Tulalip Charitable Contributions Funds Distribution Report

NAME OF AGENCY: Independent Colleges of Washington

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GENERAL GOALS: Independent Colleges of Washington provide educational opportunity, choice, and success for students.

SPECIFIC USE FOR THIS AWARD:

The project has become known as the "Fit Matters Project". Its goal has been to research, document, and develop a more complete understanding of college fit dynamics and create a training module for application of this improved understanding for use by middle and high school counselors and college admissions staff from ICW member institutions in Washington.

For more information, please see the attached report from Council of Independent Colleges.

Project Sponsor

First Opportunity Partners Grant Project Report

Project Title

College Choice and the Dynamics of Student Fit

Conducted By

Independent Colleges of Washington

April 11, 2016

Executive Summary

For the past five years, The Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW), education partners in Washington state, and education leaders in the legislature have been working diligently to help create a college going culture among high school graduates in the state. ICW concluded that to be successful in this effort, all partners had to develop a much better understanding about the dynamics of student and college 'fit' so that school counselors and admissions officers can help students, especially underrepresented students, make more informed and positive choices about college attendance. ICW secured a First Opportunity Partner's grant from the Council of Independent Colleges and contributions from philanthropic organizations to further explore and help inform middle and high school counselors about these dynamics.

The Project become known as the "Fit Matters Project". Its goal was to research, document, and develop a more complete understanding of college fit dynamics and create a training program about this improved understanding for use by middle and high school counselors and college admissions staff. The $50,739 project was guided by an expert advisory team of college admissions professionals to learn about the research, generate ideas, and provide feedback to the process. The research included a literature search on factors that determine student fit and interviews with college guidance counselors, project partners, and students to gather baseline information on how targeted audiences define fit. Based on the research, surveys and observation of current training practices for middle and high school guidance counselors, the project then developed training modules for middle and high school guidance counselors designed to increase understandings and provide tools to help students, particularly underrepresented students, with fit dynamics and decisions. Using these modules, the project also conducted training workshops across Washington state for middle and high school guidance counselors in partnership with the College Success Foundation.

> The project's research concluded: *The best way to address the questions of fit is to utilize middle, high school and college counseling support to strengthen student understanding of the impact non-cognitive skills/ variables have on the options available to them, and concurrently in their ability to make best use of those options.*
>
> *This involved expanding the focus of college preparation, search, and decision support to ensure students grasp that while academics are of critical importance, the college opportunity will include much more than preparation for a career.*
>
> *It also involves strengthening college/high school links including greater use of admissions staff visits to high schools and middle schools scheduling college workshops as well as campus visits to any/multiple colleges starting no later than middle school.*

The workshops were well attended and effective. 98% of participants reported growth in understanding college fit factors, 94% were satisfied with the overall training, and 97% of participants found the training immediately useful. And a very interesting learning from the workshops was that college pennants are a highly valued commodity by counselors since, when posted on school walls, they serve as an inspiration and sample of the diversity of colleges choices for students. With this in mind and as an inspiration and token of appreciation for K-12 education partners, ICW sent a set of pennants from ICW colleges to nearly every high school and middle school in the state.

Introduction

This document is the final report of a project entitled "College Choice and the Dynamics of Student Fit." The project was conducted by the Independent Colleges of Washington (ICW) in partnership with the College Success Foundation (CSF). ICW is an association of the ten non-profit private liberal arts based colleges in Washington. Together these colleges confer nearly 40% of the baccalaureate degrees awarded annually in Washington and have a student population of nearly 40,000. The graduation rates of these the ten ICW member colleges consistently rank in the top five in the nation.

CSF is a private non-profit national organization designed to serve the underserved – those who might not otherwise get to college without our help. CSF provides scholarships to young people from low-income families, students of color, foster youth, and first-generation college students. CSF also offers direct services in addition to scholarships through an integrated system of supports addressing the critical transition points from middle to high school, high school to college, and college to career. Both ICW and CSF support students directly through raising and distributing funds for financial aid. The project was conducted during the course of 2015 and was funded in part by a First Opportunity Partner's grant from the Council of Independent Colleges. Other financial contributors to the project included Moccasin Lake Foundation $5,000; Gene Collin $5,000; Franz Lazarus and Costco Wholesale $4,000; The Wollenberg Foundation $7,000; The Suquamish Tribe $750; Quil Ceda/Tulalip Tribes Charitable Fund ▇▇▇▇ Kidder Mathews $2,119

For the past five years, ICW, in collaboration with other education partners in Washington has been working to help create a college going culture among high school graduates. Colleges and universities across the country have long known that the dynamics of student "fit" are an important element of creating a college going culture and critically important factors in helping students make choices about college attendance. Yet there is incomplete knowledge and understanding about these dynamics among high school counselors in the application of admissions practices. This is particularly true and uniquely important to populations of students who are underrepresented in the higher education system, and especially in independent colleges. In sum, ICW designed and carried out this project to find answers to this lack of understanding.

The project also grew out of discussions with ICW member college presidents and admissions staff, all of whom strongly recognize a need for greater capacity and innovation in their admissions efforts, particularly in reaching out to first-generation, hard-to-serve, and underrepresented students so that these students and their families see attending an ICW member college as a viable and realistic choice. These concerns led to the concept of a student fit project evolving from the knowledge that many of these students have, by the 10th grade, if not sooner, ruled out college as an opportunity for them and certainly ruled out attendance at an independent college partially based on their sense that these institutions too expensive for them.

The project sought to enhance knowledge of these fit dynamics by:

1. Researching and documenting a more complete understanding of the fit factor for underrepresented students and share that research with college admissions staff so that they may have a more complete understanding of these dynamics.
2. Creating a training module based on this improved understanding of fit factors and conducting related training for middle and high school counselors in Washington thereby indirectly helping students who are underrepresented in the higher education system make more informed and effective choices about college attendance.

As a collateral benefit, the training module developed through this project was designed to have an application for other independent college associations across the country. The project's success will greatly improve ICW's member college's ability to work with and more successfully recruit new populations of underrepresented students.

Purpose, Scope and Outcomes of Project

The project has become known as the "Fit Matters Project". Its goal has been to research, document, and develop a more complete understanding of college fit dynamics and create a training module for application of this improved understanding for use by middle and high school counselors and college admissions staff from ICW member institutions in Washington.

