A–G Resource Guide

Insights and Strategies From Exemplar School Districts

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PACE
Policy Analysis for California Education

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- Covina-Valley Unified School District, including Covina High School and Northview High School;
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- Nuview Union School District, including Nuview Bridge Early College High School;
- Oakland Unified School District, including Fremont High School and Oakland High School;
- San Francisco Unified School District, including John O'Connell High School, Washington High School, Mission High School, and Marshall High School;
- Sanger Unified School District, including Sanger High School and Sanger West High School;
- Val Verde Unified School District, including Citrus Hill High School and Rancho Verde High School; and
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This report, like all PACE publications, has been thoroughly reviewed for factual accuracy and research integrity. The author assumes full responsibility for the accuracy of the report contents.

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Executive Summary

This Resource Guide addresses a key problem that many district and school leaders in California face: how to increase student enrollment and success in A–G courses to reduce equity gaps in college eligibility. Developed from a qualitative research study that examined the policies and practices of nine school districts in California with A–G completion rates surpassing the overall statewide rate, the guide presents strategies, tools, and resources to address challenges with A–G course alignment, counseling, and scheduling. The guide is organized around eight key questions in three overarching categories:

- **A–G course-alignment challenges:** (a) Where are there equity gaps in A–G access and completion? (b) How can course offerings be revamped to ensure greater options? (c) How can districts facilitate A–G course approvals and ensure consistency in courses across schools? To address these challenges, exemplar districts implemented A–G data audits and analysis; eliminated or revamped non-A–G courses; aligned course offerings with graduation, A–G, and career and technical education requirements; and centralized A–G course-approval processes.
- **Counseling challenges:** (a) How do schools build an understanding of A–G requirements with students and families? (b) How do schools monitor A–G progress given data challenges and large student caseloads? (c) How do schools approach A–G advising with diverse student populations? Study districts implemented a range of tools and resources to build understanding of A–G requirements, manually evaluated transcripts and used data tools to monitor A–G progress, and implemented antiracist and inclusive counseling practices.
- **Scheduling and placement challenges:** (a) How can schools approach master scheduling in ways that ensure equitable access to A–G courses? (b) How can schools engage students in credit-recovery options to complete the A–G sequence? Several solutions were implemented among study districts, including student-centered course offerings, prioritization of English learners and students with disabilities in master scheduling, flexible bell schedules, open access policies for all A–G courses, and creative credit-recovery programming.

Several recommendations emerge from the study and resource guide. Districts should consider local policies and systems that address: (a) auditing A–G access and completion equity, (b) revamping A–G course offerings and sequences to address gatekeeper courses, (c) creating centralized processes for submitting and updating A–G course offerings, (d) developing open-access policies for A–G course offerings, (e) implementing flexible bell schedules, (f) using common tools to monitor A–G progress, and (g) offering more options for credit recovery.

Introduction

Although the value of a college degree is well recognized, many students in California graduate from high school ineligible for admission to the state's University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) institutions. Fewer than half (about 42 percent) of these students are graduating from high school having completed UC/CSU's A–G courses, a defined sequence of 15 college preparatory courses across a range of subject areas (Hurtt et al., 2022). In 2021–22, the California Department of Education (CDE) allocated $547 million through its A–G Improvement Grant Program to support local educational agencies (LEAs) with increasing the number of students who graduate from high school meeting the A–G requirements for UC and CSU admissions. Given this context, there is significant need across the state for greater understanding of best practices for increasing A–G course enrollment and completion rates.

Researchers and policymakers point to many factors that can contribute to students' college readiness, including academic preparation (Kurlaender & Howell, 2012), cognitive capabilities (Conley, 2008), nonacademic factors like student beliefs and aspirations (Kurlaender et al., 2019), and the supports and barriers that students experience (Long, 2014)—especially those students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). In the case of rigorous course-taking—like A–G completion—access to courses is central. Course offerings, counseling practices, and master scheduling all play a role in shaping schools' college-readiness policies and, ultimately, students' eligibility for 4-year colleges (Clay et al., 2020; Gilfillan, 2017; Jones, 2020).

