



# Connecting the Dots Between High School and College to Ensure Student Success: Summary Highlights from the I3/EIR College Access and Success Public Webinar

July 26, 2018 — 2:00 p.m.

The i3/EIR College Access and Success Community conducted an interactive webinar on ways in which practitioners can develop resources and network with colleges to ensure their students seamlessly transition to college.

The webinar panelists consisted of Dr. Lorenzo Baber, a professor at Iowa State University, and Lara Dreier from College Possible, an i3 grantee. Dr. Baber discussed **frameworks on college transition success for students**, with specific attention to those from underrepresented populations. Additionally, Lara Dreier highlighted **College Possible's approach and promising strategies** in working with first-generation, low-income students.

This document highlights main themes and discussions from the webinar.

## FRAMEWORKS SUPPORTING COLLEGE TRANSITION AND SUCCESS FOR STUDENTS

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Research emphasizes a holistic approach to support students, particularly low-income students, in transitioning and succeeding in college. The research strands that support college transition and success are described below.

- **Academic Self-Efficacy:** students' beliefs about their ability and competence to complete tasks related to academic success.
- **Academic Validation:** students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, are often in need of processes that serve to confirm their academic ability.
- **Social and Cultural "Capital":** students from underrepresented backgrounds may not recognize normed activities in postsecondary settings, which may hinder their opportunities to develop sociocultural connections and a sense of belonging on campus. Thus, connecting students with validating agents can help them uncover hidden norms, assumptions, and practices in postsecondary settings.
- **Cultural Community Wealth:** recognizing and supporting the concept that all students enter postsecondary education with existing strengths and talents.



## COLLEGE POSSIBLE'S APPROACH AND PROMISING STRATEGIES

### COACHING MODEL

- College Possible uses a near-peer coaching model to match low-income students—starting in 11<sup>th</sup> grade through college graduation—with recent college graduates who serve as AmeriCorps coaches. One of the program's hallmarks is encouraging students to develop authentic relationships with trusted mentors to act as a one-stop shop for guidance, advocacy, and coaching.
- Coaches utilize an interactive college preparation and success curriculum to engage high school and college students. High school students attend after-school coaching sessions. Once those students matriculate to college, they receive technology-based coaching or in-person coaching (depending on the college they attend).
- Students who participate in the program either self-identify or are referred by educators or school-based personnel. College Possible conducts many outreach efforts so that students are aware of its program.
- Since students receive a new coach each year, it takes time to build a relationship with a new coach. Thus, College Possible's approach is for students to develop relationships with the College Possible Network as opposed to just one coach.

### CURRICULUM

- College Possible's curriculum encompasses academic, financial, and social support. College Possible is using its i3 grant to evaluate and strengthen its social curriculum.



College Possible focuses on the following components:

- **Academic preparation** to include content review and building foundational knowledge.
- **Building cultural capital** to help uncover the hidden curriculum of college (e.g., asking for help, networking, knowing institutional norms and expectations).



- **Persistence and belonging** to help students understand failure and imposter syndrome and to normalize challenges. This is done through a strengths-focused/asset-based approach.
- **Time management and goal setting** to help students keep their sense of purpose during their schooling and to help them manage their academic, personal, occupational, and familial demands.

## COACHING TRAINING

- Coaches receive extensive training and partake in a three-week onboarding process. Coaches are trained on lesson planning and on asking great questions (rather than just disseminating information).
- Throughout the year, coaches meet weekly for additional training focused on content review. The trainings also provide a space for coaches to network and troubleshoot with one another.

## STUDENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- College Possible keeps its students engaged by working with coaches to have stimulating and effective lesson plans. Persistent communication through following up with students if they miss any coaching sessions is another key to keeping students engaged.
- College Possible noted that attendance can be challenging for the students it serves; however, it works with students to make up missed lessons.
- College Possible also focuses on engaging families to help them better understand its program.