The project had had the following five major work components:

1. Engage an expert advisory team of college admissions professionals to learn about the research, generate ideas, and provide feedback to the process.
2. Conduct a literature search on factors that determine student fit and meet with/interview school district personnel, high school and college guidance counselors, project partners, parent groups, and students to gather baseline information on how targeted audiences define fit.
3. Using the research developed, and observation of current training practices for middle and high school guidance counselors conducted by our project partners, develop training modules for middle and high school guidance counselors that increase understandings and provide tools to help students, particularly underrepresented students with fit dynamics and decisions.
4. Conduct training workshops for middle and high school guidance counselors using the training modules.
5. Write the project report for delivery to funders.

The generalized outcomes of this project included:

1. Improved understanding of the dynamics of student fit among college admissions staff and high school guidance counselors.
2. Better understanding about the attractive fit dynamics for students and families considering attending an independent college in Washington.
3. Increased consideration of attending an independent college in Washington among underrepresented students in Washington.

The more specific outcomes of the project included:

1. Documented survey and literature research on the dynamics of college fit in making college attendance decisions.
2. A set of training modules related to considering the dynamics of student fit college counseling practices designed for middle and high school counselors.
3. Training workshops for middle and high school counselors on the topics related to college fit factors.
4. Improved communications and deeper relationship between admissions officers and school counselors.
5. Creating opportunities for middle school students to tour area campuses.

Project Process and Activities

The Project was accomplished through a team convened and managed by ICW. The Team consisted of team of expert consultants guided by a working group composed of representatives from our member college admissions staff, existing ICW staff, and local representatives from the nationally recognized College Success Foundation. Specific key personnel working on the Project included:

- **Violet Boyer**, ICW President and CEO served as the project administrator and member of the project team
- **Anne Cassidy**, ICW Vice President for Advancement Services, served as ICW's overall coordinator for the project
- **Tom Fitzsimmons**, ICW Vice President served as a member of the project team guiding the consultant team and the work group throughout the project
- **Michelle Alejano**, College Bound Program Director, College Success Foundation, served as the coordinator of the work effort with the work of the College Success Foundation in this area as well as a key member of the work group focusing on developing the training module for middle and high school counselors
- **Linda and Ron MacDonald**, consultants from the Model Secondary Schools Project, conducted the research and helped design the training modules

The project was implemented along on the following timelines and activities:

2015 Month	Tasks

February	• Initial literature and journal search summarized
	• Facilitation of first (of three) meetings with Advisory Team
	  o Agenda with reflective questions developed to elicit key areas for survey development for high school counselors, college admission officers and high school students
	  o Identify topics and draw key questions
	• Project budget finalized with ICW
	• Additional funding secured

March	• Draft surveys completed for review by Work and/or Advisory Team • Draft of literature review written • Survey content ready for release

April	• Literature review finalized
	• Advisory Team Meeting
	  o Update on literature review findings
	  o Request for survey participation assistance – publicity, distribution, access to students & families
	  o Input on training module content/format
	• Observe CSF training
	• Student/family interviews completed
	• Surveys publicized – distributed- collected

May	• Survey results compiled • College partners interviewed regarding training needs

June	• Training modules developed
	• Advisory Team Meeting
	  o Survey results shared
	  o Training module shared

July - August	• Training Workshop locations and logistics secured • Training Modules finalized
September - November	• Training Workshops held • Interim report provided
December	• Project evaluations completed
January - April 2016	• Report drafted and finalized

All components of the Project have been successfully completed including the research, the surveys, developing the training modules, conducting the training workshops, the evaluation, and the analysis of the evaluation protocols for the effectiveness of the training workshops. These components of the Project are outlined in further detail in the remainder of this report

Research and Findings

The Project research utilized a three stage process to investigate college fit factors – beginning with a literature review focused on current issues and findings related to college fit. This review also included informal cataloging of existing college decision making websites targeting high school students. Next field interviews were conducted with college admissions counselors at ICW member colleges. Primary focus of these interviews were recruitment and admissions initiatives targeting low-income and first generations students, questions and concerns they were hearing from students, families, and high school counselors, and gaps they perceived in student understanding of college fit factors. The information from the first two stages was used to prepare and disseminate a survey of current low income and first generation college students at ICW member colleges on how perceptions of "fit" and other factors influenced individual college decisions.

A large number of researchers, organizations, and foundations have developed various measures, information resources, and training materials to help students and their support systems to address being 'college ready'. In general, this work is primarily focused on academics and test performance, student career interests, and the fiscal calculations of college expenses. However, in the last decade we are seeing an expanded search for the social/emotional factors that impact both college choice/fit and preparedness.

The Project research found the following reports in the literature with findings specific to college fit for low income and first generation students:

1. Sedlacek, W.E. (2011). Using non-cognitive variables in assessing readiness for higher education. *Readings on Equal Education*, 25, 187-205

2. Sedlacek, W.E. (2004) *Beyond the big test: Noncognitive assessment in higher education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

3. Caroline Hoxby and Christopher Avery, *The Missing "One-Offs": The Hidden Supply of High-Achieving, Low income Students,* Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, Spring 2013, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/projects/bpea/spring%202013/2013a_hoxby

4. Adebayo, Bob (2008), *Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Factors Affecting the Academic Performance and Retention of conditionally Admitted Freshman,* Summer 2008 National Association for College Admission Counseling Journal

Sedlacek refers to non-cognitive variables as those that relate to student's adjustment, motivation, and perceptions. He states that "*while non-cognitive variables are useful for all students, they provide viable alternatives in fairly assessing the abilities of people of color, women, international students, older students, students with disabilities, or others with experiences that are different than those of young,*

White, heterosexual, able-bodied, Eurocentric males in the United States (traditional students)." (Sedlacek 2011)

Sedlacek has detailed discussion and research supporting each of the following non-cognitive variables and their descriptions: (Sedlacek 2004).

