

To and Through College

.....
Programs Addressing Student Barriers and Needs
for College Persistence





Before she died in 2006, Governor Ann Richards laid out her vision for the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders. As the first in her family to attend college, she was committed to advancing education and empowering young women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ten years later, it is imperative that we build upon our past success to address the challenges that we know Ann Richards School students encounter. The school's unique combination of rigorous curriculum coupled with year-round college preparation programs is graduating young women poised for success in college and careers. The Ann Richards School must provide the guidance our students need as they pursue uncharted territory and as the barriers to college completion become more complex.

Implementing the To and Through College recommendations outlined in this report will ensure our students have the confidence and skills to not only apply and attend college, but to graduate from college.



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Executive Summary

The [Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders](#), a public, all-girls college preparatory school of choice in Austin, Texas, embodies its namesake's lifelong passion for advancing education, empowering young women and creating opportunities for girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Before she died in 2006, Governor Richards laid out her vision for the Ann Richards School. As the first in her family to attend college, she was committed to advancing education and empowering young women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. More than ten years later, the Ann Richards School continues to break through economic, gender and first-generation barriers. Of note:

- 75% of our students come from Title I schools and over 60% qualify for free and reduced meals, an indicator for being economically disadvantaged.
- 65% of our graduates will be the first in their family to graduate from college.
- 100% of our graduates are accepted to college, more than double the rate for students of similar backgrounds.
- 95% of our graduates enroll in college, compared to the 58% college matriculation rate.

The [Ann Richards School Foundation](#) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization focused on ensuring students gain the confidence and skills to graduate from high school college-ready and to apply, attend and graduate from college. The Ann Richards School is supported by a unique public-private partnership between the Foundation and the Austin Independent School District.

In 2016, the Foundation's Board of Directors initiated a strategic planning process designed to sharpen vision and design a three-year plan for supporting the Ann Richards School. The 2016-2019 Strategic Plan included the following goal for the Foundation:

Achieve College To and Through: Partner with the Ann Richards School to

- Ensure 100% of students graduate on time and are admitted to college each year, and
- Support its graduates in successfully completing college and/or transitioning to the workforce

Led by a Board member and facilitated by a consultant with Shore Research, the Board formed a To and Through College Study Team, comprised of Board members, Ann Richards School faculty and industry experts. The Study Team's focus was to understand the characteristics of existing, quality To and Through College support programs with an eye toward developing such a robust and effective program for the Ann Richards School. Between January and May 2017, the Study Team nominated and selected seven best-in-class exemplars for study and conducted in-depth interviews to understand the successful components of each program. Simultaneously, Ann Richards School faculty analyzed data about its four graduating classes to understand the barriers specific to this group and to focus on program development efforts. The Study Team presented its report and recommendations to the Foundation's Board of Directors in May 2017.



For each of the seven programs studied, this report presents the student demographics and the barriers students face, along with each program’s essential services and outcomes. Although each program has distinct features, nearly all of the programs address barriers faced by student populations similar to Ann Richards School students, e.g., first-generation college attendees and high levels of need for academic, social or financial support.

These programs commonly offer the following services:

- College-Going Curricula
Information and educational materials that cover the skills and knowledge needed to select, apply and be accepted to college; and often soft skills such as self-advocacy, self-awareness or locating and utilizing resources.
- Individual or Group Mentoring
Help students navigate college life, plan for their college and after college careers, locate and use resources and offer emotional support. Mentors are sometimes professionals in a similar field, college age or near-peer mentors, supporting both individuals and groups of students.
- Bridge or Transition Activities and Support
Assist students through identified transition periods, such as the summer between high school and college, where most college attrition occurs and warrants extra support activities, and the transition from college to work life, where support activities help students move into internships, apprenticeships or paid work in their fields of study.
- College Partnerships
Through formal partnerships or informal agreements, partners agree to provide academic and/or social and emotional supports and resources, financial support or differential admissions criteria.
- Financial Support
Provide financial assistance to deserving students, with some providing full scholarships spanning a student’s entire college career, others providing lesser amounts for a shorter length of time and others providing emergency type funds, such as bridge loans or vouchers for services.

In addition, this report presents the six components of the Ann Richards School’s To and Through College program. The Ann Richards School’s unique combination of rigorous curriculum coupled with year-round college preparation programs is graduating girls poised for success in college and careers. Although its College Bound program has been extremely successful, the addition of more comprehensive “Through College” components will ensure that our young women not only reach college, but also thrive there.

Contributors

The Ann Richards School Foundation extends its gratitude to the Study Team members who were generous with their time, expertise and contacts; to the organizations that shared their time and knowledge during the research process; and to the St. David's Foundation and Creekmore and Adele Fath Charitable Foundation for generously funding this project.



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Introduction

In 2016, the [Ann Richards School Foundation's Board of Directors](#) initiated a comprehensive strategic planning process that established its five priority goals for 2016-2019. Through this effort, the Foundation Board determined that the work of the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders (ARS) should expand beyond supporting its students through high school graduation and college admission. In its new strategic plan, the Foundation Board committed to establishing over the next three years a comprehensive and effective program to transition ARS graduates successfully from high school into a four-year college and onto completing a bachelor's degree within six years.

In January 2017, the Foundation Board established the To and Through College Study Team which was composed of 12 outstanding Austin civic leaders and thinkers, under the leadership of Dr. Pat Forgione. Its charge was to conduct an in-depth analysis of the status of ARS's first four college-going cohorts, including the challenges and student barriers to college persistence; launch a careful examination of the "best in class" To and Through College programs and models in Texas and nationally; and formulate a set of recommendations for the Foundation Board's consideration that would enhance the school's current To and Through College program, with implementation to begin in school year 2017-18. In addition, the Foundation contracted with Karin Samii-Shore of Shore Research and secured grants from the St. David's Foundation Community Fund and the Creekmore and Adele Fath Charitable Foundation to support the Study Team's research work.

The organization of this final report reflects the work of the To and Through College Study Team in three phases:

1. An analysis of the student barriers and needs that are impacting the college persistence of ARS's four graduating classes (Classes of 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016);
2. An identification and profiling of a set of selected "best in class" To and Through College programs and models in Texas and nationally; and
3. The development of a carefully formulated set of recommendations on key features to be included in an expanded To and Through College program at ARS to be reviewed and acted upon by the Foundation Board, with implementation to begin in the 2017-18 school year.

Ann Richards School Alumnae Needs and Barriers to College Success

The mission of the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders is to prepare young women to attend and graduate from college, commit to a healthy and well-balanced lifestyle, lead with courage and compassion and solve problems creatively and ethically in support of our global community.

To support its mission, the Ann Richards School (ARS) provides a rigorous STEM-based curriculum coupled with college-bound programming designed to provide exposure to college, careers and real-world opportunities.

As our students face unique needs and challenges on their journey to and through college, ARS has developed a To and Through College program to respond to their needs and empower each and every girl to achieve her dream of graduating from college.

