to prepare them to take the exams. • First Place for Youth enrolls students in an Accountability 101 course designed to build their self-efficacy, resiliency, and determination to reach goals. • Taller San Jose's Medical Careers Academy teaches students the skills to become highly qualified medical assistants, using curriculum developed in partnership with local employers.	
Curriculum is aligned/sequenced toward increasingly challenging subject matter, building skills needed for entry into credit-bearing college coursework and/or career pathway programs of study.	• Does the school/program have skill maps around which curriculum is sequenced, building from students' skills at entry to postsecondary and career readiness? • Does the school/program have a framework for competencies and benchmarks that start with incoming students' skill levels and build towards postsecondary and career readiness? • Does the school/program have clear steps laying out sequence of skills covered in key subject areas, such as from simple essays to college level research papers and from basic math operations to algebraic concepts? • Does the school/program include sequences of lessons that contextualize core content across various career fields?	• YESPhilly partnered with Math Foundations to develop a math curriculum, mapping out key areas that build students' math foundational skills. • Boston Day and Evening Academy has a set of competencies that start where their incoming students enter – often with low academic skills – and builds towards more advanced academic skills. The school has recently aligned its competencies to the Common Core. • With Portland Community College, Portland YouthBuild identified college-ready standards in math, reading and writing and adjusted program courses to embed needed skills. Partners also monitor students' progress in bridge programs to determine how well students are prepared for college coursework. • LaGuardia Community College has developed contextualized curriculum in healthcare and business occupations as a strategy to help students progress towards a secondary credential while learning basic technical skills in their chosen career field.	• [Retooling the GED Math](#) • [Math Foundations Math 200 Course Map](#) • [Boston Day and Evening Academy Resources](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Substantial reading and writing takes place daily across the curriculum, and is scaffolded through collaborative group work, literacy circles, digital literacy activities, and other strategies that enable learners with diverse skill levels to support and challenge their peers.	• Do students have regular opportunities to practice writing through low- and high-stakes assignments, using different types of writing (creative, expository, technical, narrative, etc.)? • Do students have opportunities to read a range of texts and genres, including those that are specific to careers, in all classrooms? • Does the school/program have a consistent approach to scaffolding for diverse learners across content areas? • Does the school/program use web-based technology to help students improve their writing skills?	• Excel Accelerated Schools in Philadelphia have adopted JFF's Common Instructional Framework and have implemented the six instructional strategies across every classroom. • Teachers at Downtown College Prep in San Jose California use Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) to increase students' reading proficiency, improve their motivation to read and facilitate language development. • In LaGuardia Community College's Bridge to Health Careers program, students develop their literacy skills by reading and analyzing texts related to health care, such as the memoir of a first-year nurse.	• Excel North Algebra Lesson Plan • Student-Centered Assessment Resources • Student-Centered Assessment Video Suite
All students develop thinking, listening, speaking, and inquiry skills through purposeful questioning, opportunities to talk about their learning, project-based and work-based learning activities.	• Across classrooms, do students have regular, purposeful conversations about what they are learning and how much progress they are making towards benchmarks? • Do teachers across content areas use questioning to help students investigate and analyze their thinking, and to further intellectual inquiry?	• TIPS for Teachers project developed a framework on asking good questions designed to improve student engagement and metacognitive skills. • At the College, Career, and Technology Academy in Pharr-San Juan-Alamo, Texas, reengaged dropouts regularly engage in collaborative group work and purposeful questioning as they engage with academic coursework.	• JFF's Common Instructional Framework • Framework for Questioning • Self- and peer-assessment tools and resources 1 • Self- and peer-assessment tools and resources 2
Staff embed in the curriculum ongoing opportunities to practice college-ready and professional skills and behaviors such as effective time management, teamwork and problem solving.	• Do classes incorporate postsecondary and career ready skill development activities (note taking, asking for help, preparing for tests, dealing with conflict, working in teams, etc.) along with regular feedback that helps students begin to do these tasks reflexively? • Do teachers require increasing amounts of independent work as students progress through the prep phase?	• West Brooklyn Community High School undertook an assessment of the school's instructional strategies to understand how well the school was building students' college-ready skills and behaviors. A College Culture Committee then created a peer observation protocol for teachers to use in observing each others' classrooms and providing feedback on the use of college-ready instructional strategies.	• Note Taking Tips • Career Competencies

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
	• Do teachers intentionally scaffold longer-term assignments and projects, setting benchmark goals and deadlines for students to prepare them for postsecondary education and the workplace?	• Capital Workforce Partners in Hartford—working with area employers-- developed a set of career competencies that are embedded in all of its WIA youth funded programs. • Year Up divides its program into two six-month sections: during the first term students focus on technical skills such as computer help desk and investment operations; during the second students learn professional and communication skills such as workplace norms, time management, conflict resolution, and professional networking.	