Positive Self Concept	Demonstrates confidence, strength of character, determination, and independence.
Realistic Self-Appraisal	Recognizes and accepts any strengths and deficiencies, especially academic, and works hard at self-development. Recognizes need to broaden his/her individuality.
Understands and Knows How to Handle Racism;	Exhibits a realistic view of the system based upon personal experience of racism. Committed to improving the existing system. Takes an assertive approach to dealing with existing wrongs, but is not hostile to society, nor is a "cop-out." Able to handle racist system and make system work for him/her.
Long Range Goals	Able to respond to deferred gratification, plans ahead and sets goals.
Strong Support System	Seeks and takes advantage of a strong support network or has someone to turn to in a crisis or for encouragement.
Leadership	Demonstrates strong leadership in any area of his/her background (e.g. church, sports, non-educational groups, gang leader, etc.).
Community	Participates and is involved in his/her community.
Nontraditional Knowledge Acquired	Acquires knowledge outside the education system in sustained and/or culturally-related ways.

The research of Hoxby and Avery suggests that low-income high achievers do not necessarily apply to selective colleges despite being well qualified for admission. Conclusions drawn from Hoxby and Avery (Spring 2013) show that low income high achievers:

- are poorly informed about their college-going opportunities

- have cultural, social, or family issues that make them unwilling to apply to peer institutions, even if they are confident of being admitted and succeeding academically

This research suggests that low-income high achievers are not necessarily less enterprising but rather that their support system of family and/or overtaxed counselors do not know or have time to help them develop their awareness of selective colleges. The research also suggests that interventions that expect to have an impact on these students, college admission behaviors should not depend on the students being concentrated in a small geographic area or a limited number of schools.

A final piece of research in this initial review, *Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Factors Affecting the Academic Performance and Retention of conditionally Admitted Freshman* (Adebayo 2008) provides analyses revealing that one cognitive variable (high school grade point average) and two non-cognitive measures (realistic self-appraisal and understanding and coping with racism) are the three best predictors of first semester grade point average (GPA) for conditionally-admitted freshmen students. This study was designed for students who were conditionally admitted to a public university

(designed for students who do not meet regular admission standards to the university but based on their performance on standardized tests or high school GPA, may be admitted on a conditional basis). The students in this admission process were asked to complete a non-cognitive questionnaire (NCQ). The research was limited to a one-year study of conditionally admitted students at a public university.

Adebayo, based on this study, recommends that new selection indexes be developed for at risk applicants. This index would be based on high school GPA, self-perceived realistic self-appraisal, and the student's understanding of and capability for coping with racism (the latter two factors determined by the NCQ). Discussion concluded that support services focused on enhancing realistic self-appraisal of the conditionally admitted students may increase their success. The study revealed a statistically significant correlation between realist self-appraisal and the ability to understand and cope with racism. Discussion of the results of this study also suggested incorporating appreciation of cultural diversity into freshman seminars for at risk students.

The research concluded that the best ways to address the questions of fit are to:

1. Utilize high school and college counseling support to strengthen student understanding of the impact non-cognitive skills/variables have on the options available to them, and concurrently in their ability to make best use of those options.

   College going is an ideal, a forgone conclusion with established rituals for many teens, but a distant and mysterious possibility filled with unknowns for many other teenagers.

   The factors impacting both decision-making and success once that decision has been made are highly individual, but often have a much higher risk for low-income and first generation students. In addressing the embedded challenges of preparing students for their college decision, there is a professional responsibility to bear in mind that low income and first generation students are taking on a greater personal and financial risk in this decision process.

2. Make better use of opportunities to embed critical skills in high school course work and counseling workshops, such as utilizing data collected using Internet research to formulate critical questions, or mapping the range of responses or options posed by a single concept – such as housing options available at multiple colleges.

3. Expand focus of college preparation, search and decision support to ensure students grasp that while academics are of critical importance, the college opportunity will include much more than preparation for a career:

   Academics do matter, but social skills, collaboration, adaptability, and cultural responsiveness are also critical success skills for college. Case studies, personal stories, site visits and college
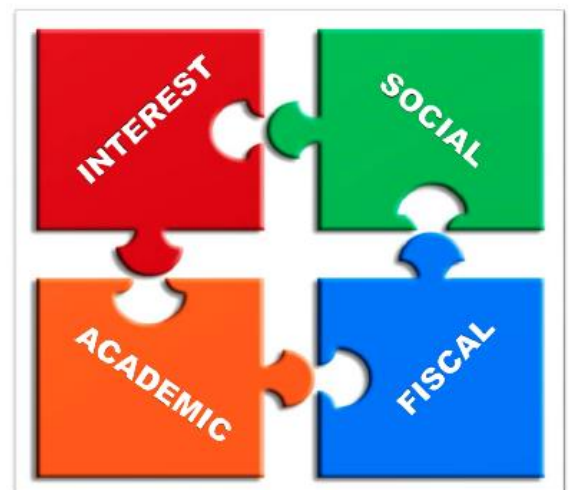
student/graduate mentors for students without college experience in their community network are a few examples of multiple supports available. Opportunities to expand and focus the outcomes of these efforts on college success as a social skill should be explored.

While college admissions is a competitive process, college going should not be. College fit efforts should focus on building student information base, connecting dreams with the reality of pathways to those dreams, and skill in weighing options – this implies use of multiple non-cognitive skills. The college research process contains multiple opportunities to embed this question seeking and decision justification process into school subject area work. Sample modules and resources for embedding college research into multiple content areas should be developed.

4. Strengthen college/high school link

Collaborate with counselor networks to establish a common schedule and event nights in communities that focus on reaching targeted students.

One of the most common responses we heard from college admissions counselors is the challenge of being able to meet the demand for admissions visits to the hundreds of high schools and middle schools scheduling college workshops. A second common response was about the value of campus visits to any/multiple colleges starting no later than middle school. We suggest establishing a stronger collaboration among the ICW network, with potential to reach beyond the state of Washington, to establish a common "social network" of college students, high school students, moderated and overseen by college admissions counselors and school counselors, to foster mentor type on-line dialogs, discussions, and resource sharing.

ICW and co-sponsors should host and publicize weekly online workshops, panel discussions with admissions, current students, graduates etc., Q&A sessions, campus tours, critical skills coaching, showcase highly skilled and effective high school counselors and practices, model/tutor college fit research tactics.

Training Modules

The consultant research, surveys, and student case examples were well documented and combined into a single 64-page document entitled College Fit Matters Facilitators Guide. The document is available on line at http://icwashington.org/fit-matters-fac-guide .

This body of work then served as the foundation for developing the actual training module used in the workshops. This module is entitled College Fit Tool Kit and is included in this report as Appendix #1.

