



***Where We Are,  
Where We Need to Be,  
and How We Get There***

**The Essential College Preparation  
Step:  
SCHOOLS!**

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***The Keys to College Access***

- Educational expectations
- Academic achievement
- Supportive family members
- A school with:
  - A college preparatory curriculum,
  - A college culture, and
  - Supportive, knowledgeable staff, including counselors, teachers and administrators

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## ***Structural Conditions***

Schools are “first among equals” with students on the college preparatory project.

Without schools, students don’t complete the first two of Cabrera and La Nasa’s three critical tasks:

- **Acquiring academic qualifications**
- **Securing high school diploma**
- Applying to and enrolling in college

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## ***What is culture?***

An organization’s underlying values, beliefs, and meanings which are deeply held, static, and enduring.

Shared assumptions that are taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

Culture influences daily operations through expectations, assumptions, language, flow and content of information, and specific options highlighted or downplayed.

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## **Identifying School Culture: Fill in the Blanks**

- All students who attend this school are expected to \_\_\_\_\_.
- All counselors who work at this school are expected to \_\_\_\_\_.
- You can't walk down the hallways of this school without seeing \_\_\_\_\_.

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## **Building a College Culture: Overarching Goal**

All students are prepared for a full range of post-secondary options through structural, motivational, and experiential college preparatory opportunities.



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## ***Building a College Culture: Specific Objectives***

- School leadership is committed to building a college culture
- All school personnel provide a consistent message to students that supports their quest for a college preparatory K-12 experience
- All counselors are college counselors
- Counselors, teachers, and families are partners in preparing students for college



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## ***Principles of a College Culture***

- College Talk
- Clear Expectations
- Information & Resources
- Comprehensive Counseling Model
- Testing & Curriculum
- Faculty Involvement
- Family Involvement
- College Partnerships
- Articulation



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## ***College Talk***

- Clear, ongoing communication about college
- A college-going identity for all students
- Faculty, administrators, and counselors share own experiences



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## ***Clear Expectations***

- Explicit goals of college preparation must be defined
- Goals communicated clearly, consistently, in a variety of ways
- Students, families, teachers, administrators, counselors, staff must be aware of their roles in college preparation



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## ***Information & Resources***

- Students must have access to up-to-date, comprehensive college information
- Counselors may have primary responsibility, but use of this information must extend beyond the counseling office



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## ***Comprehensive Counseling Model***

- All counselors are college counselors
- All student interactions with counselors are college counseling opportunities
- All decisions about students' coursework are made with a full range of options in mind\*\*

***\*\*Strongest link to National Counseling Standards\*\****



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## ***Testing & Curriculum***

- Students must have knowledge and awareness of necessary tests
- Students must be given the opportunity to prepare for these tests
- Testing fees must be taken into account
- Students must have access to all necessary coursework



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## ***Faculty Involvement***

- Faculty must be active partners with counselors, students, and families
- Faculty must be kept up-to-date on college knowledge
- Professional development opportunities must be available
- College Talk in the classroom



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## ***Family Involvement***

- Families as informed partners
- Family members must have opportunities to gain knowledge and recognize their role
- Parents and other family members must have access to counselors and faculty



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## ***College Partnerships***

- Active links between K-12 schools and local colleges and universities
- Field trips
- College fairs
- Academic enrichment programs



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## ***Articulation***

- Students should have a seamless experience from Kindergarten through HS graduation
- Ongoing communication among all schools in a feeder group
- Work at one school site should connect with activities at other levels



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## ***Lessons Learned***

Must change organizational mission from *graduation* to college *preparation*

- Doing so requires:
  - Constant communication & articulation
  - Curricular and scheduling changes
  - Revised testing schedules
  - Attention to local constraints, including resistance
  - Professional development for entire school





**College Culture Principle  
#10  
(the WISCAPE Principle)**

Extend school resources by  
partnering with  
college access  
Intervention programs!