Students have opportunities to engage in work-based learning, such as internships or job shadows.	• Does program have partnerships with employers that provide internships or job shadowing opportunities? • Are internships/job shadows in career areas that are aligned with students' interests? • Are internships/job shadows structured to provide students a meaningful workplace experience?	• Youth Radio helps all students to find a paid or subsidized summer internship, which they complete after passing their first college course, and works with the employers to structure a high-quality work experience with meaningful feedback for the student. • Taller San Jose arranges four-week externships with health care employers, which students take part in after completing a 16-week training program in medical assisting. • New York City's Learning to Work initiative supports internships for students in the city's transfer schools and Young Adult Borough Centers. Staff at each transfer school in the initiative identify internships and support students in accessing and succeeding in them.	
Intentional Use of Time to Customize Instruction & Accelerate Learning			
Program organizes time flexibly to enable older youth to fulfill family/work responsibilities while working	• Does the school/program utilize online learning tools to enable students to study on their own, work in teams, get help if needed, and keep up with school assignments?	• New York City's Young Adult Borough Centers are scheduled for the evening hours to enable youth to accomplish work and family responsibilities during the day.	• [Overview of New York City's Young Adult Borough Centers](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
toward graduation and postsecondary goals.	• Are classes and activities scheduled at times that are convenient for the population of students served?	• The College, Career and Technology Academy in Texas runs morning and afternoon sessions to enable their student population – ages 18 to 26 – to work. • Edinburg Vision Academy enrolls students using the state's OFSDP policy to ensure maximum flexibility for work and family. • CUNY Prep runs a full time GED to College day program for younger students and a part-time night program to accommodate working students. • Restore Education, a program in San Antonio TX, has set up its own YouTube channel with instructional videos in reading/writing and math covering specific areas of the curriculum for students who can't make it to class or need supplemental work to catch up or practice specific skills.	
Program is of sufficient length and intensity to enable youth to both gain a secondary credential and/or get adequately prepared for postsecondary education and careers.	• Has the school/program analyzed incoming students' skill levels and carefully planned programming to enable students to move from their entering skill level to postsecondary readiness? • Does the school/program use strategies to extend time such as through summer opportunities to gain more instructional and career development time with students?	• The College, Career, and Technology Academy operates on the area college's calendar, and offers year-round programming— including summer sessions. • Philadelphia Youth Build expanded their program from 12 to 18 months in order to better ready youth for college. • The Maya Angelou Public Charter Schools, Evans High School Campus, offers extended day programming, staff by volunteers and in some cases teachers, that is designed to expose students to extracurricular activities such as drama, debate, or digital arts and also build skills through tutoring and technology enhanced learning tools.	• [College and Career Technical Academy Calendar](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Staff use regular and various assessments methods (face-to-face and web-based), including college placement exams, to diagnose students' specific learning needs and customize instruction to accelerate learning.	• Are assessments designed (and delivered frequently enough) to give a clear picture of students' strengths and specific learning needs? • Does the school/program use multiple assessment methods such as portfolios, student presentations, and performance assessments? • Does the school/program make use of early (or practice) college placement exams as a first signal of the degree of college and career readiness? • Do staff convey assessment information to students clearly and transparently and in ways designed to encourage students to own their learning, celebrate successes and stretch to reach the next milestone?	• YESPhilly and Math Foundations are implementing a math curriculum that includes student conferences to better diagnose and assess students' learning needs and ascertain college readiness. • NYC Transfer schools conduct biweekly meetings with students to review student progress and make mid-course corrections. • At X-Cel Education, students in the college prep program take the Companion Accuplacer test during intake. This allows instructors and students to discuss the importance of college placement tests and to identify priority areas to work on to help students improve their scores.	• [Math Foundations Math 200 Course map]
Technological tools enhance instructional strategies, provide skill-building support and facilitate "anytime, anywhere, any pace" learning.	• Does the school/program use a blended learning approach, (e.g., use of technology for specific skill-building or to offer more advanced learning opportunities and use of face to face instruction when appropriate)? • Do students have access to the internet outside of school to accomplish coursework? • Are students trained to use the web and other internet tools to accomplish specific school related tasks such as research, use of discussion boards, collaboration, etc.?	• X-cel uses interact Math and Khan Academy. Both are self-paced and accessible anywhere through the web. Khan Academy uses video tutorials whereas Interact Math allows students to select any Pearson textbook and work through individual chapters and skills. • Olympus Academy has developed a blended approach to classroom instruction, using on-line platforms for remediation as well as to offer AP courses. The University Park Campus School (UPCS) Institute created a course for coaches helping schools integrate technology into their classrooms. They created the "Technology Integration Rubric" to help school leaders measure how well teachers were integrating technology in their classrooms. This rubric makes reference to the Common Instructional Framework—an instructional framework created at the UPCS—but any instructional strategy can be substituted to make this more	• [Interact Math] • [Khan Academy]

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
		relevant to your school.	