Workshops

A total of eight four hour workshops provided by the College Success Foundation were held across the state almost all hosted at ICW member college campuses. The thrust of the workshops was designed to use the training module as a teaching tool in an interactive environment to improve the utilization of current and new knowledge acquired at the workshop about "College Fit" in the college search, application and selection process for students who are likely to succeed in college but are not selecting colleges that may be well suited to their potential due to lack of adequate information and tool to explore alternatives.
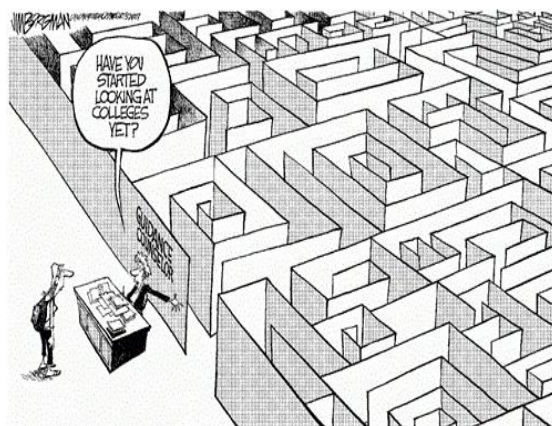
The workshops were attended by some ninety-five counselors from all over the state. All attendees reported a very positive outcome of their learning experience as indicated in the following summary of the pre and post evaluation protocol used by the CSF. The full evaluation report appears is included in this report as Appendix # 2.

Workshop Evaluation Summary

Goodness of Fit:
- 69% to 80% of participants reported having a moderate or great extent of pre-training understanding of college fit factors and the College Bound Scholarship.
- 50% to 64% of participants reported having a moderate or great extent of knowledge in facilitating conversations about college fit (including using tools to facilitate such conversations).

Learning Growth:
- 98% to 100% of participants reported growth in understanding college fit factors and the College Bound Scholarship.
- 77% to 79% of participants reported growth in facilitating conversations about college fit.

Satisfaction, Utility, and Implementation:
- 94% were satisfied with the overall training
- 97% of participants found the training immediately useful; 77% of respondents in the follow-up survey said what they learned was still useful 30 to 60 days after the training.
- 99% said they were likely to implement the tools; 77% actually implemented the tools or practices to at least a small extent 30 to 60 days after the training.

Pennants

As indicated earlier in this report, one of the most significant requests made by the school counselors during the workshops was for college pennants for them to display in their offices and around their schools. The reason for this request was that the counselors have found the pennants to serve visual and aspirational symbols of all the possibilities for students to pursue after graduation. They also serve as a catalyst for having the kinds of discussions the research suggested students should engage in. With this in mind ICW sent a set of its pennants to nearly every high school and middle school in the

state. As the pictures and the appreciative testimonials received in return reiterated, the pennants were very well appreciated.

Project Budget

The overall budget for the Project totaled $ 50,739. The Council of Independent Colleges provided $21,869 through a First Opportunity Partners grant and the remaining $28,869 was through private contribution.

FIRST OPPORTUNITY PARTNERS GRANT PROGRAM FY 2015
Independent Colleges of Washington
College Choice and the Dynamic of Student Fit

Budget Item	CIC Funds	Matching Funds	Total Expenses	Narrative
Consultant Work Team	$18,000.00	$10,000.00	$28,000.00	These were the expenses related to the team of consultant experts ICW established. This team conducted survey and literature research and designed training modules related to the understanding the dynamics of student fit for use in the high school and middle school workshops conducted by the College Success Foundation (CSF).
Consultant Travel and Incidental Expenses	$1,199.43		$1,199.43	These expenses were related to the travel and incidental costs of the consultant team work and the attendance at training sessions across the state.
College Admissions Workgroup Member Travel and Meeting Expenses	$1,129.20		$1,129.20	These expenses were related to meeting room and food cost for the College Admissions Workgroup meetings
High School and Middle School Counselor Workshop Support (Contribution to CSF)	$1,000.00		$1,000.00	This expense was a contribution to the College Success Foundation to help underwrite the cost of the training sessions across the state.
Pennant Postage	$540.00	$1,863.48	$2,403.48	The postage and shipping costs associated with distributing the pennants.
Pennant Production Costs		$17,005.95	$17,005.95	Costs associated with the design, fabrication, and production of the 6,000 pennants distributed to the middle and high schools across the state.
Total	**$21,868.63**	**$28,869.43**	**$50,738.06**	

Conclusion

ICW was honored to be supported by CIC and supporting partners for this important work. It appears to have achieved all of its objectives and has the potential to be replicated by others. It was a valuable contribution to efforts in Washington state to help create a college going culture among underrepresented students and their families and thereby ultimately providing improved opportunity for higher education and greater prosperity in life.

COLLEGE FIT TOOLKIT

FINDING YOUR FIT FACTOR
PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE

Table of Contents

Hearing from our Students

Facilitator Notes

- Computer
- Internet Access
- TV or screen to watch student testimonial video

Time: 15 minutes

Key Points
- Real WA student experiences/challenges getting into their college and why they chose their college
- Factors that affected their college choice
- Advice to their high school near peers

Activity

Show video Discussion Questions:

- Whose story did you relate to and why?
- Was there anything surprising about what they said?
- What fit factors did they talk about?
- Are there any fit factors that you can think of that the students didn't cover?
- What tips did the students say that you want to implement today?

Fit Factor Funnel

Step 1: What will you find at a college that is a "Good Fit" for you? (circle all that apply)

Campus Life	Quality of Professors	Clubs and Activities	Transportation
School Size	Admission Selectivity	Academic Programs	Affordability
Curriculum	Academic Atmosphere	Demographics	Spirituality
Reputation	Networking Opportunities	Safety Statistics	_____
Meal Plans	Commitment to Major Field	Academic Rigor	_____
Class Size	Financial Aid/Scholarships	Student Diversity	_____
Athletics	Study Abroad Opportunities	Campus Housing	_____
Location	Student to Faculty Ratio	Distance from Home	_____
	Employment Opportunities	Sports Participation	
	Extracurricular Activities	Male/Female Ratio	
	Facilities/Technology	Disability Services	
	Internship Opportunities	Graduation Rate	

Step 2: Narrow your choices down ... which 3-5 of those selected above are most important?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Step 3: Asking the "right" questions... Come up with good questions that a college admissions counselor could answer to give you the information you want to know about your "Good Fit" factors.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

