

Los Angeles Unified School District
Instructional Support Services

College Month

Activities for Middle School

October 2006

K-12 College Going Culture Initiative

COLLEGE AWARENESS ACTIVITIES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS COLLEGE MONTH, OCTOBER 2006

LAUSD students come from a wide variety of cultural, economic, ethnic, language, racial, and social backgrounds. It is essential that all middle schools begin to prepare students to attend college or other post-secondary educational programs. To support this goal, each school is asked to develop a college-going culture. In partnership with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the District identified the following principles of a college-going culture:

A *college-going culture* exist when the following elements are present on all school campuses, in classrooms and school offices:

- College Talk – clear communication about what it takes to get to college
- Clear Expectations – the explicit goals of preparing students for a full range of postsecondary options is clearly defined
- Information and Resources – students have access to information and resources related to college
- Curriculum – school makes a commitment to provide the instruction necessary for every student to be prepared to meet grade level standards, every year in every classroom
- Faculty Involvement – faculty integrates college information into regular classroom activities
- Family Involvement – family members must have opportunities to gain knowledge about the college planning process
- College Partnerships – college-related activities and academic enrichment programs raise awareness of and aspirations toward college
- Articulation – a seamless experience where a college message is communicated from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade

Schools are encouraged to submit a College Month activity or idea to be included in next year's publication. Please send the description of the activity and photos, if available, to:

Coordinator-College Programs and Initiatives
Instructional Support Services
333 S. Beaudry Avenue
25th Floor, Room 162
Los Angeles, CA 90017

College Awareness Ideas for Middle Schools

- Participate in a college/career fair held at a local high school.
- Use college-going as a theme for Family Literacy or Family Math Nights to review recommended reading lists, information about high school graduation requirements and financial aid.
- Each teacher takes a few minutes to share information about the college he or she attended.
- Each paraprofessional takes a few minutes to share information about the college he or she attends.
- College students who are alumni of the school talk to students about their college experience either in an assembly or in classroom presentations.
- School staff or community members who are alumni of the school present information about their college experience.
- On a designated day or days during College Month, staff members wear clothing with a college name, mascot, or emblem. Students can also wear college sweatshirts or T-shirts.

College Awareness Activities for College Month

Activity 1 Read to Succeed

Remind students that fundamental to success in college and life is learning to read with excellent comprehension and learning to read for a variety of purposes. Non-fiction comprises most of the reading for secondary and college classes. Challenge students to select and read a non-fiction book and to complete a reading log to document their participation.

Title of Book: _____ **Author:** _____

| Date | Minutes Read | Pages Read | Something I learned | A question I still have |
|------|--------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
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Activity 2 Role Models

Ask faculty and staff members to bring a photograph of themselves wearing a cap and gown from their alma mater. Display the photos in a hallway display case with captions such as, “We graduated, you can too!” or “The road to your graduation begins today.”

Activity 3 Focus on Graduation

Have students contribute to a classroom bulletin board that focuses on graduation. Students might bring a graduation photograph or picture of a family member or friend to display. Images may include graduation from pre-school or kindergarten, high school, college, or training programs. Assign a persuasive paragraph or essay explaining why graduations are so important.

Activity 4 College Tours

Use a computer with internet access and an LCD projector to give students a virtual tour of colleges or universities. Use a search engine to locate the website for the college or university. Select two-year and four-year, public and private institutions. Also select schools in different parts of the state or country. Ask students to create a T-chart in which they list information about the college or university on the left column and write reflections, questions, or observations in the column on the right.

Activity 5 College Comparisons

Use a computer with internet access and an LCD projector to give students a virtual tour of colleges or universities. Use Google or another search engine to locate the website for the college or university. Select two-year and four-year or public and private institutions. Select schools in different parts of the state or country. Tell students to create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the institutions.

Activity 6 College-Ready Attributes and Activities

Explain to students that the good habits and self-discipline needed for success in college and in careers develop early in life. Have students brainstorm a list of personal attributes and activities that could help someone become college-ready.

Example: Makes list of things to do
Follows directions carefully
Reads every day

Activity 7 Careers/Colleges Web (or Cluster)

Place students into pairs or groups of three. Allow each group to select a letter from the alphabet. Challenge students to create a web (or cluster) of careers/occupations or colleges that begin with the selected letters. Encourage students to use the dictionary or career resource guides to aid them. Students should be expected to describe or define the careers/occupations. Students should also know where the colleges are located.