Students are coached and supported to use time in supplemental learning, online learning, work and service activities to accomplish learning goals and develop independent work and study habits.	• Does the school/program have a consistent policy with clear expectations for students to continue learning and producing learning products outside of school/program building? • Do staff involve students in projects that require them to plan and manage work outside of the program?	• YouthBuild programs connect youth with AmeriCorps service awards; youth perform community service outside of the program and in return receive awards that help pay for college.	YouthBuild AmeriCorps Evaluation Report
Staff utilize student data to understand patterns of learning for individual students and customize the course/curriculum to ensure opportunities for acceleration and additional academic supports.	• Is data about students' strengths and challenges in content and skill acquisition across classrooms collected and shared amongst program staff? • Are program staff trained to analyze the data and use it to customize instruction? • Do staff use this data to implement programming for additional academic supports?	• At the High School for Excellence and Innovation in NYC, teachers and the school coach use a common tool to assess student learning of Common Core skills, and then review the tool to identify patterns of student performance on specific skills. Teachers then modify their instruction to address variations in student proficiency.	• Data Dashboard Indicators Tool
Personalized Guidance and Support			

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Students develop a clear, realistic, and detailed postsecondary and career plan.	• Are there structured opportunities built into the program for students to work with counselors to create a postsecondary and career plan? • Do students' internship and job shadowing experiences inform their postsecondary and career plans? • Has the school/program identified mentors and/or sponsors who work in students' chosen fields of interest to help motivate them to pursue their goals?	• At Rudy Lozano Leadership Academy, students participate in "Familias," or advisories, through which they develop leadership skills, social/personal awareness, and decision-making skills, as well as prepare for postsecondary education. In their Familias, students are supported in the development of a postsecondary plan, and complete college applications, which are required for graduation. • FEGS, a program in New York City, offers returning youth internship and job shadowing experiences in partnership with a variety of area employers to expose them to various careers and help them learn about the world of work.	• Rudy Lozano Graduation Checklist • Cypress Hills Local Development Center Student Success Plan • Youth Connections Charter Schools Quality School Measures
Students develop an understanding of how they learn best, reflecting regularly on what they still must accomplish or master to achieve college and career readiness.	• Are college and career ready standards clearly articulated and understood by staff and students alike? • Have students completed learning style assessments to identify their learning strengths and styles? • Do students and staff regularly use this information to help students tackle complex tasks or assignments? • Do students have opportunities to articulate what they need to do to improve their skills and complete their requirements in order to achieve college and career readiness?	• NYC Transfer Schools use bi-weekly check-ins with students to go over their academic progress, and pinpoint steps to improve their performance. • SCALE in Somerville, MA developed a Learning Styles Inventory lesson to support all students in their GED program. • At Portland Youthbuilders, students self-assess and are assessed by staff each quarter on five habits of success—self-management, resourcefulness, resilience, interpersonal skills, and accountability—and must speak about their progress on each in concrete ways.	• NYC Transfer Schools • Student-Centered Assessment Resources • Student-Centered Assessment Videos
Program provides leadership, service and work opportunities to build students' agency, self-advocacy and key academic and career behaviors, such as	• Does the school/program partner with WIB's, community-based organizations, employers and others to offer a range of short and longer-term internship, job shadowing and work experiences? • Are students involved in researching and connecting to service and work opportunities?	• New York City's Learning to Work initiative enables multiple pathways schools to offer supported internships to students.	• New York City's Learning to Work • Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice Tool kit

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
persistence and time management.	• Does the school/program have programming that focuses on building young people's understanding and use of self-agency, self-regulation, and self-advocacy?		