With permission from an original template developed by Admissions at Pacific Lutheran University

Understanding the Landscape

Facilitator Notes

- Flip charts
- Large/small post-it notes
- Markers

Time: 10 minutes

Key Points

- Consider all options
- Opportunity to transfer from 2 to 4 year schools (many students do this to save on costs)

Activity

Opening Discussion Questions:

- How many different college or university options are out there to choose from? >Answer: 8 including public or private 4 year or 2 year, for profit, liberal arts, university, community colleges, vocational or technical colleges
- What do you think are the biggest differences between 2 and 4-year colleges?
- What do you think are the biggest differences between public and private colleges?
- Write down their answers on a whiteboard or post-it note

2- year Public	4-year Public / Public
Open and rolling admission	Selective and deadline driven admission
Lower tuition	Higher tuition
Support services	Support services
Offers vocational and technical training	Potential for graduate opportunities
Mixed faculty (masters and PhDs)	Mixed faculty (mostly PhDs)
Smaller class size	**Public:** Larger undergraduate class sizes (range from 100-500) **Private:** Smaller undergraduate class size (on average less than 50)

Discuss differences:

- What do you think the typical class size is at a 4-year university? Answer: 50-100 per class How many students are in your classes now?
- What do you think the typical class size is at a 2-year college? Answer: 30-50 students per class
  - What do you think the benefits or drawbacks are?
- What do you think the typical class size is at a 4-year private? Answer: Fewer than 40

Then ask the following:

- How many students are at your school?
- How many students are at Whitman College? > Answer: 1,500
- How many students attend Seattle Central? > Answer: 15,000
- How many students attend UW? > Answer: 43,000
- How many students attend Arizona State? > Answer: 70,000

Reiterate there are differences between schools, but the difference between your current school environment and any college environment is significant.

If they try to learn more about the colleges they are considering, the transition will be easier.

Student Scenarios
Facilitator Notes

- Case study handouts

Time: 30 minutes or more

Key Points:

- Refining questions and identifying resources and supports students could utilize to find answers
- Using cases to direct students toward identifying their own challenges in getting to college and questions about college
- Preparing a college going decision timeline

Note:

- Read through the cases yourself – once with adult eyes, another with student Point of View Identify what you see as critical information in the case story
- The case stories provide multiple indicators of social issues and potential equity conflicts. The intent of these cases is for students to consider possibilities and options within their scope rather than focusing on the problem itself.
- These stories contain elements that may make some students uncomfortable – poverty, race, illness, ambition – be prepared for such issues to be embedded in the questions students identify, and acknowledge the role such issues play in the complexity of going to college
- Reiterate that there are no "wrong" answers just different possible angles to address student issues

Case Study Themes:

Adam	Rita	Brendan	Rashel	Sarah	Tyler
• How to prepare • Options	• Resources • Desire	• Resources • Goal Setting and Planning • Career Planning	• Belief and Aspiration • Grit	• Goal Setting • Influencers • Discretion	• First steps • Academic Planning • College Type

Activity

Break class into small group of 3-5 students (7 different case studies are provided)

Assign case studies to small groups

Ask student groups to:

- Assign a READER and a REPORTER from each group
- Read through the case studies
- Identify questions that information from the student stories raises and answer discussion questions

As a group discuss:

- Have the READER read their scenario out to the group
- Have the REPORTER go over their discussion questions and what their groups conclusions, proposed solutions, or resources that the student in the scenario would/should access
- Possible questions students might have about each scenario

Adam

Adam is in his second year of college at a campus about 12 miles from his parents' home and plans to major in engineering. The campus he attends was the only college he applied to because it was closest to his home. Adam wasn't sure he would be able to afford it but was surprised at how much financial aid he was offered. Adam readily agreed to a package of grants and loans but will still owe some expenses. He stayed at his parents' house his first year to save money, but this year is living on campus and he hopes to rent an apartment with his college friends next year.

In high school he was not certain he would be able to go to college. In 9th and 10th grades he received mostly B's and C's, with one D. He worked when he could after school and on weekends, so he didn't always get his homework done. Adam's mom had talked to him about college since 8th grade but he didn't really think about it much. It was just too far out in the future and he knew it took good grades, smarts, and money. He liked math and thought he was pretty good at it, though some of it was too complicated. He was often thinking about other things like his work schedule, money, basketball and friends. He did fine in the other subjects like science and wrote papers for his homework when he felt it really mattered.

Adam's school offered an AVID course for one year, which allowed him to explore some ideas about a career. This got him thinking about engineering - an idea that has stayed with him into college. He now expects to major in civil engineering and hopes for a career where he can contribute to improving communities like the ones where he has lived.

Adam's mother is sick and only rarely leaves the house for medical treatment. His father works one job that has irregular hours and pay and Adam fills in whenever he can at his brother's auto body shop. Since he was 16, Adam has also worked 12 to 16 hours each week at his uncle's store so he has a little pocket money and is sometimes able to contribute toward groceries. However, he and his family have no money saved up for college.

What could he have done when he was your age to be better prepared for college?

 Do you think Adam made the right choice about college or should he have considered more options?

Does Adam's story bring any other ideas or questions to mind for you?

 What information could he have looked for? What questions might he have asked?

• Who else might he have talked with?

Brendan

Brendan has always liked to run. He was often competitive, liking the feeling of being faster than someone else, but he also just liked the sense of freedom and accomplishment he felt when he ran. As a college student running was still important to him. His track teammates were also his best friends and they often talked about everything: their classes, their friends, new people they had met, the news, and the future.

When Brendan decided to go to college he thought he would become a scientist, but didn't really know what that meant. He had always liked science, especially the experiments, but writing the lab reports and writing clear conclusions were usually the hardest parts. The only scientists he had talked to were his teachers, though his college often had guest science speakers. Listening to these talks, then discussing them with his friends, left Brendan wondering: "Was he smart enough to have such big ideas?" "Did he know enough to create science experiments that would answer important questions?" "Could he stand in front of an audience and explain complex ideas in a way that the listeners could develop their own big ideas?"

Brendan has an important choice to make in college. He has to choose a major. His coursework is suffering because of his other commitments. Running, spending time with friends, and his new girlfriend are interfering with getting good grades and learning everything he needs to be a good scientist.

