

## Module Four: College and Career Advising in the Middle Grades

### COURSE DETAILS

#### *Overview*

This module, developed for practicing professional school counselors, pre-service school counselors, and college access professionals, includes six sessions that address the skills and knowledge required to counsel middle grade students for college and careers. Participants will be engaged in building knowledge and skills in several areas including the creation of a college-going culture, the value and affordability of postsecondary education, career exploration, using data to support student success, academic planning and transitions from elementary to middle and middle to high school, and developing academic mindsets and skills. Participants will engage in constructive discussions in a learning community with their colleagues during each session, and complete practical, hands-on activities throughout the course.

*Note: The term "college" is used throughout this course to refer to any postsecondary education or training in accordance with the NCAN definition: "College" ... refers to a Pell-eligible educational institution beyond the high school level, including those that offer apprenticeship programs, certificates, and associate and/or bachelor degree programs.*

#### *Goals*

During this module, participants will learn to:

- Utilize effective strategies for creating a college-going culture in the middle grades and identify and address barriers within the school culture that impact students' ability to reach their education and career goals.
- Communicate the value of higher education for both individuals and society and that postsecondary education is for everyone and provide an overview of the costs of higher education and the types of aid that is available and convey to students and families that college is affordable.
- Communicate practical, developmentally-appropriate knowledge about the college planning and admissions process to middle grade students and families..
- Use assessments and other effective strategies to help students develop self-awareness of interests, skills, and abilities and how these relate to career options and use knowledge of national- and state-recognized career clusters to assist students in identifying a career area of interest.
- Provide program interventions to students and families to help dispel cultural, social, and gender career stereotypes.
- Identify, analyze, and interpret types of data that are useful for understanding student achievement and academic planning needs and use data to assist students in academic planning and aligning course selection to career interest and planning.
- Analyze and interpret data to identify at-risk students who may not be on a path to college and career readiness and plan interventions for students who are not on track to be college and career ready.
- Plan transition activities for parents and students to help students prepare for middle or high school.

- Help students and families to understand how success in academic courses in middle school affects access to postsecondary preparation options in high school and how taking the right courses in high school and getting good grades prepares them for success in college and careers.
- Help students to set academic goals and monitor progress toward those goals and how academic mindsets, social skills, and career-ready skills lead to success in college and careers.

### *Module Structure*

This module consists of six, one-week sessions, plus an orientation. Each session will provide participants with readings and resources to increase their background knowledge and understanding, activities that help you to apply your new knowledge, and online discussions to encourage interaction and reflection among course participants. The time for completing each session is estimated to be five to seven hours.

The outline for the module is as follows:

1	Developing a college-going culture in your middle school
2	Helping middle grade students and families understand the value and affordability of postsecondary education
3	Engaging middle grades students in self-exploration of career interests and skills
4	Using data to address equity and create early warning systems
5	Engaging middle grades students and families in academic planning and transitions
6	Helping students develop mindsets and skills for academic and career success

This module addresses the following American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model Standards:

- Academic Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.
- Academic Standard B: Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.
- Academic Standard C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.
- Career Development Standard A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.
- Career Development Standard B: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career goals with success and satisfaction.

- Career Development Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work.

### *Requirements*

Participants are required to complete all assigned products in this module and to participate in the several discussions. The [discussion rubric](#) describes the expectations for the discussion questions.

### *Assessment*

Graded activities for this module include class discussions, completion of work products, and quizzes. Quality of participation and completed assignments will be assessed using the rubrics provided for these purposes.

### *About this Module*

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## Session Overviews

### **SESSION ONE: DEVELOPING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE IN YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOL**

In this session, you will read documents that focus on the importance of developing a college-going culture in middle school and articles about the barriers to success many students face. You will explore strategies for establishing a college-going culture in your school and for working with your faculty to promote a college-going culture. Additionally, you will practice identifying the barriers your own students face and propose strategies to help them overcome the barriers.

