



Celebrating College & Career Readiness

By celebrating college and career readiness milestones meaningfully and inclusively, you promote a culture of high expectations, resilience, and hope—recognizing every student's potential to shape their own future and uplift their communities.

Step 1: Reflect on the “Why”

While not every student aspires to attend college, plans to pursue further education after high school, or needs a degree to achieve their career goals, we strongly advocate for college and career readiness programs to promote a college-going culture.

Discussion Prompts:

- Why is it important to promote access to higher education for all communities, even if not every career path requires a degree?
- How can education (college or otherwise) serve as a tool for individual and community empowerment?

Optional: Allow 5 minutes for journaling before discussion to encourage deeper reflection.

Step 2: Plan Your Celebration

Use the questions below to brainstorm how you can involve each group in celebrating students' educational and career achievements, aspirations, and pathways—no matter their postsecondary plans.

Students

- How can we spotlight student achievements and future plans? How can we affirm all paths (college, career, military, entrepreneurship)?

Staff

- How can staff celebrate their role in student success? How can we reinforce a culture of encouragement?

Stakeholders (families, community members, businesses)

- How can stakeholders show their support and amplify the celebration?

Tip: Encourage participants to think of both small and large-scale ideas — from individual acknowledgments to community-wide events.





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Step 3: Connect to Key Learning Outcomes

As you plan your celebration, choose **2–3 Learning Outcome Themes** you would like the celebration to reinforce.

Example Learning Outcome Themes:

- **Academic success skills:** Skills that contribute to positive performance in academic coursework and test taking.
- **Leadership:** Contributes to society/civic life by creating positive change and impact in the community.
- **College Planning:** Information and knowledge required to understand college-related requirements and processes to make appropriate college-related choices and navigate complicated pathways into, across, and through higher education.

Reflection Questions:

- How does this celebration support students' growth in these areas?
- How can we highlight the skills students have developed throughout their college and career readiness journey?

Step 4: Share & Commit

- Have each team or individual share their top 1–2 celebration ideas with the group.
- Then, ask participants to commit to implementing at least one action before the end of the school year (or a chosen time frame).

Optional extension: Create a "Celebration Action Plan" template where participants can outline:

- What they'll do
- Who's responsible
- When it will happen
- What resources are needed