The program works to strengthen students' care network, such as child-care and mental health resources, so they have adequate support to address barriers that might impede learning.	• Does the school/program provide case management for students needing extra or specialized support? • Does program have formalized partnerships such as MOU's with appropriate community partners? • Does school/program work with families or adult advocates as appropriate to help them support students' achievement of their goals? • Does program offer on- or near-site services (childcare, basic healthcare) to address common barriers?	• Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation in Brooklyn has advocate-counselors who help students address any barriers that impede their progress. • South Bay Center for Community Development offers a comprehensive range of cradle to career services that students in career pathway programs take advantage of. • Fairhill Community High School in Philadelphia provides on-site day care for parenting students. • Our Piece of the Pie in Hartford, CT runs family involvement workshops which are designed for families to identify resources such as financial aid, tutoring and supportive services to help youth plan for and succeed in postsecondary education	• CHLDC's Student Success Plan
Staff develop students' abilities to have greater responsibility and voice in their own learning and life choices.	• Does the school/program utilize student government and other mechanisms to enable student leaders to advise on a range of program issues? • Does a case manager or related staff use college, career and life planning tools and processes that drive students towards assuming full responsibilities for their studies and goals?	• YouthBuild's Postsecondary Success Initiative grantees use Youth Voice Groups to build students' leadership skills and give them the opportunity to shape programming.	• YouthBuild YouthVoices PSE Advisor • YouthBuild YouthVoices Mission Statement • Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice Tool • What Does it Look Like: Student Ownership, Voice and Choice in a Competency-based School

POSTSECONDARY BRIDGING

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Supported Dual Enrollment			
Students enroll in credit-bearing courses to gain exposure to college experiences and expectations. First courses can be those that reinforce essential skills within a career context, prerequisite math and English courses, or first coursework towards a technical certificate.	• Does the school/program have a formal agreement with a postsecondary institution to enroll students in first courses towards a technical certificate or degree? • Are school/program leaders informed about state dual enrollment policy and are they using this opportunity to fund postsecondary courses where feasible? • Are first courses tailored to integrate the remediation of skills as appropriate with content and college knowledge skills needed to succeed in for-credit and/or in-demand technical programs of study? • Are students guided in the selection of their first postsecondary courses, using clear criteria for course selection (supportive professors, high student interest, opportunity to earn credits, gatekeeper courses, etc.)?	• LaGuardia Community College's Bridge classes provide career-focused academic preparation by incorporating themes in healthcare, business or the world of work in order to help improve students' academic skills as they develop plans for careers and college. • The College, Career, and Technology Academy enrolls students in "mini-mesters"—shortened dual enrollment courses—as soon as they pass the state-level TAKS tests. These courses are career/technical education courses in in-demand career fields. • Restore Education in San Antonio partners with Alamo Colleges to offer an eight-week sociology course as part of its postsecondary bridging phase. The sociology course was chosen in part because it applies to most majors and is designed to help students develop critical college success skills.	• [Overview of LaGuardia Community College GED Bridge](#) • [College, Career and Technology Academy's Dropout Prevention Program](#) • [Designing a Skills for Success Course](#)
Where appropriate, program takes advantage of accelerated or streamlined developmental education courses to build student skills and reduce time to completion.	• Are course offerings in math and English designed to accelerate students through the developmental education sequence at the college? • Do students have the opportunity to take advantage of innovations in developmental education such as accelerated, personalized or contextualized approaches?	• CUNY Prep's College Transition Academy offers psychology, writing and math to help students test out of remediation once they enter college. While in the program, all students earn 3 credits by taking an Intro to Criminal Justice course. • Youth UpRising partners with a hybrid university, University Now, which offers prerequisite and developmental courses on the Youth UpRising site to help students prepare for career pathway training.	• [CUNY Prep's College Transition Academy Video](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
First college courses explicitly model college instruction through the use of for example, syllabi, out-of-class assignments, college-style pedagogy and assessments (e.g. sophisticated papers, research projects, and presentations) and blended or on-line approaches.	• Are bridge courses taught in a college format, i.e. using syllabi, assignments with due dates, online collaboration tools, and individual/group projects? • Are courses set up to build students' level of comfort with the various instructional approaches used in college (lecture, small group work, blended/hybrid, etc.) and skills needed to successfully complete a college course (long term assignments scaffolded to help students develop as independent learners)? • Do bridge courses provide students with opportunities to learn technical skills and workplace norms and expectations?	• Operation Fresh Start in Madison, WI enrolls students in a bridge course that includes writing and math segments and is designed to give students a real college course experience using syllabi, individual and group projects, research papers, etc. • Taller San Jose's medical careers training program includes a "College 101" component to introduce students to postsecondary education. Students take an online Skills for Success course that introduces them to online course-taking strategies. • EMS Corps, a program of the Alameda County Health Pipeline Partnership in California, offers Pathways to Emergency Medical Careers. This five-month bridge program, for youths 18-24 with a GED or diploma, builds academic and technical skills to help youths become firefighters or emergency medical technicians.	• [Operation Fresh Start's Learning to Learn (LTL) College Success Syllabus](#)