Brendan really likes being in college but he didn't realize how hard it would be to work out some of the decisions he would have to make. He still has many questions he must resolve about his future.
How could Brendan find help with the answers he is looking for?

What could Brendan have done before he applied to college that would have helped him do better in college?

What about you – what questions do you have about college? About the courses you might take or the careers they might lead to?

Where can you look for help in figuring out which questions to ask?

Rashel

Middle school was hard for Rashel. Finding time for studying and getting along with others were real challenges. She always had to take care of two brothers and a sister at home before and after school and on weekends because her mom was always working. She didn't have time to have a social life.

After a conversation with her counselor, he connected her to a mentor in 8th grade. Things didn't change overnight, but Rashel began realizing she could do better by thinking about her options and making good choices. Her grades were pretty good but she realized she had to make positive decisions in order to keep moving forward.

A few years later, even though it wasn't easy getting here, Rashel is sometimes surprised when she realizes that she is a college student, getting good grades and enjoying time with friends who have dreams like hers. No one in her family had ever gone to college. Now she is learning about careers she didn't even know existed and is planning to work for a big company for a few years after graduating, then start her own business. In college she has realized that the reason the math classes that others found so hard had seemed easy to her was because she just had a good sense about numbers.

Now, Rashel has decided to become an accountant, solving real world challenges with managing money. This is her plan:
1) Help mom manage money now
2) Get accountant job after college to help support my family
3) Save money so mom does not have to work as many hours
4) Motivate brothers and sister to do better in school and help them make their own college plans

What changed for Rashel?

Can you think of some things Rashel might have done, that are not told in this story, which made it possible for her to get college and change her outlook?

As a student, there are some things you cannot change, and some things you can change by the decisions you make. As you consider the possibility of going to college, what are some of the things you could change that might open doors, making college a real possibility? (For example: Who could you talk to? What internet searching could you do? What else?)

Rita

Rita is a sophomore at a private college in Washington.

When she was in high school, going to college was barely a thought. One day a school counselor came to her class and asked the students to write down their answers to two questions: "What might be some good reasons for going to college?" and "What would you want to get out of going to college?" Rita talked to her uncle about those questions because he was the only member of her family who had gone to college. He told her how much he wished he had tried harder and gone to a different college that matched with his career goals. This sparked something for Rita. She knew she wanted to do something important, even though what that meant wasn't clear to her. She thought being a nurse or a teacher might be a good foundation for the life she would like to have when she has a family of her own.

After completing her assignment, she kept thinking about those questions, talking to her friends and teachers, and even using the idea of being a nurse for a research project in her English class. Still, she knew going to college would not be easy. Her grades were fair, but she felt she wasn't "one of the smart ones", and she knew it was going to be difficult to pay for.

She started asking others how they decided to go to college and how they paid for it, and heard many different answers. Some had families who helped with funding; others got financial aid. Some also worked – taking an extra year or two to get their degrees. After hearing that a friend's mom was still paying off her college loan, she asked herself, "Would college allow me to get a job I like and still pay off a tuition loan?"

Rita wrote down her questions, and whenever a new question came to her she added it to the list. She started reading about colleges and was surprised to find a website at bigfuture.org that allowed her to find out about colleges all over the country – who went there, what it cost, what the campus was like, what courses she could take and the majors and advanced degrees she could work towards. All she had to do was figure out her next steps to make it a reality.

If you were Rita, what would be on your list of questions about college?

Who could you talk with to begin answering your questions?

What are some reasons you would want to go to college?

What do you think is Rita's next step?

Sarah

When Sarah's mom passed away, she was in ninth grade. She and her brother went to live with their grandmother, who set high expectations for her: doing well in school and going to college. When Sarah asked, "How am I supposed to pay for it?", her grandmother said, "We'll just have to see".

Next year Sarah will be the first person in her family to graduate from college. Meeting her grandmother's expectations and nearing her college goal, Sarah's perception of many things has changed.

One surprise was that, with the help of her grandmother's rules, Sarah had better grades in high school than in middle school. Being responsible for getting her school work done didn't really seem harder, she just became better at managing her time and asking for help. That's why she also had better scores on her SAT tests than she expected, and that helped with the cost of college – her financial aid package had more grants and scholarships than she imagined.

Another surprise resulted from her dedication and extra work as a team leader on a high school class project to introduce early reading skills to pre-school students in her neighborhood. She received a leadership award and grant from a local foundation.

Sarah made a short list of the most important things to consider:

Close to home but not too close (she wanted to be in the city)	Diversity – she wanted a place where she could find people similar to her, as well as people with different histories and backgrounds.
Size - she wanted to attend a big school	Net cost – she needed to figure out how much financial aid, grants and scholarships would contribute to reducing the size of the loan she would need.

Sarah did her research and made her first list of schools. Then after researching and talking to the adults in her life she made another more targeted list. After getting accepted into multiple schools she made one last "most important" list. This time she decided that size did not really matter. While she wanted to stay close to her grandmother and her brother, she also needed her independence. Surprisingly, the cost differences weren't that much with her aid packages, so she was able to focus on her #1 factor - LOCATION!

It appears Sarah made some good choices that made going to college easier. What do you think they were?

Her grandmother certainly influenced Sara. Who/what else might have had an influence on her decisions?

Look at the items on Sarah's "most important" lists. What do you think are first things to put on your own "most important" list?

Tyler

Tyler started thinking about the possibility of college in the tenth grade. He wasn't certain he could go, wasn't sure he would fit into a college campus even if he did go, and questioned whether he was college material. Most of the impressions he had from looking at college literature and listening to others talk about college gave him the sense that one had to be smart, a good student, have money, like being around lots of different people and know what he or she wanted to be. Tyler didn't feel any of those things matched who he was.

A school counselor told his class they could grow their minds and expand their thinking about what was possible, but Tyler didn't know what that meant. His mom encouraged him to think about going to college, but since she hadn't gone, she wasn't very helpful with ideas on what he should do. Their church pastor had gone to college though, so his mom suggested Tyler talk with him about what to do. His pastor told him his counselor was right, he could do more than he thought he could. However, college could be difficult in many ways. Sometimes he might be the only black student in his class, he might have roommates who came from other countries or had more money, he might find himself in discussions where he disagreed with what other students said. But his pastor also said college was the best opportunity he would have to learn more than he thought possible, to meet people who would influence him for the rest of his life, and to become friends with others who supported him no matter what.