College Bound Programming

The Ann Richards School is the only high school in the Austin Independent School District that provides a year-round, integrated college-bound program that is staffed by a full-time college advisor. Our College Bound staff provides personalized attention to help identify schools most appropriate for each individual student, creating a positive college experience and increasing college persistence. College Bound staff also conduct family meetings to better understand individual family situations and goals, helping to best advise families in college selection, determine appropriate scholarships and secure financial aid. ARS also works with families on campus to complete the FAFSA (financial aid) and TASFA applications, and ARS leads all high schools in central Texas for percentage of FAFSA submissions.

ARS is the only school in our District where all students tour college campuses and gain exposure annually to a diverse selection of colleges. ARS is also the only school in the District that has an on-campus college fair, which provides our students one-on-one time with college admissions staff as well as targeted recruitment from colleges that align with our college-to-career pathways.

Collectively, our graduates have secured merit-based scholarships totaling \$32 million, 95% of ARS graduates have enrolled in college and 89% are currently attending college. However, College Bound program expenses are above and beyond funding provided by the school District and are underwritten by the Ann Richards School Foundation, thanks to the generosity of individuals, corporations and private foundations.

Support for ARS Alumnae

Through its Alumnae Program, ARS offers continuing assistance to our high school graduates who are currently attending college. Supporting ARS students post-high school ensures that students still have support and motivation to complete college. With five years of alumnae now on college campuses, ARS staff are able to connect incoming college freshmen with ARS alumnae at each school to build relationships and offer on-campus mentoring. In addition, ARS staff assist alumnae with navigating college processes, conduct periodic correspondence to check on students' progress and provide intervention as necessary.

ARS alumnae have a strong loyalty to the school and desire to "pay it forward" for their sisters. Alumnae maintain their connection with ARS and participate in homecoming, serve on Alumnae Day panels to discuss aspects of college life with the entire ARS student body and attend ARS graduation.

Barriers and Needs of ARS Alumnae

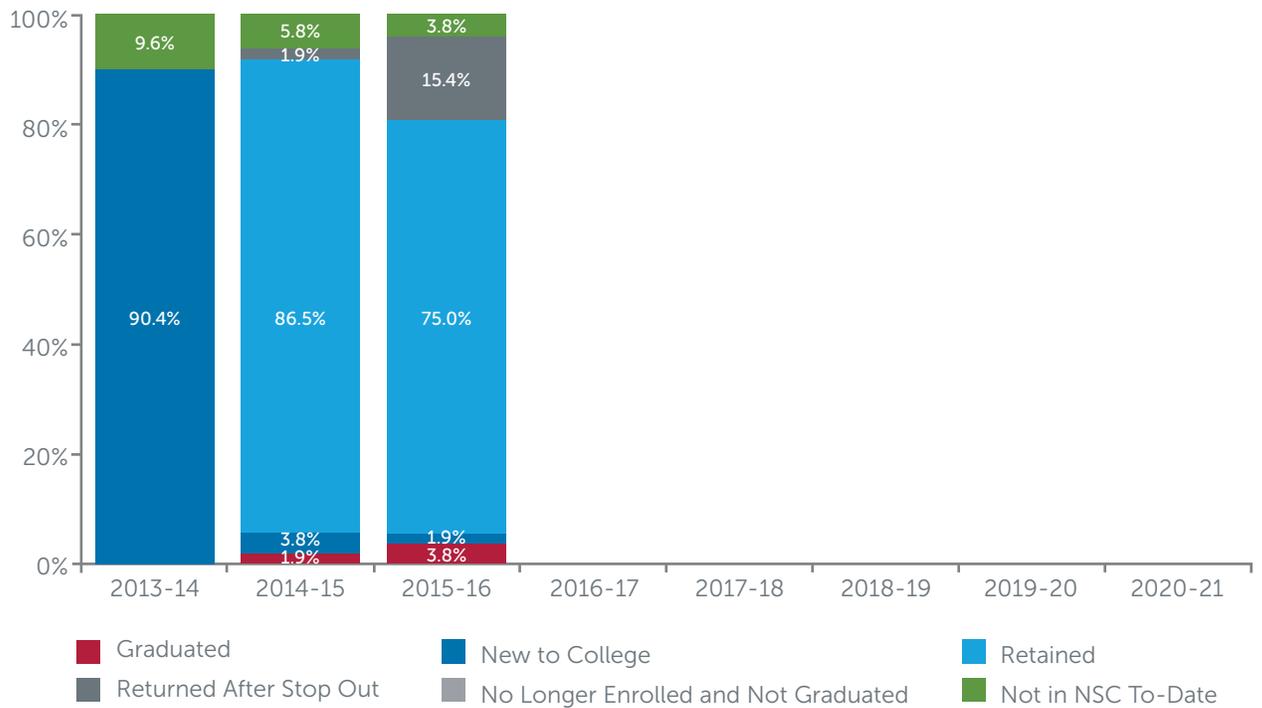
Acceptance to and persistence in college requires significant planning, foresight and knowledge of the process. Without a knowledgeable support system, college can seem overwhelming and unattainable.

Over 60% of ARS students live in very low-income households, and 65% will be first in their family to graduate from college. Therefore ARS students rely on our To College program for the resources, timelines, planning, insight, monitoring and encouragement necessary to navigate the uncharted path to college completion for themselves and their families. ARS staff and the Foundation Board recognize that there was an emerging need to strengthen the ARS College Bound efforts that would benefit from lessons learned and successful components of "best in class" To and Through College programs across the country.

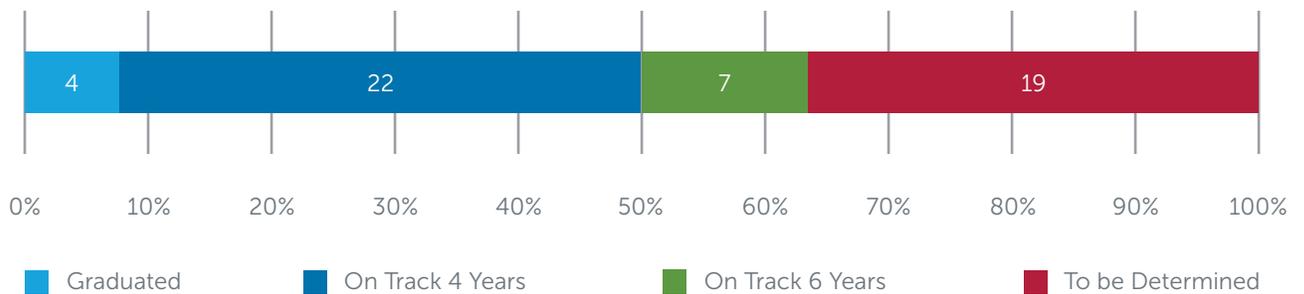
Over **60%** of ARS students live in very low-income households, and **65%** will be first in their family to graduate from college.



Class of 2013 Postsecondary Enrollment and Progress



This bar chart profiles the status of post-secondary enrollment and progress of the 52 ARS graduates in the Class of 2013. The most challenging part of meeting the college completion goal is tracking persistence over time. Where do students enroll, term by term? National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data is a good place to start. However, with a variety of name combinations, citizenships and college reporting policies, it is challenging to collect accurate data. Students can also opt out of being tracked by the National Student Clearinghouse. We estimate that our accuracy is in the 80%-90% range.