The program provides formal, intense academic supports and scaffolding to ensure students are successful in their early postsecondary courses.	• Does staff have enough time/resources to offer adequate academic supports, especially as students are taking increasingly challenging classes? • Does the program offer appropriate supports to students while they are enrolled in postsecondary courses (i.e., tutoring, study skills, homework help, conflict resolution)? • Are scaffolds in place to help students tackle and "chunk" complex, longer term assignments, such as research papers or theme based projects?	• Edinburg Vision Academy offers a college success course in combination with an on-campus dual enrollment mini-mester (compressed college course) at South Texas College. The dual enrollment course becomes a platform for students to hone skills learned in the college success course such as time management, note-taking, and study skills. • Taller San Jose delivers an 18-credit business certificate through Santa Ana College to students in its Office Careers Academy. Students take the courses on the Taller San Jose site with support from staff, and the credits are fully transferrable to an Associate's degree.	• [Edinburg Vision Academy College Success Overview](#)
A Focus on College Knowledge and Success Strategies			

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Program coaches students to develop college and career-ready skills and behaviors, including study and other self-directed learning skills, digital literacy skills, time and stress management, persistence, and awareness of performance.	• Are college and career-ready skills and behaviors such as time and stress management, self-regulation, persistence and awareness of performance set as explicit learning goals for the school/program and for students individually? • Are college and career-ready skills and behaviors embedded in all classroom activities and assignments?	• Olive Harvey Middle College has developed a tool to assess and track key college-ready academic behaviors for every student in each class throughout the school day. • Good Shepherd Services created LifeLink, a comprehensive postsecondary bridging and retention program that empowers students to take ownership of their learning and improve their chances of success in postsecondary education.	• Olive Harvey Middle College Scholar Readiness Assessment • Putting Students in the Driver's Seat: Good Shepherd Services' LifeLink Approach to Postsecondary Success
Students gain postsecondary and career navigation skills, learning about general and technical programs of study, admissions requirements, financial aid, college culture, campus resources, and building relations with professors.	• Do students spend sufficient time visiting colleges, auditing courses, and talking to mentors to learn what it takes to be successful in college? • Does the program offer "Skills for Success" courses that give students opportunities to learn about and practice key career and college navigation skills and to acquire information – both formal and informal – necessary for navigating college and the workplace? • Do students have opportunities to participate in internships or other work based learning activities in order to build career/employability skills?	• Davidson Community College's Backpacks to Briefcases program focuses on career planning and college knowledge, integrated with GED or high school diploma preparation. • YouthBuild Philadelphia takes students to multiple campus tours—some of them over several days—to give students exposure to campus life and college culture. • LifeLink in New York City offers a summer bridge program designed to help students improve academic readiness for college, develop strategies for success, and understand the time and financial investments as well as the rewards of postsecondary education.	• College Transition Network Promising Practices • Campus Tours Videos • Putting Students in the Driver's Seat: Good Shepherd Services' LifeLink Approach to Postsecondary Success
Program continues to develop the mindsets and key cognitive strategies and content knowledge required for college success, such as formulating hypotheses, problem-solving, analyzing and evaluating findings, and	• Has the program identified the most critical cognitive strategies and content knowledge required for college and career success? • Are these strategies and knowledge covered and assessed in the postsecondary bridging curriculum and through work-based learning experiences?	• Achievement First high schools share a set of rigorous academic standards carefully aligned to the critical aspects of college readiness. To support their writing curriculum, they developed an Interactive Writing Rubric. • Corps Network Postsecondary Education Success Initiative (PSEI) programs use Core Skills Mastery (CSM™), a curriculum designed to teach students learning strategies, intrinsic	• Achievement First Schools' Writing Rubric • David Conley's College Readiness Framework

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
understanding key foundational content in core subject areas.	• Do students have the opportunity to apply cognitive strategies and content knowledge in their postsecondary courses?	motivation, confidence and self-efficacy, all critical skills for students to succeed in college and the workplace.	