Activity 8 Getting There

Have students use a map of the city to plot out the route to three colleges or universities in the area.

Activity 9 Focus on Careers

Have students cut pictures from magazines of people in different occupations. Tell students to select a career they would be interested in pursuing from the assortment of magazine pictures. Use a digital camera to take a picture of each student. Have students superimpose their face over the face in the magazine picture. Have students write a paragraph or essay (1) explaining why they selected that particular occupation and (2) how that occupation contributes to the community.

Activity 10 Alphabetical Careers or Colleges

Place students into pairs or groups of three. Give the student teams five minutes to make a list of careers and/or colleges beginning with the letter "A" through "Z." Have teams compare lists. Then tell students to place the listed items into categories. Teams must explain how they choose their categories to the class or to another team. The goal is to recognize that there are different ways to process information.

Activity 11 College Geography

Give pairs of students an outline map of the United States and a high school or college dictionary. Tell the students to use the list of colleges and universities found in the appendix of the dictionary to find at least one college or university for each state. Challenge students to list institutions other than state colleges and universities.

Activity 12 Book Mark Art Project

Provide students with construction paper, magazines, glue, scissors, markers or crayons. Each student is to create a bookmark highlighting a college or career. The bookmarks may be displayed on a bulletin board or used for the classroom library.

Activity 13 Door Decorating Contest

Ask grade level members to decorate classroom doors to focus on specific colleges or careers. Doors may be judged for originality, amount of information provided, visual appeal, impact or other criteria. Door designs and student designers may be acknowledged in a display case or centrally-located bulletin board.

Activity 14 Focus on the Future

Have students select a career that they might want to pursue in the future. Students are to use an 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper, to a) draw a portrait of himself/herself in that career, b) list the school subjects needed to excel in that career, and c) list the specialized skills and abilities needed for the career.

Activity 15 Help Wanted Ads

Remind students that each semester they actively participate in school provides information and experiences the students will need for their future. Tell pairs of students to search through the classified section to find an ad that lists the job title, qualifications, and salary for a specific job. Have the students tape the ad to a sheet of paper and then list "what I will need to know and be able to do" to fully qualify for the position. Students may include personal qualities, academic knowledge, skills and abilities.

Activity 16 Three Degrees

Pairs of students are to search through the classified section to find ads that list the type of college degree that is required for a specific job or position. Have the students make a chart or graph that includes the job or position, the degree required, and salary offered.

Activity 17 Book Store and More

Ask paraprofessionals or other staff members who are attending college to provide a list of required textbooks. Tell students to either visit a college bookstore or to go on line to determine how much college textbooks cost. Reinforce the point that every course students take and successfully complete in middle school, high school and college saves them from having to spend money to take remedial or additional courses in college to supply the missing knowledge and learning.

Activity 18 Compare and Share

Inform students that buying college textbooks is often expensive, and there are ways to reduce the costs. Have students visit a variety of websites to compare the cost of college textbooks. Sites to visit include Amazon.com, eBay, Half.com, and surfcollege.com.

Activity 19 Count the Cost

Allow each student to select a different college or university. Then have students determine the average cost per undergraduate class at the institution they selected. Reinforce the point that every course students take and successfully complete in middle school and college saves them from having to spend money to take remedial courses in college to supply the missing knowledge and learning.

Activity 20 Time to Read

Ask paraprofessionals or other staff members who are attending college to provide a copy of the syllabus for the courses they are taking. Ask students to compare and contrast the syllabi with assignments they have been given. Ask students to draw conclusions about the college workload and the preparation they will need for college.

Activity 21 Guess Who

Compile college-related questions about faculty and staff members. For example, which 7th grade teacher attended three colleges in the San Francisco Bay area? During College Month, ask a question a day over the PA or in the bulletin. Students turn in their answers each week. Students with the most correct answers are eligible for a drawing to win books or other incentives. The goal is to encourage students to speak with the adults on their campus about college-going.

Activity 22 Guess Who 2

List ten to twenty college-related statements on the left-hand side of an 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper. For example, "majored in Spanish," "received financial aid," or "attended a community college." Students are to get signatures of faculty and staff members for whom the statement is true. Students may not get multiple signatures from any one staff member. The goal is to encourage students to speak with the adults on their campus about college-going.