Our individual follow-up efforts with the Class of 2013 are intended to maintain ties with all of our graduates, even if NSC does not track their data. We are committed to an ongoing communication with 100% of our graduates through their college years. The graph above shows how we are using NSC data to enhance and quantify our efforts. For the Class of 2013, as of the spring of 2017, 50% (26 students) were on track to graduate in four years, and another seven students are projected to graduate within six years, for a cumulative 63% graduation rate. Our challenge is to implement strategies that will successfully assist the remaining 37% (19 students) who are not on the path to complete their degrees within six years, which would meet the National Center for Educational Statistics national college graduation definition.



Profiles of Best in Class To and Through College Programs

Led by an Ann Richards School Foundation Board member and facilitated by Karin Samii-Shore, a consultant with Shore Research, the Foundation Board formed a To and Through College Study Team which was comprised of Board members, Ann Richards School faculty and industry experts. The Study Team's focus was to understand the characteristics of existing, quality To and Through College support programs with an eye toward developing a comprehensive program for the Ann Richards School. In January through May 2017, the Study Team nominated and selected seven best-in-class exemplars for study and then conducted in-depth interviews to understand the successful components of each program:

- College Bound Initiative of the Young Women's Leadership Network
- College Forward
- Dell Scholars Program
- KIPP Through College
- Posse Foundation Scholarship Program
- St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship Program
- YES Prep Through College Program

For each of the seven selected exemplary programs, this report provides an overview of the program's mission statement, key student outcomes, identified barriers to college persistence and completion and a summary of the students being served. A two-page profile provides a short description of the essential services of each program, with a schematic that lays out the key components and the years of college when the service is offered.

College Bound Initiative of the Young Women's Leadership Network



CollegeBound Initiative

Students Served

The YWLN serves girls in grades 6-12 through five schools in the New York City area. These five campuses serve nearly 2,000 girls annually.

Low Income
77%

Minority
94%

First-Generation College
50-60%

The College Bound Initiative (CBI) at the Young Women's Leadership

Network employs a dedicated college guidance staff member to provide each student with individualized college going support, education and advising. CBI partners with a network of colleges to match students to appropriate colleges and maximize financial aid.

Barriers to College Persistence and Completion

Often exhibit high financial need

Under-resourced communities which leads to limited knowledge of the college admissions and financial aid process

Student Outcomes

College acceptance rate: 99%

College entry rate: 95%

Freshman to sophomore retention rate: 91%

Persistence rate: 67%

4-year graduation rate: 42%

6-year graduation rate: 58%

www.ywln.org/college-prep

Essential Services

College Going Curriculum

- A full-time Director of College Counseling at each YWLS campus guides each student through the college research and application process. Students meet with college recruiters, visit colleges, apply for financial aid and complete their entrance exams and applications. Parents also receive direct support completing a multitude of financial aid forms and navigating the complex college admissions process.

University Partnerships

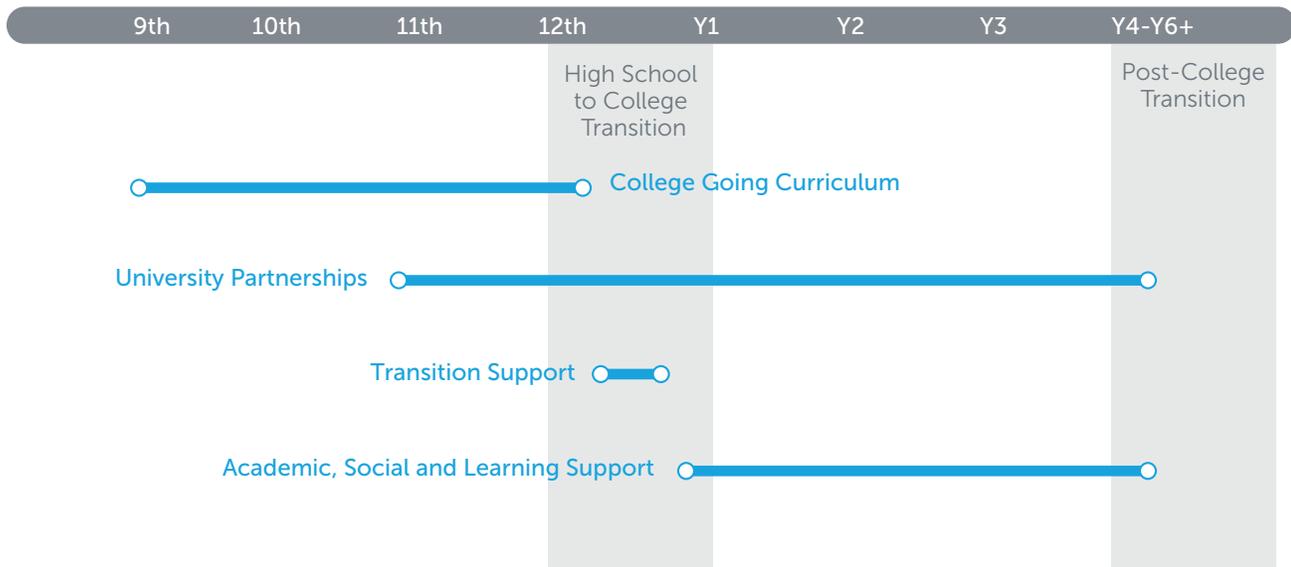
- College partnerships optimize college placement and maximize financial aid. These partnerships also connect students with Opportunity Programs that provide transition and campus-based persistence support such as tutoring and career guidance.

Transition Support

- Bridge to College Transition Support is provided to reduce “summer melt.” YWLS alumnae provide “near-peer” support in areas such as completing college entry paperwork, understanding housing options and dealing with “cold feet.”

Academic, Social and Learning Support

- The Closer re-enrollment program is a new program in which a YWLS College Completion Manager identifies students who have completed six or more semesters of college but are not currently enrolled and works with these students to eliminate barriers to college completion.





college forward

Students Served

College Forward serves students in 1,172 high schools in 11 Texas school districts, beginning in 11th grade.

They provide support to more than 6,500 students in total, with nearly 3,500 students in college.

Low Income
75%

Minority
91%

First-Generation College
88%

Founded in 2003, [College Forward's College Completion program](#) starts in high school. It serves students from applying and acceptance to college through college graduation by providing hands-on coaching that includes personalized "near-peer" support, campus-based engagement strategies and an integrated data system. Students must qualify for services or be nominated by a counselor or teacher and complete an application to participate. Any student in the [College Forward ACCESS Program](#) who is accepted into college may also participate.

Barriers to College Persistence and Completion

High financial need

First-generation college students with high risk of not enrolling or not persisting in college

Student Outcomes

College acceptance rate: 99%

College entry rate: 90%

Freshman to sophomore retention rate: 80%

Persistence rate: 82% are still attending college

4-year graduation rate: Not available

6-year graduation rate: 50%

www.collegeforward.org/approach

Essential Services

College Going Curriculum

- Students and their families are provided with information and support for navigating the college application and acceptance process.
- Students attend after-school classes and coaching sessions to learn how to complete essays and applications, choose the right college, visit colleges and interact with college students and professors.
- Parents are supported with parent events that educate them on the college application and selection process and assist with completing the FAFSA and understanding the financial obligations of college.