Tyler decided he should set his sights on college and do what it takes to have that opportunity. Tyler realized he might have to do some things he wasn't comfortable with, like speak up and ask questions. He decided he would have to be his own advocate and figure out what was most important to him, then see what he could do to make the right things happen.

Getting to college would not be easy for Tyler. He was most interested in his art classes in high school but thought they were too easy and that the other required subjects were too hard. He thought he might have to leave his school friends behind and he knew money for college would be a big challenge. He also knew going to college would be a challenging experience, where he might not know anyone or have any favorite places where he could just be alone. He had to decide where he might go, what he would have to do to get there, and if he was willing to work hard enough.

Four years later, Tyler is a sophomore in college, taking art and design courses. He reads much more than he used to, everything from the news to novels to history. He has made many friends at college and they talk for long hours about their own designs, and the artwork of others. They talk about what they want to do after graduation, what they want their lives to be like and what they want to be best known for. Tyler's college professors have told him he has talent and will need to keep working to develop it if he wants to become the artist he imagines he can be.

Tyler made it to college and appears to be doing well. What do you think he had to do first to start on his path to college? What other things would be on his "to do" list in his sophomore, junior and senior years of high school? Use the chart below to prepare a "to do" list for Tyler starting tomorrow. What reasons do think Tyler might have had for deciding to go to a four-year college instead of a two-year college? What are ways that Tyler could overcome the challenges his pastor talked to him about?

Right Away	Sophomore Year	Junior Year	Senior Year

Other Resources

National Resources

- **Pathways to College Network** http://www.ihep.org/research/initiatives/pathways-college-network
- **Quest Bridge** http://www.questbridge.org/
- **Institute for Educational Sciences – College Navigator** http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/
- **I'm First** http://www.imfirst.org/
- **College App Map** http://collegeappmap.org/
- **Big Future** https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search
- **Roadtrip Nation** http://roadtripnation.com/
- **U.S. Department of Education - Net Price Calculator** http://collegecost.ed.gov/netpricecenter.aspx
- **FastWeb** http://www.fastweb.com/
- **National Association for College Admissions Counseling** http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/articles/Pages/Determining-the-Right-College-Fit.aspx
- **College Scorecard** https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/
- **Campus Tours** http://www.campustours.com/
- **Question Formulation Technique (QFT™)** http://rightquestion.org/educators/resources/
- **College Interview Questions** http://collegeapps.about.com/od/theartofgettingaccepted/tp/college-interview-questions.htm

State Resources

- **Ready, Set, Grad** http://readysetgrad.org/
- **Career Guidance Washington** http://www.k12.wa.us/SecondaryEducation/CareerCollegeReadiness/
- **Community and Technical College of Washington State** http://checkoutacollege.com/
- **Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges** http://sbctc.edu/
- **Washington Occupational Information Service** http://www.wois.org/about/wois/

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"College Fit" Training Report

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OVERVIEW

In the fall of 2015, the College Bound Scholarship team provided training across Washington State to college and career professionals. The training was designed to guide professionals in helping middle and high school students identify the right "college fit."

Of those receiving the training, 94 completed a pre- and post-assessment. Survey questions established the goodness of fit between participant knowledge and training topics, identified learning growth, and determined immediate training satisfaction. Twenty-two (23%) of the 94 participants also completed a follow-up survey 30-, 45-, or 60-days after the training. The follow-up survey asked questions about actual implementation and enduring utility.

The following evaluation report provides an analysis of the results of the pre- and post-assessment and follow-up survey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goodness of Fit:
- 69% to 80% of participants reported having a moderate or great extent of pre-training understanding of college fit factors and the College Bound Scholarship.
- 50% to 64% of participants reported having a moderate or great extent of knowledge in facilitating conversations about college fit (including using tools to facilitate such conversations).

Learning Growth:
- 98% to 100% of participants reported growth in understanding college fit factors and the College Bound Scholarship.
- 77% to 79% of participants reported growth in facilitating conversations about college fit.

Satisfaction, Utility, and Implementation:
- 94% were satisfied with the overall training
- 97% of participants found the training immediately useful; 77% of respondents in the follow-up survey said what they learned was still useful 30 to 60 days after the training.
- 99% said they were likely to implement the tools; 77% actually implemented the tools or practices to at least a small extent 30 to 60 days after the training.

Recommendations:
- Use similar content and/or presentation style for the training on building an understanding of college fit factors, the importance of college fit for retention, and the College Bound Scholarship.
- Identify whether the training about facilitating conversations with youth could be improved.
- Consider whether counselors and other school-based staff from small districts could benefit from additional training or different forms of support.

1. Respondents' Profiles

Positions:

- 78% Counselors or Related
    - 58% were school counselors
    - 13% were college and career counselors
    - 4% were student achievement specialists
    - 3% were migrant graduation specialists
- 22% Coordinators or Staff
    - 9% were Gear Up managers, coordinators, or staff
    - 4% were school and career center staff
    - 9% were program specialists

Years in Current Position:

- 57% have been in their positions for 0-3 years
- 22% have been in their positions between 4-10 years
- 21% have been in their positions for more than 10 years

Districts & Counties Served:

- Respondents were from over 50 school districts
- Respondents worked in 21 different counties
    - *Eastern Washington*: Yakima, Benton, Stevens, Ferry, Grant, Franklin, Walla Walla, Pend Orielle, Spokane, Whitman, Douglas, Kittitas, and Adams Counties.
    - *Western Washington*: Clark, Cowlitz, Pierce, Lewis, Mason, King, Thurston, and Gray's Harbor Counties.

2. Goodness of Fit

Pre-assessment data establishes the goodness of fit between the audience and content, which can provide information for planning future trainings.

On a scale of 1 to 4, ("not at all," "to a small extent," "to a moderate extent," and "to a great extent)," participants were asked to rate their understanding of post-secondary needs and options.

- *Understand why college fit matters for college retention*
    - 69% of respondents ranked their understanding as moderate or great.

- *Understand what college fit factors are*
    - 73% of respondents ranked their understanding as moderate or great.

- *Understand what the College Bound Scholarship is*
    - 80% of respondents ranked their understanding as moderate or great.

On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 indicating "not at all," 4 "to a moderate extent," and 7 "to a great extent," participants were asked to rate the extent of their knowledge, tools, or practices prior to the training.

