

Handout 3: Four Pillars of Support for College and Career Readiness Self-Assessment

Complete this self-assessment to determine how well your school/district/organization is providing students with college- and career-readiness supports aligned to the four pillars of support displayed in table 1. After responding to each reflection question, assess how well your school/district/organization is supporting students according to each pillar (1 = needs lots of improvement; 2 = needs some improvement; 3 = doing well).

Table 1. Four Pillars of Support Self-Assessment

Research-based strategies ¹	Reflection questions	Response	Score (1, 2, or 3,)
<i>Pillar: Academic preparation</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a curriculum that prepares all students for college-level work and provides college-level learning opportunities. • Inform all students about academic requirements for college enrollment by the end of grade 9. 	Do students in your school or district have opportunities to take advanced coursework across academic disciplines?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use existing assessments, standards, and performance data to help educators target supports for college and career readiness. • Starting in grade 9, create a four-year personalized learning plan for each student and provide coaching to help each student succeed. 	How does your school or district measure students' progress towards postsecondary planning?		
<i>Pillar: Social-emotional preparation</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for students, particularly first-generation college-goers, to connect with recent high school graduates, mentors, and peers who can provide advice and serve as role models. • Engage students in hands-on career exploration, internships, and externships. 	Do students in your school or district have opportunities to surround themselves with peers or adults who help build their self-efficacy?		

¹ Source: Institute of Education Sciences. (2022). *Four pillars of support for high school students' college and career readiness*. Regional Educational Laboratory Program, REL Appalachia. <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products/Region/appalachia/Resource/100823>

Research-based strategies ¹	Reflection questions	Response	Score (1, 2, or 3,)
<i>Pillar: Financial preparation</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host workshops on the affordability of different postsecondary options as well as opportunities to defray costs, such as scholarships and financial aid. • Help students gain financial literacy skills such as budgeting and debt management. 	<p>How does your school or district support students and families in developing financial literacy and understanding the costs of attending college?</p>		
<i>Logistical preparation</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students and families search for education and training programs that match students’ career interests and goals. • Establish and communicate clear timelines and processes for completing applications, obtaining letters of recommendation, and taking required tests. • Encourage students to take required tests early so they have multiple opportunities to improve their scores. • Integrate college application essay requirements into coursework. • Offer resources such as internet access to help students complete college admissions forms, job applications, and other career exploration activities. 	<p>How does your school or district support students and families in completing the necessary steps for college or career entry?</p>		