Students have access to postsecondary facilities to build familiarity with and attachment to the institution and receive college IDs providing access to college facilities (e.g., skills centers, library, gym, and cafeteria) and college email addresses.	• Are receipt of a college ID and college email address, and access to campus facilities, included in the partnership agreement with the postsecondary institutions? • Has the program worked with its partner college to create formal campus orientation activities for new students?	• Students in the Backpacks to Briefcases program at Davidson Community College take career planning and college 101 and have access to all college facilities such as the library, cafeteria, and gym. • San Antonio College back-to-school information sessions at the college's Empowerment Center, a space set up to operate multiple orientation and support services designed for first-generation and other nontraditional students.	• [Backpacks to Briefcases College Transition Program](#)
Personalized Guidance and Connection to Best Bets			
Counselors use data such as attendance and course performance to monitor student progress toward the goal of entry into credit-bearing coursework and/or technical programs of study.	• Have counselors set up a process to collect student attendance data, grades, and faculty feedback from the postsecondary institution partner college? • Do counselors set up periodic conferences with students to review the data, discuss progress, and offer support?	• X-cel Adult Education students sign a release form giving program counselors access to attendance data and grades while they are enrolled in college. This allows counselors to monitor student performance and intervene when necessary. • JFF's *Taking the Next Step* Report highlights "momentum points" and "milestones" in each student's trajectory towards postsecondary completion. Counselors can then use these critical momentum points to provide targeted and highly individualized supports to students based on their unique needs.	• *[Taking the Next Step](#) Report*

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Whenever possible, program utilizes a cohort-based approach to leverage peer connections, expand students' social networks, and build additional postsecondary support, using both face-to-face and online strategies.	• Do students enter the bridge phase as a cohort where possible, with the expectation that they will support each other during the bridge and into the critical first year in college? • Have students been prepared to offer each other peer support while in first courses, through team-building activities or through the creation of study groups? • Does the program offer students an opportunity to practice using social media for professional networking (eg, Linkedin, twitter)? • Does staff monitor student performance to ensure each person has an adequate first year support plan and personal connections with mentors?	• Students at Edinburg Vision Academy, in Texas, take dual enrollment courses as a cohort, and are guided in the formation of study groups. • South Bay Center for Community Development enrolls students in college courses as a cohort so students form supportive networks, social capital and alumni connections.	• National College Transition Network's Learning Communities Practice Brief
Program integrates intentional career exploration and planning that takes into account students' career aspirations as well as local labor market demand to help drive toward "best bet" postsecondary programs resulting in credentials with labor market value.	• Does career planning start early and include interest inventories and career exploration? • Does the program have access to and actively use labor market data as a way to inform students about what career areas are most in demand? • Does career planning include the use of postsecondary career pathway outcome data to help students choose a program with good labor market pay-off? • Do students have the opportunity to engage in internships or other work-based learning experiences that align with and enable them to test career areas or sectors of interest?	• YouthBuild and National Youth Employment Coalition sites, with their college partners, have been using customized analyses of their labor markets to speak with employers and postsecondary program coordinators. The goal of this engagement is for them to develop a more nuanced understanding of regional supply and demand and subsequently identify a range of postsecondary programs and pathways that would serve a range of students (based on student interests, skill sets, and time available to attend postsecondary). • JFF developed Counseling to Careers as a service to help schools/programs analyze regional labor market data, and vet findings with employers, to identify "best bet" programs of study.	• Counseling to Careers Overview • Sample Best Bet Profile

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Program graduates who are currently enrolled in college mentor students in the bridge phase to guide their key decisions as they transition to postsecondary (face-to-face and/or online).	• Does the program use youth currently enrolled in postsecondary to advise students currently considering their fields of study? • Does the program share updated postsecondary program information with mentors to enable them to provide appropriate college guidance?	• The College Initiative Mentors program matches students who are in good standing – i.e., with at least two semesters of college experience and a GPA of 3.0 or higher – with mentors, who have been trained through a 15-week training structured as a college course. • Graduates of LifeLink in NYC mentor incoming students, both at LifeLink community-based centers and on-campus at CUNY, helping with course work and with developing skills needed for postsecondary success.	• [College Initiative's Peer Mentoring Program Video](#)