Individual Mentoring

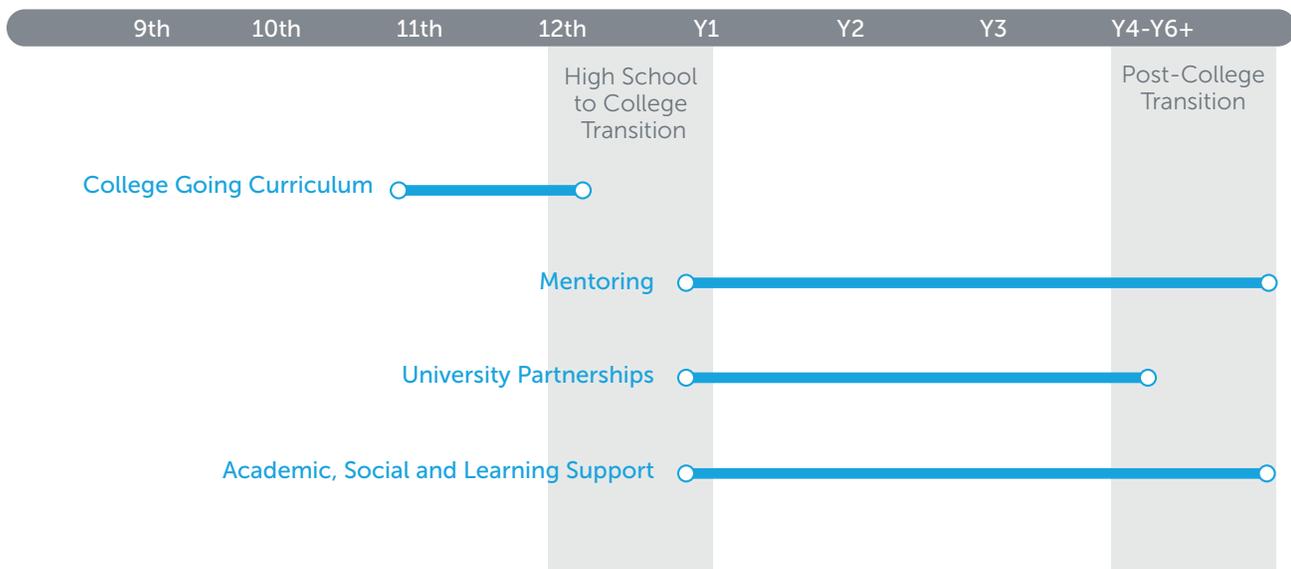
- Each student is assigned a College Forward Coach, a recent college graduate who provides personalized on-demand support in person, by phone or through social media.
- The coaches teach skills for self-advocating and persistence and connect students with campus supports and resources as well as with College Forward students on their campus.

University Partnerships:

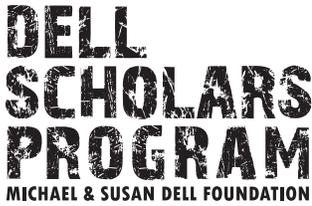
- College Forward collaborates with higher education institutions to connect students with existing supports and resources. Where resources are unavailable, College Forward partners with these institutions to provide what students need to successfully matriculate and graduate.

Academic, Social and Learning Support

- College Forward coaches facilitate the formation of cohorts of College Forward students on campuses. These student groups hold events and/or meet to form a support system for each other as they navigate college life.



Dell Scholars Program



Students Served

Annually, there are about 8,000 applications from rising high school seniors for the Dell Scholars Program. Of those, 350-400 students are selected to participate. Since its inception, the Dell Scholars Program has provided support to more than 3,000 students.

Low Income
100%

Minority
87%

First-Generation College
95%

Founded in 2004, the [Dell Scholars Program](#) provides support to a growing number of students for up to six years in college. Applications are accepted from high school seniors who [qualify for the program](#). For those selected, the program provides financial support in the form of a scholarship, technology and textbooks and comprehensive, data-driven case management support.

Barriers to College Persistence and Completion

- Financial need including the need to work, lack of financial knowledge and food or housing security
- Academic needs, such as inadequate preparation for college-level work
- Lack of knowledge of the collegiate process and lack of social/emotional support
- Managing non-academic, "life happens" situational challenges related to family/ personal circumstances

Student Outcomes

- College acceptance: 100%
- College enrollment rate: 100%
- Freshman to sophomore retention rate: 98%
- Persistence rate: 96% are still attending college
- 4-year graduation rate: 52%
- 6-year graduation rate: 77% (2009-2011)

www.dellscholars.org

Essential Services

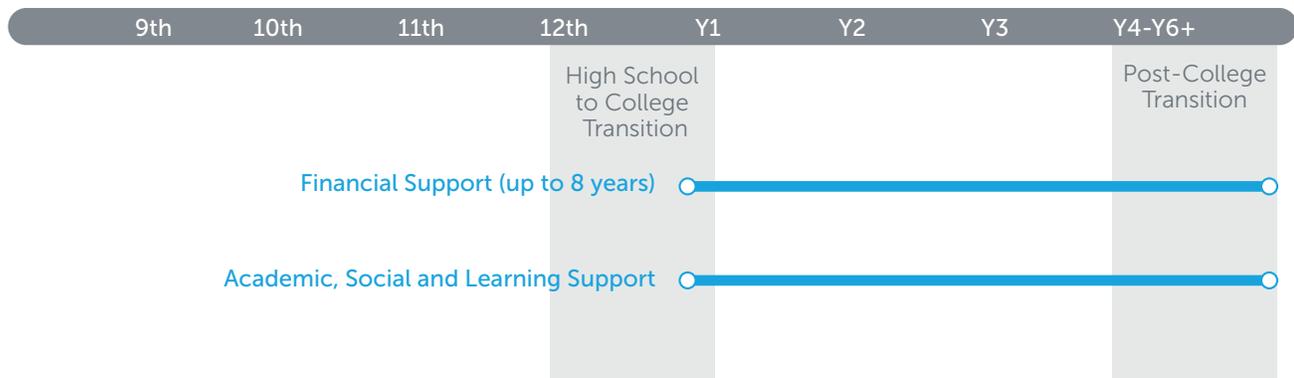
Financial Support

- \$20,000 scholarship, laptop computer and funds for the purchase of textbooks.

Academic, Social and Learning Support

- At regular intervals, students provide progress information through the GradSnapp Connect data portal by answering questions and uploading artifacts that express their academic, financial, social and informational barriers. Dell Scholar staff then use this information to target individuals or groups of students for additional support.
- Dell Scholar staff use the GradSnapp database to provide targeted support and resources for students.

- Students have their own GradSnapp progress dashboards where they can track their financial and academic progress, connect with the Dell Scholars team or other students on their campus and access college success resources.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provided to students and their families to provide additional support such as mental health resources, tax advising to assist with proper FAFSA documentation, access/referrals to child care, etc., to ensure student success and college continuation.



KIPP Through College



Students Served

In the 2015-16 school year KIPP Austin served just under 4,500 students, 244 of whom participated in KTC (155 juniors and 89 seniors).