#### **Objectives**

In this session, participants will learn to:

- utilize effective strategies for creating a college-going culture in the middle grades
- identify and address barriers within the school culture that impact students' ability to reach their education and career goals
- help faculty to understand all postsecondary options and how different higher education degrees/credentials lead to different career paths
- provide program interventions to faculty colleagues to help dispel cultural, social, and gender stereotypes associated with college and careers

### **SESSION TWO: HELPING MIDDLE GRADE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES UNDERSTAND THE VALUE AND AFFORDABILITY OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

Middle school is a crucial stage at which students and their parents must begin to make variety of complex choices that range from pursuing a challenging academic curriculum to developing an understanding of college financing. Studies have shown that almost all parents hope that their children will be able to attend college, but many parents do not have the necessary information to help their children make the important early choices that will help them prepare to fulfill their college dreams. This session will equip participants with tools and strategies to communicate the value and affordability of a postsecondary education and the steps necessary to take now to plan for college.

#### **Objectives**

- Communicate the value of higher education for both individuals and society and that postsecondary education is for everyone
- Provide an overview of the costs of higher education and the types of aid that is available, and convey to students and families that college is affordable
- Develop strategies to communicate to students and families what “postsecondary” means as well as the pros and cons of different types of higher education institutions
- Communicate practical, developmentally-appropriate knowledge about the college planning and admissions process to middle grade students and families

### **SESSION THREE: ENGAGING MIDDLE GRADES STUDENTS IN SELF-EXPLORATION OF CAREER INTERESTS AND SKILLS**

In this session, you will review methods to learn about employment area forecasts, explore state-adopted career clusters and explore tools and strategies to help students understand the connections between career aspirations and academic planning and how stereotypes can influence future aspirations.

#### **Objectives**

In this session, participants will learn how to:

- use assessments and other effective strategies to help students develop self-awareness of interests, skills, and abilities and how these relate to career options
- use state resources to promote career awareness and development among middle grades students

- use knowledge of national- and state-recognized career clusters to assist students in identifying a career area of interest
- use data to assist students in academic planning and aligning high school course selection to college majors and career interests
- provide program interventions to students and families to help dispel cultural, social, and gender career stereotypes

#### **SESSION FOUR: USING DATA TO ADDRESS EQUITY AND CREATE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS**

This session will address the importance of exploring school data from multiple perspectives. First, it explores the use of data to uncover issues related to equity. It also explores the importance of using disaggregated school-level data and individual student data to identify early warning signs for at-risk students early and plan interventions to support students who may be demonstrating signs that they will struggle to be college and career ready as they progress through middle and high school.

##### **Objectives**

This session will enable participants to:

- identify, analyze, and interpret types of data that are useful for understanding student achievement and academic planning needs
- analyze and interpret data to identify at-risk students who may not be on a path to college and career readiness
- plan interventions for students who are not on track to be college and career ready

#### **SESSION FIVE: ENGAGING MIDDLE GRADES STUDENTS AND FAMILIES IN ACADEMIC PLANNING AND TRANSITIONS**

Involving students in transition and academic planning to support their career assessments and interests is an important element in student motivation for learning. You'll read articles about the importance of middle school to students' decisions about whether or not they will go on to college. Additionally you'll read about ways to support students in their transitions from elementary to middle and then to high school.

##### **Objectives**

In this session, participants will learn strategies to:

1. help students and families identify potential barriers to students' education and career goals and address them;
2. plan transition activities for parents and students to help students prepare for middle or high school;
3. help students and families to understand how success in academic courses in middle school affects access to postsecondary preparation options in high school; and
4. help students and families understand how taking the right courses in high school and getting good grades prepares them for success in college and careers.

#### **SESSION SIX: HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP MINDSETS AND SKILLS FOR ACADEMIC AND CAREER SUCCESS**

Research suggests that non-cognitive factors not only contribute to students' academic performance but also that racial/ethnic and gender differences in school performance can be reduced by focusing on students' attitudes and behaviors. It's important for students to learn these skills in middle school as they are foundational to success in high school, college, and their careers. This session will expose participants

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to strategies for helping adolescents develop a growth mindset, and how the development of academic mindsets, social skills, and career-ready skills will lead to success in college and careers.

**Objectives**

- help students to set academic goals and monitor progress toward those goals
- help students develop time management skills; study skills; psychological resilience; learning strategies; and self-management behaviors that contribute to academic success
- help students understand how academic mindsets, social skills, and career-ready skills lead to success in college and careers