This Resource Guide addresses a key problem that many district and school leaders in California face: how to increase student enrollment and success in A–G courses to reduce equity gaps in college eligibility. Quantitative data document disparities in A–G course enrollment and successful completion by students' race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status in schools across the state (Hurtt et al., 2023). These disparities stem from both individual (e.g., student choice and academic preparation) and institutional (e.g., course-scheduling and advising practices) factors. Prior research has focused largely on the impact of academic preparation and student beliefs about college rather than the district- and school-level systems and policies that structure A–G course-taking opportunities. Therefore, research has yet to illuminate workable strategies that can help district and school leaders identify patterns in A–G course enrollment and shift counseling and scheduling processes to address equity gaps. This guide aims to provide leaders with insights and examples from exemplar school districts related to these strategies.

This Resource Guide was developed based on policies, practices, and insights from nine California school districts with A–G completion rates that surpass the statewide rate both for all students and, in most cases, for key student subgroups. The purpose of the guide is to provide practitioners with tools, resources, and examples of approaches to improving A–G course alignment, counseling, and scheduling. While there are no cookie-cutter solutions to these

complex challenges, the hope is that this guide will facilitate creative discussions and solutions as districts support students with preparing for college.

How This Guide Is Organized

This Resource Guide is organized around three overarching areas: (a) A–G course alignment, (b) A–G counseling practices, and 3) A–G course scheduling. In practice, these three areas overlap and are interconnected, but they are discussed separately in this guide so that strategies and approaches can be explored in greater detail.

Within each of the three areas, the guide delineates common challenges identified by the focus districts. These challenges include systems barriers, policy limitations, stagnant school and district cultures, and problems of practice. After each challenge area is described, the guide presents the following

- **strategies** implemented by exemplar districts to address the challenge;
- **planning questions** for practitioners to consider when addressing similar challenges in their own systems; and
- **spotlights** on artifacts from focus districts that highlight a key practice or policy.

Overarching conclusions from the exemplar district study are given at the end of this guide. These include policy and practice recommendations for district and school leaders, counselors, and college-readiness coordinators.

Data and Methods

The research study was conducted during spring and summer 2022. The study explored the policies and practices of nine California school districts that had surpassed the state's A–G completion rates both for all students and for key student subgroups in 2018–19 (see the next section, "Overview of Focus Districts"). A total of 84 interviews were conducted with district leaders, school administrators, high school counselors, and teachers; policy descriptions, course offerings, lessons learned, and artifacts were collected from interviewees. The data were thematically analyzed to identify both common and unique practices implemented by the focus sites. Key challenges, strategies, and tactics were extracted from these findings and organized for this Resource Guide.

Overview of Focus Districts

Nine school districts participated in this study. All nine systems evidenced 2019[1] A–G completion rates that were higher than the statewide rate for all students as well as the statewide rate for Black, Latinx, socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED), and English learner (EL) student groups. The districts were also selected to reflect a range in both geographic location and enrollment size. Table 1 lists the nine districts and the high schools within those districts that participated in the project.