Low Income
89%

Minority
98%
(93% Hispanic)

First-Generation College
90%*
*estimated

KIPP Through College (KTC) prepares KIPP high school students to attend college by creating a college-going culture and developing needed social and academic skills. KIPP Through College begins working formally with high school students in the junior year of high school and supports student needs through college graduation.

Barriers to College Persistence and Completion

- High financial need
- Lack of knowledge of the college selection and admissions process
- Lack of knowledge of the college system, how to navigate it and available supports and resources
- Difficulties with self-advocacy and problem-solving

Student Outcomes

- College acceptance: 100%
- College enrollment rate: 94%
- Freshman to sophomore retention rate: Not available
- Persistence rate: 56% are still attending college
- 4-year graduation rate: 20% through 2012: Not available for 2013
- 6-year graduation rate: Not available until 2018

www.kipp.org/approach/kipp-through-college

Essential Services

College Going Curriculum

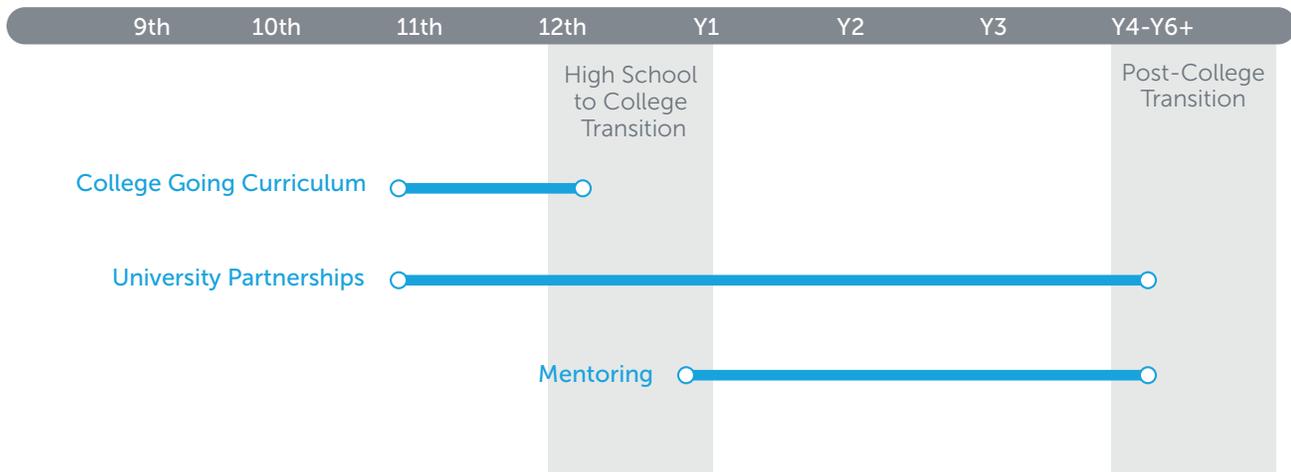
- Teaches skills for advocating and persistence, examining college/career interests and planning academically for college. Provides information about financial aid, college admissions process and choosing a good match. Students visit colleges and meet with college advisors. Families attend some sessions to learn about the college process.

University Partnerships

- Colleges selected based on affordability, the number of KIPP students attending the college, and the six-year graduation rate.
- Partnerships include data-sharing, a goal for the number of KIPP students the school will admit, designated transition supports, a target persistence/graduation rate for first-generation college-students and a dedicated high level college liaison for students.

Individual and Group Mentoring

- Each student is assigned a coach who meets twice monthly with each student through Skype or in person. Coaches use benchmarking data about their groups to determine group needs and to develop group level communications and activities.
- The KTC program also includes alumni as peer mentors. Alumni give tours of their college campus when KTC students visit. The new College Ambassadors program employs college juniors and seniors to develop and host on-campus events for KTC freshmen.



Posse Foundation Scholarship Program

Students Served

Annually 17,000 students apply for the Posse program. Of those, 740 are selected to participate. In all, about 60% of the scholars chosen are female, and all live in one of the 10 cities served through the program. As of 2016, close to 8,000 students have been served by the Posse program.

Low Income
65%

Minority
90%

First-Generation College
51%

The Posse Foundation program serves students from public high schools by providing scholarships, training and support to teams of students (called "posses") placed on partner university campuses. High school seniors apply to the program and are interviewed by Posse staff and universities before being chosen to participate. Posse is a national program located in 10 cities in the U.S. Diverse groups of students are selected on the basis of strong leadership potential and are supported in becoming leaders and change agents on their respective campuses. Posse's focus is unique in that it aims to not only support student leadership, but also to develop partner universities as spaces that support and welcome diverse student voices.

Barriers to College Persistence and Completion

- Financial need
- Students with less traditional college profile, but high promise

Student Outcomes

- College acceptance rate: 100%
- College entry rate: 99%
- Freshman to sophomore retention rate: 90+%
- Persistence rate: 90+% are still attending college
- 6-year graduation rate: 90%

www.possefoundation.org

Essential Services

University Partnerships

- Selected applicants are interviewed by both Posse staff and the partner universities.
- Groups of 10 students (posses) are selected to attend each partner university.
- Posse Access: Partner universities receive access to the Posse applicant database so that they may choose to admit additional highly qualified applicants not accepted into the Posse program.

College Going Curriculum

- Curriculum covers team building, cross-cultural communications, leadership and academic excellence in high school and college.
- Curriculum is aimed at assisting posse members in becoming leaders and change agents on their respective campuses.

Financial Support

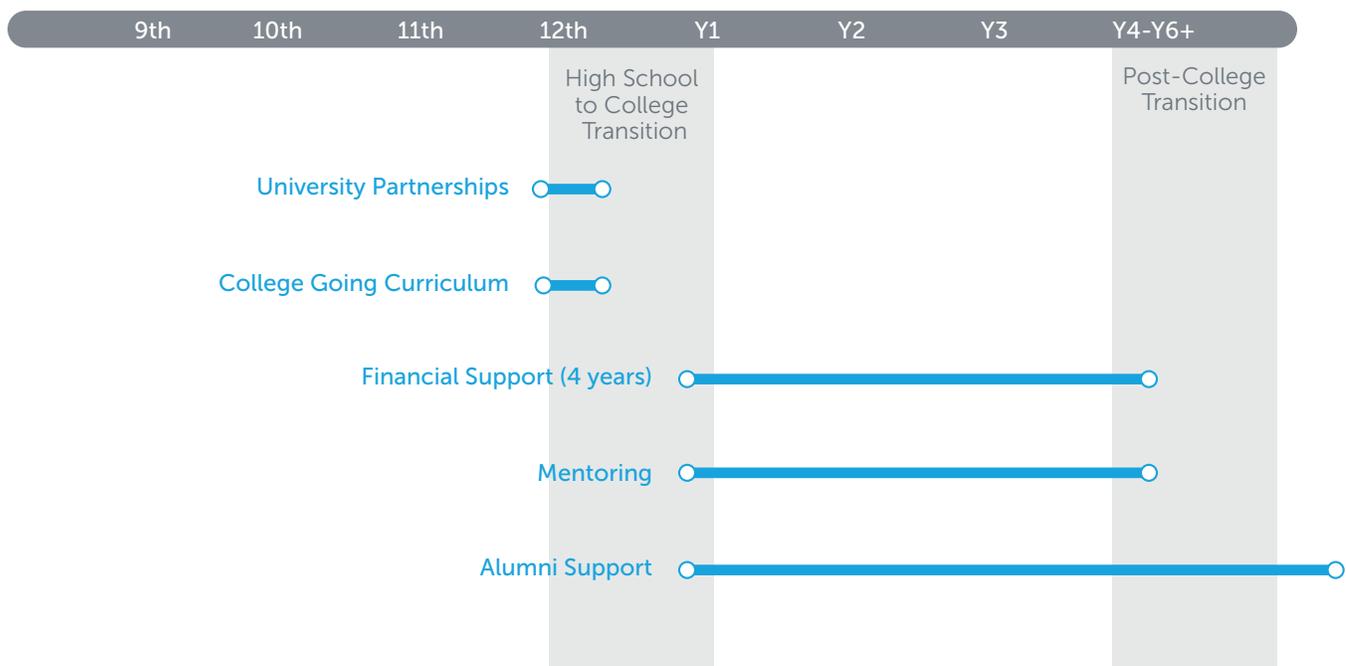
- Posse partner colleges provide 100% of tuition for four years.
- Posse provides programming senior year in high school and four years of college (plus programs for alumni).

