

OREGON GEAR UP TOOLKIT



College Visits

planning successful & intentional
campus visits for every grade

REACHING HIGHER

RIGOR

RELEVANCE

RELATIONSHIPS

RAISING AWARENESS

7 8 9 10 11 12 13+

Parents Community Teachers



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REACHING HIGHER

Create a school environment, policies, and teacher expectations that support all students' pursuit of a postsecondary education.

RAISING AWARENESS

Promote early awareness of college preparation, selection, admissions, financial aid and other critical steps for college entry.



DOWNLOAD PRINT-AND-USE RESOURCES: bit.ly/1O28Jye

Look for the printer icon and green text throughout the toolkit!

- College Scavenger Hunt
- College Comparison Scorecard
- On The Bus Games
- Chaperone Expectations
- Pre-Visit Survey
- Post-Visit Survey

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Sources & More Information

Association for Middle Level Education, [Facilitating College Readiness through Campus Life Experiences](#)

Mandy Savitz-Romer & Suzanne M. Bouffard, [Ready, Willing and Able: A Developmental Approach to College Readiness](#)

The Bridgespan Group, [Reclaiming the American Dream](#)

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

In order to encourage student aspirations for postsecondary education, it's vital for students to be able to see themselves as college students. College campus visits are one way of encouraging this college-going identity. A recent study found that following a weeklong experience of immersion on a college campus, students imagined a future that included post-secondary possibilities, developed college knowledge, and cultivated deeply positive



feelings about college. Even one-day visits have the power to inspire both students and parents and inform them of the possibilities. In fact, students whose parents accompany them on campus visits have increased odds of attending college. Campus visits can also help reinforce key concepts about the application and financial aid process and provide an opportunity to build relationships with college students and staff.

COLLEGE CAMPUS VISITS

College visits give middle and high school students the opportunity to interact with students and staff, experience campus life through activities and tours, and learn about possible majors and careers.

A day on campus helps make the potentially far-off and far-away idea of “college” a reality – and with your additional support, should provide students with the inspiration and tools to reach the goal of continued education after high school.

Use the checklist, planning guide and customizable resources to plan what to do before, during and after for a successful college campus visit for your class or school.

“The biggest thing [for our students] is exposure about what college looks like and what it takes to go to college. College visits make kids feel connected to that and to see it as a possibility. We talk about college in weekly sessions but getting on campus makes a huge difference.

GEAR UP Principal



PLANNING A COLLEGE VISIT

BEFORE

DECIDE ON A PURPOSE

The purpose of any college visit is to increase awareness of higher education and foster familiarity with a university campus. Be intentional about what students will specifically achieve with their visit.

Consider what is developmentally appropriate for each grade level. For example, 7th graders don't need the details of the financial aid process, but 11th graders do.

Think about the scope and sequence of college visits so students have the option to visit a variety of campuses (including community colleges, public universities and private, not-for-profit institutions) over their school career. If possible, tailor your visit schedule to the colleges or programs that students are interested in.

The colleges you choose to visit may be based on your goals for the visit, geographic proximity, or tour availability. Map out your school's visit schedule with our [College Visit Planning Calendar](#).

DETERMINE COST & FUNDING

Campus visits can be a very affordable field trip for your students, since programming is generally offered free of charge. Costs may include transportation, substitute teacher salaries, and food.

If your school district or program doesn't have funding for campus visits, consider applying for grants such as [Target's Field Trip Grants](#).

Colleges may also have funds for special groups or events to help with transportation or meal costs.



Purpose	Examples
Learn the requirements and steps for admission	Attend a presentation by the admissions office
Learn how to pay for college	Attend a presentation by the financial aid office
Connect with college students	Hear from a student panel
Learn about career options and majors	Meet with an academic department
Discover support services available	Meet with tutoring staff
Learn about extracurricular activities	Do an activity with a student club Attend an athletic or cultural event
Enhance class curriculum	Science class visits a research lab History class studies the history of the college



PLANNING A COLLEGE VISIT

BEFORE



CONTACT THE COLLEGE

Contact the college or university of your choice at least one month ahead of your preferred visit (and preferably longer).

The college you choose to visit may be based on your goals for the visit, geographic proximity, or date availability.

You may need to make several calls or e-mails to reach the right people that can organize the kind of trip you want. In general, admissions offices will lead high school students on group walking tours and offer presentations on financial aid and requirements to get into college. It might require extra coordination on your part with professors, program directors or staff in order to do custom activities.

Be clear on what you'd like the students to see and do. Activities might include:

- Campus tours led by students
- Student panels
- Hands-on activities related to class curriculum
- Admissions/financial aid presentation (specific to school or general information)
- Athletic facilities

BE FLEXIBLE!

- Have a range of dates that you are able to visit.
- Consider bringing smaller groups on multiple days.
- Understand that all of your requests might not be met due to staffing, space, or time limitations.
- Consider contacting alumni from your town's high school who attend the university to serve as tour guides or mentors if the college is unable to meet all of your requests.

One option is to visit a university or college during their special event days that are geared towards a particular group, such as Spring Preview Days for high school juniors.

PROS

- More programming and special presentations or tours available
- Information for specific target groups
- May include lunch or transportation funding

CONS

- Less opportunity for custom programs
- Often takes place during breaks when college students aren't in class or on campus
- Part of a larger group with other schools



PLANNING A COLLEGE VISIT

BEFORE

PREPARE STUDENTS

Next, create and implement activities to prepare the students for their upcoming visit.