Table 1. Focus School Districts and Sites

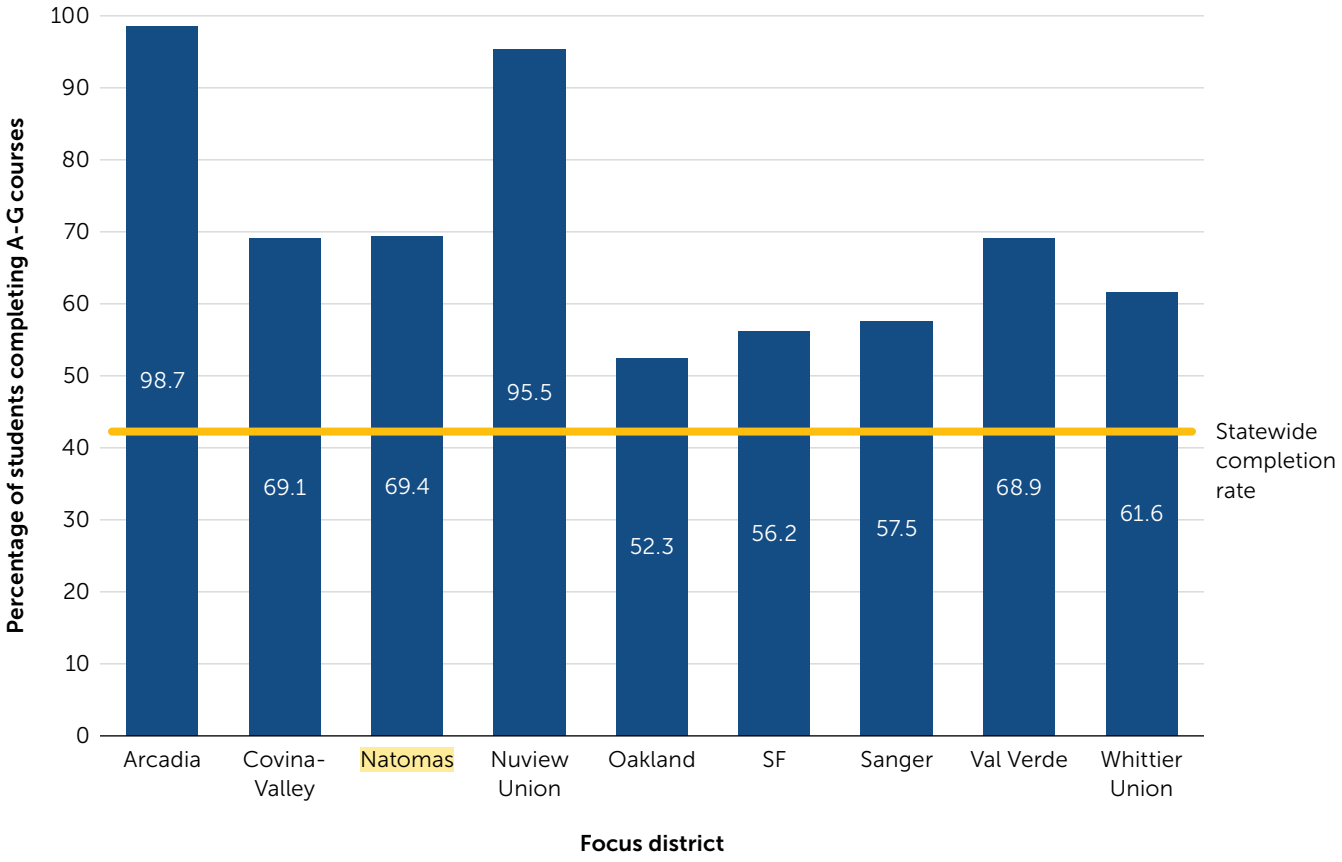
Study district	Study school sites
Arcadia Unified School District	Arcadia High School
Covina-Valley Unified School District	Covina and Northview High Schools
Natomas Unified School District	Inderkum and Natomas High Schools
Nuview Union School District	Nuview Bridge Early College High School
Oakland Unified School District	Fremont and Oakland High Schools
San Francisco Unified School District	John O'Connell, Washington, and Marshall High Schools
Sanger Unified School District	Sanger and Sanger West High Schools
Val Verde Unified School District	Citrus Hill and Rancho Verde High Schools
Whittier Union High School District	Pioneer and Santa Fe High Schools

The goal of the study was to include districts that represent a range of demographics and geographic locations. Therefore, study districts included small (less than 2,000 students), medium (2,000–10,000 students), and large (more than 10,000 students) districts; represented six counties across the state; and reflected significant Black and Latinx student populations (six of the nine districts had 2019 combined enrollment rates of Black and Latinx students of more than 50 percent). Figure 1 illustrates the A–G sequence completion rates for the nine districts compared with the state average.[2] While the state's A–G sequence completion rate was 42 percent in 2019, the focus districts had completion rates between 52.3 and 98.7 percent.

[1] A–G results were analyzed from 2019 for this study as it was the most recent year when high school graduates were unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, 2019 was the most recent year when student-level data were available at the time the study was designed.

[2] This study draws on student-level data from the College/Career Indicator (CCI) provided by CDE. A–G completion rates reported here may differ from CDE's DataQuest and other published papers because of sample differences and/or cohort composition. For example, CDE's DataQuest district and school reports include students in the 4-year adjusted cohort used for federal accountability reporting. In this study, all students in the CCI data for a given year are included, but alternative schools and schools with fewer than 15 students in a graduating cohort are excluded.

Figure 1. Percentage of Students Completing the A–G Sequence in Focus Districts Compared With the Statewide Completion Rate (2019)



The focus districts also surpassed the state's A–G course completion rates for subgroups. Table 2 gives the state's overall A–G completion rate for SED, Black, Latinx, and EL students as well as the range of A–G completion rates for each subgroup in the focus districts. While all the districts surpassed the state's average,[3] there was still a significant range in their completion rates. For example, while the state's A–G completion rate for Black students was 29.7 percent, the focus districts' completion rates were between 32.0 and 91.7 percent.