FIRST-YEAR SUPPORT

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Support for Students to Earn Credits Predictive of Completion			
Designated staff use data to monitor student progress, with particular attention to performance in the first few months of classes.	• Have counselors set up a process to collect data about student attendance, grades, and faculty/employer feedback about performance, particularly in the first weeks of enrollment or work? • Is the program/school tracking how much and how frequently students use campus resources, and using that data to inform further brokering of services and check-ins with students?	• Bottom Line developed DEAL (Degree, Employability, Aid, Life), a framework to support low-income, first-generation students persist and complete postsecondary education. • X-Cel Adult Education has students sign release forms to allow counselors to access data including attendance, grades, class participation, and overall professors' assessment of students' performance in the class.	• [Bottom Line's DEAL Framework](#)
Students are connected to campus resources, networks, and support providers, especially those targeted for	• Has the program/school done a campus resources inventory and have students been formally taught to access those resources?	• South Bay Center for Community Development partners with Cerritos College to train volunteer coaches to support first-generation students through their first year of college.	• [Coaching for College and Career: A SkillWorks Toolkit](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
first-generation college-goers , expanding their social capital and their awareness of formal and informal supports and resources.	• Have students been formally introduced to and taught how to use support services targeted for first-generation college goers?	• College navigation coaches in SkillWorks, a workforce funder collaborative in Boston developed a coaching for college and career toolkit designed to help coaches connect students to campus resources in order to improve retention rates of non-traditional students in community college.	
Students, particularly those who are struggling, receive intensive supports to help them succeed in credit-bearing general or technical program coursework.	• Has the program/school set up a process to identify, reach out to and help struggling students? • Are students coached and supported to utilize campus academic support services such as homework help centers and advising services? • Does the program/school provide a list of curated digital tools and resources to provide (supplemental) academic support? • Does the program/school set an "open" computer lab policy for alums, or facilitate other ways in which they can easily come back for support?	• X-Cel Education partners with area non-profit organizations including Boston Cares to recruit volunteers to tutor students who need help – especially those taking advanced math courses.	• [Overview of Boston Cares and X-Cel's Partnership](#)
Students are offered performance-based incentives, such as scholarships, to motivate them to accomplish personal and academic benchmarks.	• Has the program/school identified specific college milestones and structured incentives to help students achieve those milestones? • Is the program/school leveraging funding streams, such as AmeriCorps awards, for student incentives? • Is adequate funding built into the program budget to support student performance-based incentives?	• Larkin Street in San Francisco provides transportation vouchers, cash cards, etc. coupled with monthly advising and counseling check-ins and encourage students to meet program criteria which include maintaining a 2.0+ GPA. • At Durham Technical Community College in North Carolina, students in ABE/GED programs can earn incentives such as bookstore vouchers and free courses for achieving key academic milestones.	• [Larkin Street Youth](#) [Durham Tech High School Alternatives](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Staff create individualized plans with students who are not on track to earn a credential after the first year, including self-assessments and additional customized supports.	• Do counselors engage struggling students, as well as their former teachers, to create customized plans to provide academic and social/emotional supports? • Does the college/program partnership act on the individualized plans to provide appropriate support to students?	• In NYC, staff from the Youth Development Institute, CUNY, and CBO partners meet monthly to discuss the progress of students in college. During these meetings, they review data about student course performance, as well as qualitative information about students' lives. Discussions of individual students yield guidance on how to help each one, and the staff members come to agreement on follow-up actions.	• Youth Development Institute's Case Conferencing Model and Sample Data Form.