- Explore interesting facts about the college with an **Online College Scavenger Hunt**
- Teach a math lesson on compound interest/ college savings accounts or looking at earnings by education level
- Language arts essay or history project about the college or famous alumni
- General college prep curriculum such as NELA's [I'm Going to College](#), College Board's [CollegeEd](#), NACAC's [College Awareness and Planning for Families, Counselors and Communities](#), or ECMC's [curriculum](#)
- Assess student knowledge and aspirations about college with a **Pre-Visit Survey** . Be sure to give in advance so you can adapt the preparatory activities or college visit as needed.

Encourage students to think about and ask questions about the different aspects of what makes college a good fit when visiting. Using BigFuture's online [College Search](#) tool or our **College Comparison Scorecard** , consider:

- Type (liberal arts, technical, professional)
- Academics (type of degrees and majors offered)
- Location (distance from home, online, etc.)
- Number of students (small, medium, or large)
- Student life (on-campus housing, extracurricular activities, sports teams, academic support)
- Student body diversity
- Independent or religiously-affiliated
- Cost and financial aid availability

PREPARE PARENTS

Parents also benefit from a visit to college campuses. Invite all parents to attend as chaperones, and consider holding a Parent Night just prior to the college visit to give the basic facts about the importance of college, financial aid, and how they can help their student. Use our **Chaperone Expectations** to help orient parents and volunteers to their responsibilities on the day of the visit.

▶ PARENT RESOURCES

Parent Engagement Toolkit

oregongearup.org/resources/parent-engagement-toolkit

Gearing Up: Helping Your Middle School Student Prepare for College and Career

oregongearup.org/resources/middle-school-parent-guide

It's A Plan: College Checklists for Families

oregonquestocollege.org/itsaplan/educators/downloads





PLANNING A COLLEGE VISIT

BEFORE

LOGISTICS & DETAILS

Keep on top of the little things that you will need to do at your school in order to take a field trip. This may include:

- Requesting substitute teachers
- Organizing bus transportation
- Ordering bagged lunches
- Recruiting chaperones
 - *Tip:* Invite a different teacher to chaperone each visit so they can see the impact of a college visit on students
- Collecting permission slips
- Creating nametags

Be sure to check in periodically with your college campus contact as well. The logistical items you will want to consider with them are:

- Assigning groups (consider small groups chaperoned by 1 adult or split by gender to minimize behavior problems)
- Directions, maps, and parking information
- Cell phone numbers for chaperones, staff and bus drivers
- Items students should bring (or leave at home)
- Expectations or code of conduct for students

DURING

On the day of the campus visit, the best advice is to “go with the flow”, as unexpected events almost always occur! The preparation you have done prior to the visit should minimize most issues, but keep these considerations in mind:

- Review expectations for students and chaperones while on the bus and play [On The Bus Games](#) to reinforce pre-visit activities.
- Communicate with your campus contact if you will be early or late.
- Supervise students and monitor behavior
- Have students complete a [Campus Visit Score Card](#) or reflect with a writing prompt.
- Ask questions and gather information with [Questions and Reflections for Educators](#).
- Wear comfortable shoes and dress for the weather (advise students to do the same, as most college visits require a lot of walking outside).
- Most importantly, have fun! Take photos and make it an exciting event for everyone involved. If you enjoy yourself, the students will too!

AFTER

- After a visit to a college campus, you may want to send thank you notes written by you or the students to any staff or students that made your day on campus memorable.
- Assess the impact of a college visit with our [Post-Visit Survey](#). Track your student’s aspirations and identify areas to improve the experience for future years.
- Maintain the enthusiasm of students and parents after a college visit!
 - Post photos from the visit on the school website or on a classroom bulletin board
 - Host additional Parent Nights
 - Have College T-Shirt Fridays or other traditions that reinforce the college-going culture of your school or class
 - Refer back to information learned during the college visit
 - Start planning the next one!



COLLEGE VISIT CHECKLIST

BEFORE

3—6 MONTHS

- Determine purpose of the college visit
- Secure funding and admin. support
 - Apply for grants or programs

1—3 MONTHS

- Contact university
 - Have several dates available
 - Be clear on purpose of visit
- Prepare students and/or parents
 - Prepare college or subject curriculum
 - Parent college night (optional)
- Administrative tasks for school
 - Recruit chaperones
 - Substitute requests
 - Bus transportation
 - Bagged lunches (if applicable)

2 WEEKS—1 MONTH

- Permission slips
- Check in with university contact
- Connect with graduates of your school that are studying at the college
- Present related curriculum to students

1 WEEK

- Check in with university contact
- Confirm and orient chaperones
- Assign groups of students to chaperones
 - Nametags (optional)
- Present related curriculum to students
- Pre-Visit Survey (optional)
- Parent Night (optional)

1 DAY

- Remind students and chaperones, go over expectations
- Be sure you have maps, directions, parking information, phone numbers

- Be flexible!
- Wear comfortable shoes and appropriate clothing for the weather
- Stay in touch with college contact if you are going to be late or early
- Go over expectations for students and chaperones
- Take photos
- Supervise students
- Have fun!

DURING

AFTER

- Post-Visit Survey (optional)
- Send thank you e-mails or notes to staff and students that helped with your college visit
 - Post photos to class website (photo releases needed) or on classroom bulletin board
- Reinforce learning outcomes from campus visit during classes
- Maintain momentum of college visits with “College T-Shirt Fridays” or other traditions
- Host additional Parent Information Nights
- Start planning the next one!

COLLEGE VISIT PLANNING CALENDAR

GRADE	COLLEGE <i>2-year or 4-year? Public or private? Urban or rural campus?</i>	PURPOSE <i>e.g. intro to college, career exploration, understanding financial aid</i>	PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES <i>e.g. parent financial aid nights, student workshops</i>	POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES <i>e.g. student reflections, college comparison sheet, thank yous</i>
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				



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COLLEGE. It's not a dream, it's a plan.