Posse Mentoring

- Posse staff visit colleges quarterly to meet with each posse and their assigned campus support.
- Each posse is assigned a faculty mentor who meets regularly with the posse and each student to provide support and guidance.
- Posse staff facilitates a three-day retreat annually at each campus with Posse members, campus faculty and the larger student body to address issues identified by the posse.
- Off-campus campus program: Students who need to withdraw from college for any reason continue to meet with and receive counseling and support from their local Posse staff until such time as they can continue their studies.

Alumni Support (through college and in perpetuity)

- Posse members are provided access to and support for career development through internships, professional development workshops, career coaching, support for attending graduate school and access to Posse alumni.



St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship Program



Students Served

Currently, there are about 500-600 applicants for the St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship Program each year. Of those, 50-60 are chosen for the scholarship program. Since its inception, the program has provided support to 451 Central Texas students. Although not a requirement, a high percentage of supported high school students are ranked in the top 10% of their graduating class.

Founded in honor of Dr. Neal Kocurek, St. David's Foundation former CEO, the [St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship Program](#) offers scholarships, mentorship support from industry professionals and access to events held at St. David's health care facilities. Students applying for the program must show financial need and be majoring or planning to major in a human health care profession. Although there is no minimum GPA requirement for the scholarship, a student's academic record is one of several determinants. Students' applications go through a rigorous screening process that examines a wide range of information on each [applicant's experience and potential](#).

Barriers to College Persistence and Completion

- Financial need
- Lower levels of academic success
- Lack of preparation or understanding of the medical field or college life in general

Student Outcomes

- College acceptance rate: 100%
- College entry rate: 100%
- Freshman to sophomore retention rate: 99%
- Persistence rate: 93-95% are still attending college
- 4-year graduation rate: 77%
- 6-year graduation rate: 14%

www.stdavidsfoundation.org/scholarships/neal-kocurek-scholarship/overview

Essential Services

Financial Support

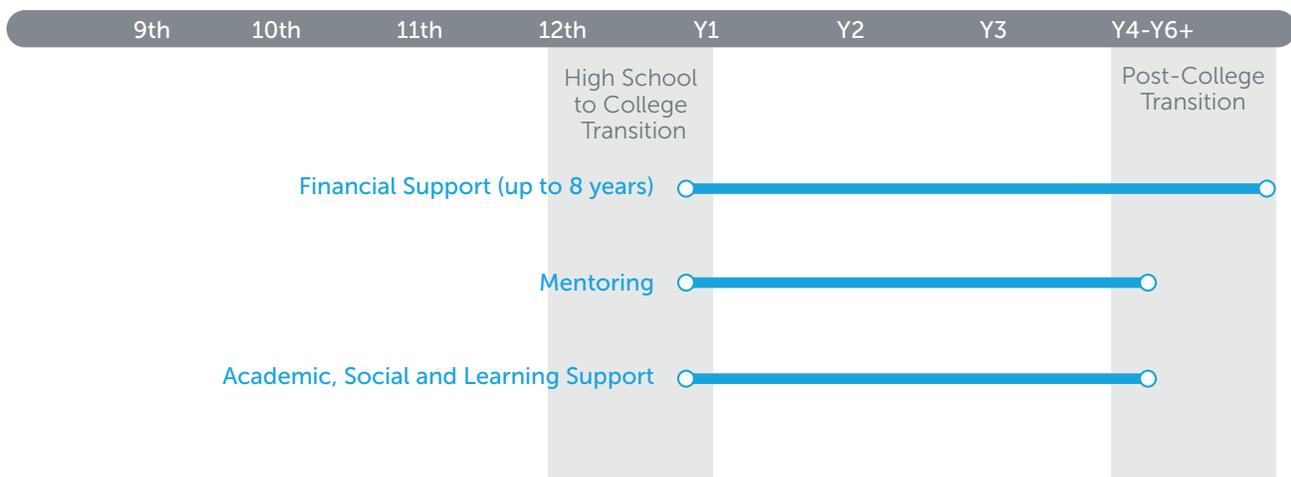
- Annual financial support of \$7,500 per year for up to four years of undergraduate work and four additional years of graduate studies is provided. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 and be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours each semester.

Individual Mentoring

- Each student is assigned a mentor who is a working professional in a health care field matched to the student's major and career goals.
- Mentors and students regularly communicate by email, phone and face-to-face visits. The frequency and discussion topics are determined by the mentor and the student.
- Mentors and students meet formally at least twice annually at luncheon events where they can also interact with other health care professionals.
- Mentors may informally provide other career or academic support such as providing introductions to other professionals for internships and job shadowing.

Academic, Social and Learning Support

- The program partners with House of Tutors to provide on-demand tutoring for any scholarship recipient.
- Half-day Education and Leadership Conference for incoming freshmen focuses on onboarding new scholarship recipients, introducing them to each other and educating them on the scholarship's vision and their roles and responsibilities as awardees.
- Half-day Health Care Up Close Conference for freshmen and sophomores. At this conference, students engage with health care professionals, tour facilities and areas at St. David's health care facilities normally restricted to the public and learn about advances in health care and the state of the profession.
- Graduate recognitions are held annually to celebrate newly graduated students.
- Bi-annual luncheon is held in the winter and summer, where mentors and mentees meet formally in a professional setting and interact with other students and professionals.
- St. David's Neal Kocurek Scholarship private Facebook group provides information and articles on a variety of topics and serves as a way for students to connect with each other throughout the year.



YES Prep Through College Program



Students Served

YES Prep serves 11,600 students in the Houston area at 16 campuses. Since 2001, nearly 3,000 students have graduated from YES Prep.

Low Income
84%

Minority
96%

First-Generation College
90%

YES Prep Public Schools is a network of 16 high-performing public charter schools serving students in grades 6-12 in the Houston area. YES Prep's mission is to increase the number of students from low-income communities who graduate from college prepared to lead. To ensure this goal could be achieved, YES Prep developed a college access and persistence program that provides skill-building and support during high school to assist students in applying to colleges that are well-matched to their needs; varying types of social, academic and financial support; strategic college partnerships and ongoing data collection and analysis for program improvement.

