



WITHIN REACH ... WITHIN YOU

COUNSELOR TALKING POINTS: IDENTIFYING STUDENT PLANS FOR COLLEGE

Engaging middle school students in conversations about their future can be a challenging endeavor. Although your students are far too diverse to be truly categorized, we've identified three common reactions students might have to attending college:

- ▶ I'm going to college!
- ▶ I might go to college.
- ▶ Am I really college material?

Consider using the following sets of talking points to help identify fears, expectations and misconceptions students may face regarding college. The questions provided will help students open up and talk about their wants and needs related to higher education.





I'M GOING TO COLLEGE!

Some students know they'll continue their education after high school. Here are some ideas to assist students in their decision-making process.

- ▶ What are your interests?
- ▶ What do you want to do when you grow up?
- ▶ What kind of college are you and your parents looking for?
- ▶ Discuss classes and activities students are currently involved in to see if they're a good fit for their goals. Be ready to suggest any options you believe would support their plans for college.
- ▶ Encourage students to give their parents information about Oklahoma 529's college savings plan. Have them visit oklahoma529.com to learn more.
- ▶ Discuss eligibility requirements for the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship. Encourage students to talk to their parents about the program. More information can be found at okpromise.org.
- ▶ Emphasize the importance of developing good study habits now to help students prepare for more challenging classes in high school.
- ▶ Encourage students to visit OKcollegestart.org, which serves as a one-stop shop for college preparation, including career exploration and planning tools, financial aid and scholarship resources, and more.
- ▶ Advise students to ask questions and gather as much information as possible. UCanGo2.org is a great source of information about planning, preparing and paying for college.

Resources:

- ▶ [OSRHE's Do You Have a Plan for College? booklet, Grades 8-10](#)
- ▶ [Oklahoma 529's college savings plan brochures and forms](#)
- ▶ [Oklahoma's Promise flyer](#)



I MIGHT GO TO COLLEGE.

Some students are considering college after high school, but may be hesitant to make a definitive choice. As their counselor, you can help them identify their concerns and create a more positive impression of higher education.

- ▶ What are your interests?
- ▶ What do you want to do in life?
- ▶ What are your goals after high school?
- ▶ What might keep you from going to college?
- ▶ When is the right time to talk about going to college?
- ▶ Discuss eligibility requirements for the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship. Encourage students to talk to their parents about the program, and emphasize that they can enroll in the program in the eighth grade. Encourage them to visit okpromise.org.
- ▶ Encourage students to give their parents information about Oklahoma 529's college savings plan. Have them visit oklahoma529.com to learn more.
- ▶ Emphasize the importance of developing good study habits now to help students prepare for more challenging classes in high school.
- ▶ Encourage students and parents to visit OKcollegestart.org for college planning information.
- ▶ Advise your students to ask questions and gather as much information as possible. UCanGo2.org is a great source of information about planning, preparing and paying for college.

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- ▶ [Oklahoma's Promise flyer](#)
- ▶ [Degree vs. On-the-Job Training chart available at UCanGo2.org/Publications.html](#)



AM I REALLY COLLEGE MATERIAL?

Some middle school students have never considered attending college. There are many influences that can discourage a college-bound mindset; three of the major influences are listed below:

- ▶ They may be struggling in school and believe that college may be too difficult.
- ▶ They may have been told by friends or family members they're not "college material."
- ▶ They may be "first generation" college students and believe their paths will be the same as their parents'.

Fortunately, there are many options for higher education, such as two-year colleges, four-year universities, career technology centers and proprietary or trade schools. Help students explore all the possibilities for education after high school.

- ▶ What are your interests?
- ▶ What do you want to do in life?
- ▶ What are your skills? How can you use those skills in a job or career?
- ▶ Think about some schools that might offer courses or certificates associated with the students' interests and skills. Help students research how these schools might help them meet future goals. Encourage them to keep track of schools that are of particular interest.
- ▶ Ask students if they've talked to their parents about going to college. What are their parents' thoughts or concerns? Would their parents be supportive if they enrolled in college?
- ▶ Advise students that financial aid is available to everyone, regardless of family income. Direct them to [UCanGo2.org](https://ucango2.org) for information about planning, preparing and paying for college.
- ▶ Discuss the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship program eligibility requirements. Encourage students to talk to their parents about the program, and remind them to enroll in the 8th, 9th, 10th or 11th grade at okpromise.org or [OKcollegestart.org](https://okcollegestart.org).
- ▶ Encourage students to give their parents information about Oklahoma 529's college savings plan. Have them visit oklahoma529.com to learn more.
- ▶ Emphasize the importance of developing good study habits now to help students prepare for more challenging classes in high school. See the *Perfect 10* guide at [UCanGo2.org/Publications](https://ucango2.org/Publications).

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