Just-in-Time Support to Ensure Persistence			
Emergency funds are set aside for students to provide short-term coverage of immediate expenses (e.g., books, housing, child care) in order to ensure that students can remain in school.	• Is adequate funding built into the program budget to support emergency funds? • Has the program created a referral network to help students address critical barriers such as lack of access to dependable childcare and transportation?	• Portland Community College's child care resource and referral office helps parents access a variety of local services, including off-campus child care centers, Head Start programs, family child care providers, and preschools. • Single Stop USA works with students to help them sign up for federal and state benefits so they can stay enrolled and complete their education	• Portland Community College's Child Care Resource Center • Single Stop USA's Community College Initiative
Staff anticipate and work with students to address obstacles, such as loss of childcare, housing, or financial aid, and provide additional referrals and follow-up as needed.	• Does the partnership between college and program clearly articulate who provides what supports to ensure students' needs are addressed? • Is there a process for staff at the college and program to monitor students' support needs and to follow up? • Do program staff and college staff communicate regularly enough to ensure that services to students are not duplicative or contradictory?	• In the Youth Development Institute's (YDI's) case conferencing model, partners not only use data to diagnose students' exact support needs, but assign follow up role to each partner who then reports to the group on steps taken to help students. • Taller San Jose provides 24 months of support to students post-training to ensure that they are on track with careers and to support them to pursue in further postsecondary education at the time that is right for them.	• Building a Better Bridge: Helping Young Adults Enter and Succeed in College • The Best of Two Worlds: Lessons from a Community College-Community Organization Collaboration to Increase Student Success • YDI's College Access and Success Initiative Principles

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
Building Attachment to Postsecondary Education			
Program enables students to develop increasing independence and self-agency as learners, drawing on academic mindsets and behaviors they begin to develop in the Bridge Phase (e.g., self-regulation and study skills, time and stress management, persistence, and ability to self-assess performance).	• Has the program/school identified a set of activities to help reinforce and enhance independence and self-agency for students who have transitioned to college and/or work? • Has the program/school set up an infrastructure that is student-centered, wherein students play an active role in setting their learning goals and work with program staff to determine the level of support they need to be successful? • Have counselors set up processes, such as one-on-one meetings and use of planning tools, to help students develop independence and self-agency? • Do counselors work with students to review progress towards goals and take corrective action if needed?	• Portland YouthBuilders' case management teams, which include student advocates, teachers, and work supervisors, created an assessment of student progress on five key habits on success (such as self-management and accountability). Students rate themselves on each habit and provide specific examples to justify each rating, and then the team assesses the student based on their performance in class or at the work site and make suggestions for improvement.	
Student mentors provide key information on college courses and professors to help first-year students make more informed choices.	• Does the program offer formal training to potential student mentors, or partner with a student mentor organization? • Does formal mentor training include strategies on how to work effectively with incoming students and tips on first-year courses including professors, workload, expectations, etc.?	• The College Initiative in NYC trains student mentors who are then partnered with up to four students beginning college. Mentors provide one-on-one and group meetings and on-going support during the next two semesters. Each semester mentors work with mentees to help them achieve key college milestones by connecting them to resources both on and off campus.	• [College Initiative's Mentor Training Video](#)
Staff leverages technological tools, particularly social media, to provide follow-up and coaching support to	• Has the program/school identified apps and online tools that promote persistence and time management, and are	• Restore Education, a GED to College program in San Antonio, uses Facebook and text messages to "nudge" their students to	• [Collegesnapps](#)

FEATURE	GUIDING QUESTIONS	EXAMPLES	RESOURCES
students who have transitioned to postsecondary/career training.	students trained and supported to use those apps and online tools? • Has the program/school engaged students to help identify the most effective technology/social media tools (text, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) to keep in touch and support them?	turn in assignment on time, complete financial aid forms, show up for tutoring sessions, and celebrate major accomplishments. • X-Cel Education uses Collegesnapps a mobile application designed to help counselors stay in touch with students and monitor their progress through customized student dashboards, immediate warnings for at-risk students and other messaging tools to help maintain contact with students	
Students engage in small cohort-based learning and leadership communities.	• Does the college offer a learning communities model, and if so, are school/program students placed in these learning communities? • Are there opportunities for students to take on leadership roles on campus? • How does program support them to take on these roles? • Does the program promote on or off-campus service learning, community service, and civic engagement activities?	• Columbus State Community College Phi Theta Kappa students contribute to positive social change in the community by tutoring kids and working in homeless shelters. • Kingsborough Community Colleges in NYC enrolls students in learning communities as a strategy to increase student retention at the college.	• Columbus State Community College's Phi Theta Kappa Project • Learning Communities