Barriers to College Persistence and Completion

- Financial need
- Student academic preparation
- Soft skills

Student Outcomes

- College acceptance rate: 55%
- College entry rate: 94%
- Freshman to sophomore retention rate: 87%
- Persistence rate: 41% are still attending college (4-year college 2010-2016)
- 4-year graduation rate: 42% (2001-2012)
- 6-year graduation rate: 46% overall and 86% for Impact Scholarship students

www.yesprep.org/college-initiatives

Essential Services

College Going Curriculum

- Students receive three to five hours of college seminar programming per week.
- Curriculum includes support for making a good college match, applying to college and financial aid and scholarships.
- Students learn soft skills such as realistic self-appraisal, goal setting, self-advocacy and study skills.

Mentoring

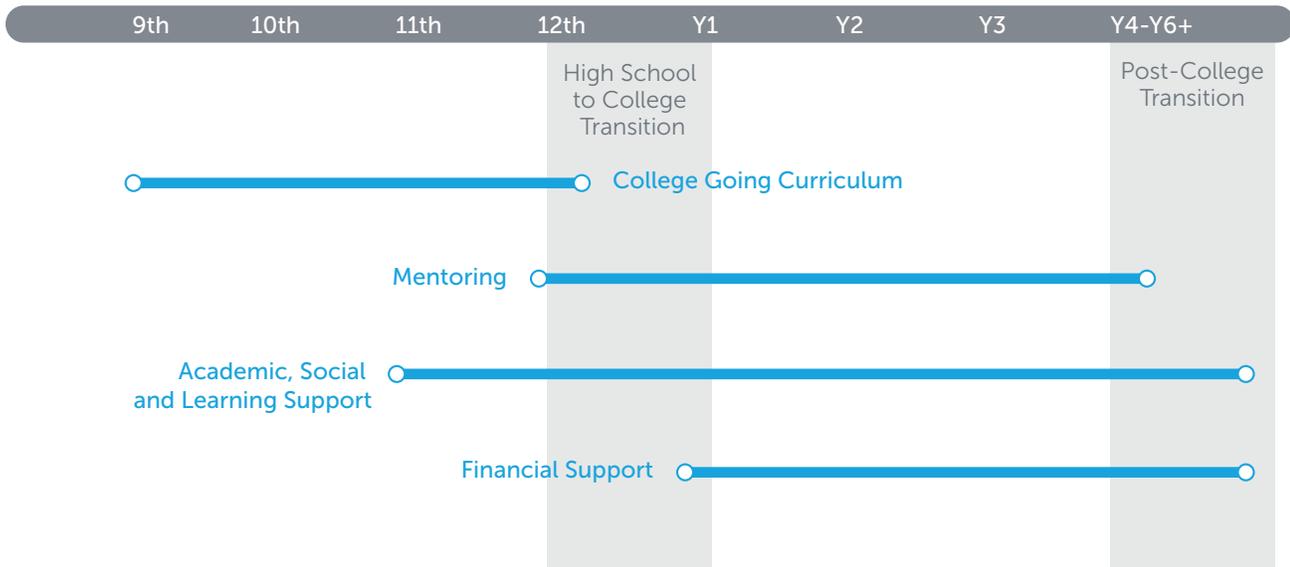
- Near-peer mentoring and support are provided by three staff who provide transition assistance and summer bridge programming, mentoring, social media outreach and on-campus alumni events.
- **Impact Partner Colleges/Universities:** 35 highly selective colleges and universities that provide financial aid and on-campus support for eligible YES Prep students.

Academic, Social and Learning Support

- Staff conduct an initial risk assessment covering three essential areas (financial, academic and situational) to design supports for students and understand the student population.
- Staff conduct exit interviews when students complete or leave the program to gather context to provide transition support and to design or improve interventions.

Financial Support

- Several scholarship opportunities are available from single year to multi-year.
- Alumni Scholarships are provided to about 35% of YES Prep students; on average, this award is \$2,000, and approximately 96% of these awards are renewable.
- Impact Scholarships are provided by partner institutions who agree to meet 100% of student need to cohorts of three to five students accepted into the partner university.



Summary of Study Team Learnings: Takeaways and Major Features

While each “best in class” program has distinct features that address barriers and needs to college completion, a common set of services were typically offered:

College-Going Curricula

Information and educational materials that cover the skills and knowledge needed to select, apply and be accepted to college; and often soft skills such as self-advocacy, self-awareness or locating and utilizing resources.

Individual or Group Mentoring

Help students navigate college life, plan for their college and after college careers, locate and use resources and offer emotional support. Mentors are sometimes professionals in a similar field, college age or near-peer mentors, supporting both individuals and groups of students.

Bridge or Transition Activities and Support

Assist students through identified transition periods, such as the summer between high school and college, where most college attrition occurs and warrants extra support activities, and the transition from college to work life, where support activities help students move into internships, apprenticeships or paid work in their fields of study.

College Partnerships

Through formal partnerships or informal agreements, partners agree to provide academic and/or social and emotional supports and resources, financial support or differential admissions criteria.

Financial Support

Provide financial assistance to deserving students, with some providing full scholarships spanning a student’s entire college career, others providing lesser amounts for a shorter length of time and others providing emergency type funds, such as bridge loans or vouchers for services.

An in-depth examination of these programs provided particular guidance to the Study Team as it examined which features would best enhance ARS’s current programming.

Profiles of Best in Class To and Through College Programs

Program Comparison	Academic, Social and Learning Support	Alumni Support	College Going Curriculum	Financial Support	Mentoring	Transition Support	University Partnerships
College Bound Initiative of the Young Women's Leadership Network	●		●			●	●
College Forward	●		●		●		●
Dell Scholars Program	●			●			
KIPP			●		●		●
Posse Foundation		●	●	●	●		●
St. David's Foundation Neal Kocurek Scholarship Program	●			●	●		
YES Prep	●		●	●	●		
Ann Richards School To and Through Program	○	①	●	○		○	○

● Provided ○ Proposed ① Some Services Provided; Additional Services Proposed

The outstanding features adopted from the studied To and Through College programs included the following:

Program	Feature Adopted
College Bound Initiative of the Young Women's Leadership Network	Bridge to College
College Forward	Coaching/Peer Cohorts
Dell Scholars Program	Case Management Portal
KIPP Through College	College Partnerships
POSSE Foundation Program	Peer Cohorts/Career Support
St. David's Foundation Program	Individual Mentoring
YES Prep	College Curriculum

Ann Richards School To and Through College Program



Students Served

ARS serves more than 800 girls in grades 6 through 12 each year. Currently ARS is providing supportive services through its Alumnae Network to 279 recent graduates.

Low Income
60%

Minority
80%

First-Generation College
65%

The mission of the [Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders](#) (ARS) is to prepare young women to attend and graduate from college, commit to a healthy and well-balanced lifestyle, lead with courage and compassion and solve problems creatively and ethically in support of our global community. ARS provides its students with a year-round, integrated “To College” program staffed by a full-time College Advisor and a part-time Scholarship/Alumnae Coordinator. ARS proposes to establish a “Through College” program that will support students during college and beyond. The program will include a pre-college transition program; college partnerships; case management; and financial supports.