Activity 23 Preparing for College with LAUSDnet Kids

Inform students that a vast amount of information that can help them prepare for classes and for college is available on the LAUSDnet web site. Use a computer with internet access and an LCD projector to give students a tour of the LAUSDnet Kids link. Go to the “Resources” tab on the menu bar, then to “Student Resources” and then to the LAUSDnet Kids quick link. Of special interest are the “LAUSD Kids News,” “Subjects” and “Digital Library” links.

Activity 24 Online Magazines

Remind students that fundamental to success in college and life is learning to read with excellent comprehension and learning to read for a variety of purposes. Non-fiction comprises most of the reading for secondary and college classes. Have pairs of students use a computer in the classroom, library or computer lab to go to LAUSDnet and to the “Resources” tab on the menu bar, then to “Student Resources” and then to the LAUSDnet Kids quick link. Then ask students to write a summary of an article from one of the online magazines through the “Newspapers and Television” tab.

Activity 25 Time Log

Explain to students that the good habits and self-discipline needed for success in college and in life develop early in life. Ask students to record how they actually spent their time during any designated three days in College Month. Students are to

- a. Make a check in the College/Career column if their activity can prepare them for college/career.
- b. Share how they spent their time with a partner or small group.

| Dates | October ____, 2006 | | October ____, 2006 | | October ____, 2006 | |
|---------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Time | How I spent my time | College/ Career | How I spent my time | College/ Career? | How I spent my time | College/ Career? |
| 4:00 pm | | | | | | |
| 4:30 pm | | | | | | |
| 5:00 pm | | | | | | |
| 5:30 pm | | | | | | |
| 6:00 pm | | | | | | |
| 6:30 pm | | | | | | |
| 7:00 pm | | | | | | |
| 7:30 pm | | | | | | |
| 8:00 pm | | | | | | |
| 8:30 pm | | | | | | |
| 9:00 pm | | | | | | |

Activity 26 College Clues

The teacher places items related to college in the classroom. Students are given a list of the 10, 15, or 20 items and a period of time--a class period to a week--to find and list the location of each of the items.

Activity 27 Name that College

Divide the class into teams. Read one to five statements about one college that the students have learned about. For example, "It once was located where LACC is now." "It was the second campus in what is now a statewide university system." The team that can identify the school most quickly scores a point. Continue until each of the colleges have been described and identified by student teams.

Activity 28 College Sponsors

Students identify several private or public universities or colleges. Students communicate with the college asking that their class be "sponsored" by the institution and furnished with posters, pennants, and other college-related materials to decorate the classroom.

Activity 29 College Connection Jigsaw

Inform students that a vast amount of information that can help them prepare for classes and for college is available on the LAUSDnet web site. Encourage pairs or small groups of students to use a computer in the classroom, library or computer lab to tour the "College Information" section. Students should go to the "Resources" tab on the LAUSDnet menu bar, then to "Student Resources" and then to "College Information." Assign each pair or group one of the sites or links in the College Information Section to explore. The pairs or groups are then to report to the class on the features of the site, the ease of use, the information available and other criteria. Students may choose to make a poster or PowerPoint presentation.

Activity 30 College Search

Inform students that there is a college that will support almost every interest or career goal that a student has. Encourage individual students or pairs of students to use a computer in the classroom, library or computer lab to identify two colleges that might be of interest based on careers, favorite subjects, geography, class size, etc.

Websites:

www.collegeboard.com

www.collegeview.com

www.embark.com

Activity 31 College Search 2

Inform students that there is a career for almost every interest or career goal that a student has. Encourage individual students or pairs of students to use a computer in the classroom, library or computer lab to identify two careers that might be of interest based on personal talents and abilities, personality, favorite subjects, or environmental preferences.

Websites:

www.acinet.org/acinet/library.asp?category=1.2

www.streamingfuture.com

www.californiacareers.info

Activity 32 Scholarship Search

Inform students that millions of dollars in scholarship money is available to students who work hard in school and who meet certain criteria. Encourage individual students or pairs of students to use a computer in the classroom, library or computer lab to identify two scholarships that might be available to them based on their career interests, favorite subjects, race, ethnicity, gender or special abilities.

Websites:

www.collegeboard.com

www.fastweb.com

www.scholarshiphelp.org

Activity 33 Reflection Log

At the end of College Month, have students:

- fold a sheet of paper into quarters,
- label each quarter, and then
- reflect on their learning by writing several sentences in each section of the paper.

As a result of College Month:

| | |
|------------|---------|
| I learned: | I need: |
| I can: | I will: |