- *Leverage the College Bound Scholarship to start conversations with students about college fit*
    - 50% ranked the extent of their knowledge and tools as between a moderate and great extent.

- *Utilize online tools to help students investigate college options and test for fit*
    - 61% ranked the extent of their knowledge and tools as between a moderate and great extent

- *Facilitate conversations with students regarding college fit*
    - 64% ranked the extent of their knowledge and tools as between a moderate and great extent

Discussion of Goodness of Fit

- *Good Fit:* Half of the workshop participants ranked their understanding of using the College Bound Scholarship to start conversations about college fit as moderate or great. This indicates the best fit between practitioner knowledge and training content.

- *Adequate Fit:* Between 61% and 73% of participants ranked their understanding as moderate or great in the topics below. This indicates an adequate fit, with the majority of participants saying they had a solid grasp of the content.
    - Utilizing online tools to help students investigate college options and test for fit
    - Facilitating conversations with students regarding college fit
    - Understanding what college fit factors are
    - Understanding why college fit matters for college retention

3. Learning Growth

Participant pre-assessment data was compared with responses to the same questions about knowledge, tools and practices immediately following the training. By matching individuals' responses, the R&E team was able to determine the percentage of participants who reported improvement as a result of the training.

Survey responses indicate strong learning gains in all workshop training topics.

Table 1: Learning Growth: Understanding

Survey Questions	Pre-Training Mean	Percent of Participants Reporting Improvement	Post-Training Mean
Understand what college fit factors are	2.8	100%	3.7
Understand what the College Bound Scholarship is	3.2	100%	3.8
Understand why college fit matters for college retention	2.8	98%	3.7

1= not at all; 2= small extent; 3= moderate extent; 4= great extent

Table 2: Learning Growth: Knowledge, Tools, & Strategies

Survey Questions	Pre-Training Mean	Percent of Participants Reporting Improvement	Post-Training Mean
Leverage the College Bound Scholarship to start conversations with students around college fit	3.9	79%	5.6
Facilitate conversations regarding college fit	4.2	77%	5.8
Utilize online tools to help students investigate college options and test for fit	4.0	77%	5.5

1= not at all; 4= moderate extent; 7= great extent

Discussion of Learning Growth

- *Most Successful*: The training was most successful in improving participant understanding of the CBS, understanding college fit factors, and understanding how to use the CBS to explain college fit.
    - Between 98% and 100% of participants reported improvement, with overall understanding following the training at close to a "great extent."
    - However, this was also an area where respondents reported high-levels of baseline understanding and arguably did not need to make great learning gains.

- *Successful*: The training was successful at helping participants know how to start conversations and using tools to explain college fit (the CBS and online tools).
    - Over three quarters of respondents said they improved, with post-training knowledge at well above a "moderate extent."

4. Satisfaction, Utility, and Implementation

Immediate Satisfaction & Utility

Immediately after the training, participants indicated their feelings of satisfaction and utility on a four-point scale ("very," "somewhat," "not very," or "not at all" satisfied/ useful).

Nearly all respondents reported that they were satisfied with the training, and that it was useful.

- 94% were somewhat or very satisfied with the workshop overall.
- 97% were somewhat or very satisfied with the quality of the resources and tools
- 96% were somewhat or very satisfied with the quality of the presentation.

- 97% found the training somewhat or very useful.

Intention to Implement, Share, and Follow Up

Immediately after the training, participants indicated on a four-point scale their intention to implement what they learned, share what they learned with others, or follow-up with someone from the training. Responses point to participant perception of utility.

- 99% said they was somewhat or very likely to implement the tools and/or practices covered in the training.
- 100% said they were somewhat or very likely to share the knowledge, tools, and/or practices covered in the training with peers.
- 97% said they were somewhat or very likely to follow up with someone from the workshop.

Enduring Utility and Actual Implementation

22 (23%) of the 94 workshop participants completed a 30- to 60-day follow-up survey. They answered questions about actual implementation and utility following the training. Their responses indicate respondent's actual action, which points to the enduring utility of the training.

- 77% said the training was somewhat or very useful 30 to 60 days after the training.

- 96% shared the knowledge and practices to at least a small extent.
- 77% implemented the tools and practices to at least a small extent.
- 67% followed up with someone from the training to at least a small extent.

Practitioner Comments

In the follow-up survey, six of participants answered open-ended questions about the training. They had the following comments: *Satisfaction & Utility:*

- Two noted that the workshop was helpful and useful, although one said she has not had the chance to implement the strategies yet.
- One said that the workshop information was too basic to be useful.

Facilitators of Change:

All respondents who answered facilitator of change questions came from small school districts. Small districts lack the resources and support of larger districts. In smaller districts, teachers may also have greater levels of contact with students than assigned counselors.

- One asked if WCAN can do a presentation for the teachers in his district (maybe pointing to the contact that teachers have with students in small districts).
- One said that she, "Would love to hear how other high schools are implementing ideas they learned from the training."
- One said that he is having great success with Facebook. He asked, "Can you post items periodically to students on Facebook?"

Discussion of Satisfaction, Utility and Implementation

- ***Changes in Perception of Utility***: Nearly 100% of participants reported finding the training satisfactory and useful immediately following the training. However, in the follow-up survey, perception of overall utility among respondents dropped 20 percentage points (from 97% to 77%).

- ***High Actual Implementation & Sharing:*** While the extent of actual implementation and sharing lagged behind the intention to do so, still over a quarter implemented the practices to at least a small extent and 96% shared what they had learned with others to at least a small extent.

5. Recommendations

- Use similar content and/or presentation style for the training topics focused on building an understanding of college fit factors, the importance of college fit for retention, and the College Bound Scholarship.
  - Nearly 100% of respondents reported great learning gains in these areas.
  - However, it should be noted that participants came into the training with already high levels of understanding.
- Identify whether the training about helping participants apply their understanding could be improved.
  - Between 77% and 79% of respondents said they improved in their ability to facilitate conversations with youth, start conversations with youth, and use online tools, which is still quite high.
  - However, the learning gains were not as great as in the areas of conceptual understanding. This is to be expected, but is still an area where the program team could consider improvements.

- Although they represent a very small sample of the total respondents, consider the open-ended responses from the small school districts. These districts and schools present different types of needs and may require greater and/or different kinds of support.