Barriers to College Persistence and Completion

- Financial need
- Lack of student engagement in college or poor college match
- Family awareness of the value of college
- Challenging life situations

Student Outcomes

- College acceptance rate: 100%
- College entry rate: 94%
- Freshman to sophomore retention rate: 90%
- Persistence rate: 89% are still attending college
- 4-year graduation rate: 35%
- 6-year graduation rate: Expected 63% by June 2019

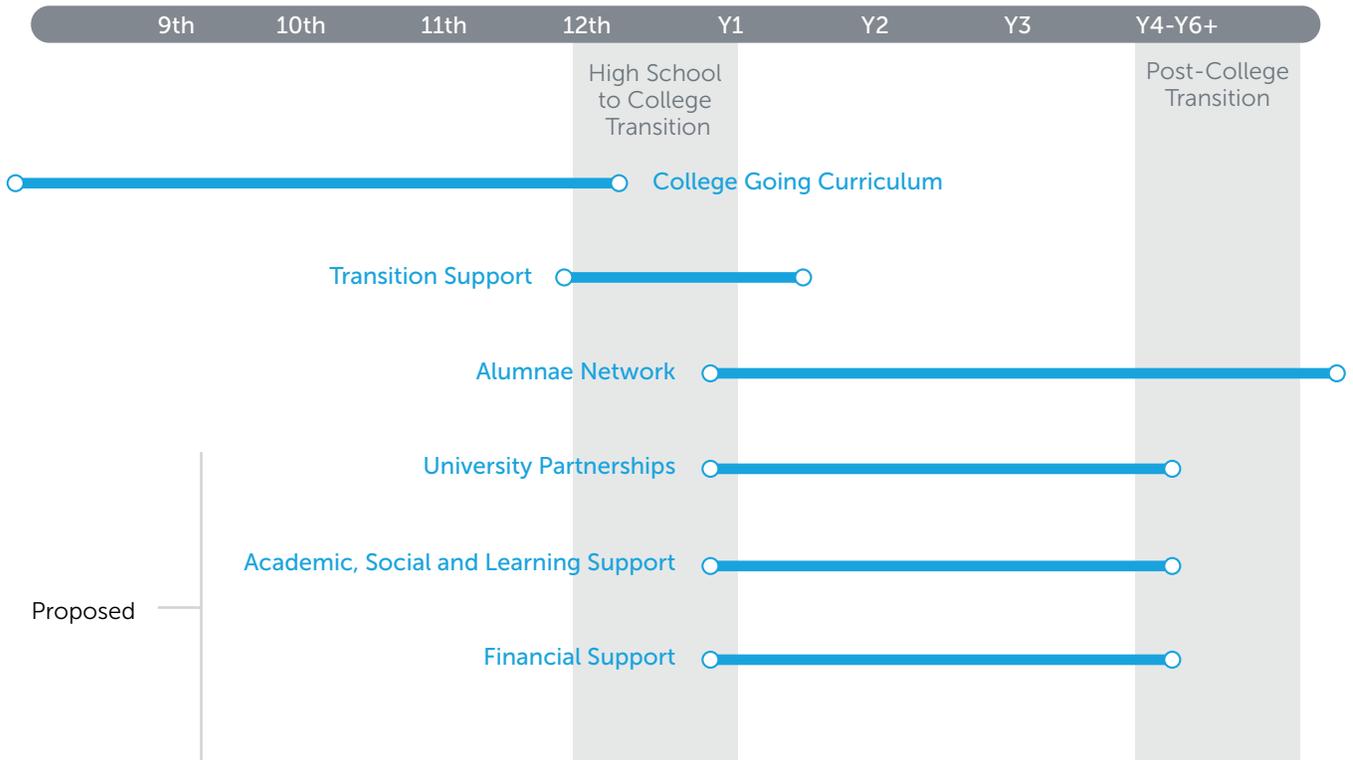
www.annrichardsschool.org

Recommendations for an Ann Richards School To and Through College Program

This report presents the proposed and approved Ann Richards School's To and Through College program components.

ARS's unique combination of rigorous curriculum coupled with year-round college preparation programs is graduating girls poised for success in college and careers. Although its College Bound program has been extremely successful, the addition of more comprehensive To and Through College components will ensure that our young women not only reach college, but also thrive there.

At its May 2017 meeting, the Ann Richards School Foundation Board of Directors adopted a plan to fund and implement the six components of the ARS To and Through College program.





Essential Services – Enhanced Existing Components

College Going Curriculum

- Students learn the value of college, build college-going skills, understand the academic rigor necessary to do well in college and visit college campuses.
- Families are educated about the importance of college for the girls' future success and the resources that are available to families and students.
- Students visit up to 15 local and national college campuses.
- Dedicated college advisors assist juniors and seniors in selecting institutions well matched to their skills, interests and needs.
- Students prepare for college entrance exams and complete college and scholarship applications.
- Seniors and their families are educated about financial aid and complete the FAFSA.
- College Bound staff hold family meetings to better understand individual family situations.

Transition Program

- ARS staff support the college entry process during the summer before enrollment.
- ARS staff assist with re-enrollment and/or transfers to other colleges.

Ann Richards School Alumnae Network

- ARS graduates support current ARS students by engaging with them during campus visits and attending events designed to provide information to current ARS students about college life.
- ARS College Bound staff communicate with ARS graduates to track progress and provide support.

Essential Services – New Components

Transition Program

- Parent University activities to support the family.
- “Summer Melt” program staffed by ARS alumnae who are supervised by ARS staff.

Ann Richards School Alumnae Network

- ARS Foundation members and alumnae serve as mentors to interested college students.
- Networking opportunities and career support for ARS alumnae are offered.

University Partnerships

- Negotiate an agreement with Austin Community College to develop a pathway for ARS.
- Partner with local colleges known to have high levels of success with ARS population.
- All partner colleges provide supportive activities and resources to ARS graduates.
- Partner with other “Through College” programs.

Academic, Social and Learning Support

- Cohort Model: ARS graduates attending the same college (or nearby colleges) are formed into cohorts. Cohorts are involved in activities before enrollment and during college to help them bond into a supportive network for each other. Cohorts can provide support to current ARS students during campus visits.
- Case Management: Database to track students and assist staff in providing support to students. Support provided to groups of students through text, email and other technology.

Financial Support

- Assistance with FAFSA completion and scholarship applications during college.
- Emergency loans or grants to students to cover unanticipated costs.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)-like program to provide support to ARS families and students such as mental health resources, childcare referrals, tax/FAFSA advising, etc.



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I’m proud to say I go to the Ann Richards School. I’m going to finish high school and I’m going to graduate from college, too. I’m proud to say I’m getting somewhere.”

–Sierra, Ann Richards School junior

This report is available in print through the Ann Richards School Foundation of Austin, Texas, and in electronic format with embedded hyperlinks to allow easy access to the specific programs and data.

To request a printed copy, email the Ann Richards School Foundation at foundation@annrichardsschool.org.



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