[3] The sole exception to this pattern is that one district had an A–G completion rate for Latinx students that was slightly lower than the state's average (34.0 percent versus 35.2 percent).

Table 2. A–G Completion Rates by Subgroup in Focus Districts and Statewide (2019)

	Percentage of students completing A–G			
	Socioeconomically disadvantaged	Latinx	Black	English learner
California	**34.6**	**35.2**	**29.7**	**18.2**
Arcadia	98.1	96.3	91.7	96.2
Covina-Valley	64.9	66.4	71.0	29.9
Natomas	64.3	67.6	55.2	46.5
Nuview Union	94.4	96.5	85.7	100.0
Oakland	49.0	49.2	42.3	33.8
San Francisco	54.6	34.0	32.0	35.2
Sanger	53.8	51.1	75.0	35.1
Val Verde	68.1	68.5	70.4	37.3
Whittier Union	58.6	60.4	50.0	35.3

A–G Course-Alignment Challenges and Strategies

Some districts and schools have a limited understanding of the A–G access or completion gaps that exist within their systems, preventing them from pinpointing specific barriers and solutions. For example, while most schools monitor passing rates for individual courses, some may lack insight into student performance in completing sequences of courses in specific subject areas or how different populations of students—including BIPOC students, ELs, and students with disabilities (SWDs)—are performing in these sequences. Leaders need strategies for analyzing data about course enrollment and performance to improve A–G access for their students.

Aligning A–G courses to graduation and college preparation program requirements was foundational to the study districts' college-readiness planning. Districts emphasized the importance of being data driven in identifying A–G successes and bottlenecks, including at the district, school, course, and student levels. These insights informed several school processes, such as Local Control and Accountability Plans, staffing priorities, and grant needs. A–G course alignment included processes for identifying A–G achievement patterns, revamping course offerings, and facilitating UC course approvals.

Challenge: Where Are There Equity Gaps in A–G Access and Completion?

> *We have to make sure that what we're actually looking at is accurate because I think that's the first step. If you don't know how to measure a problem, how can you start thinking about ways to address it or solve it? That goes for looking at our A–G data.*—Oakland Unified School District administrator

Without access to data on A–G course enrollment and completion, leaders' ability to understand the potential causes of their students' achievement patterns is limited. Districts discussed the need to shift from isolated data points related to A–G achievement towards a comprehensive assessment of A–G access and completion results. Specifically, these analyses provided insights into enrollment in A–G course offerings and equity gaps in enrollment and completion as well as priorities for interventions.

District strategies

Conduct A–G data audits. Most districts in the study conducted an A–G audit to determine patterns in A–G course enrollment and completion. Districts conducted these audits independently or as part of a county collaborative. A–G audits were especially valuable when they included: (a) participation of site administrators, counselors, and teachers; (b) review of individual transcripts and reasons for not meeting A–G requirements; and (c) summary of district- and school-level data by subject area, course, and demographics.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Val Verde Unified School District (USD) conducted a comprehensive audit in collaboration with the Riverside County Office of Education. Administrators, counselors, and teachers discussed A–G validation rules, reviewed individual student transcripts, and recorded the A–G status results. The process generated a 50-page document analyzing every course access point, including successes and bottlenecks.
- Whittier Union High School District (HSD) implemented an annual "Why Not A–G?" activity where school staff worked in small groups to analyze transcripts. Teams identified specific reasons why individual students did not complete the A–G sequence and aggregated results to determine schoolwide A–G access and completion patterns.

Conduct ongoing A–G data analysis. Leaders pointed to the importance of conducting A–G data audits and analysis every few years, if not annually, to examine changes in A–G achievement. This analysis included refreshing A–G course enrollment and completion rates as well as deeply exploring data questions identified by district and school teams. Districts and schools used A–G data reports available from their student information systems and, in several instances, more detailed and customized data analyses from their research and data departments.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Covina-Valley USD conducted an annual A–G data analysis to examine the following: (a) identification of students who missed completion of the A–G sequence by only one course; (b) exploration of gatekeeper courses, including course grade results; and (c) historical trends in A–G enrollment and completion by ethnicity, gender, EL and SWD status, and other groupings.
- As part of its district progress report, Natomas USD annually analyzed and reported A–G completion rates to determine college and career interventions and supports that were needed across the district. This analysis included historical trends in A–G completion rates for students in specific racial or ethnic groups, ELs, youth in foster care, SWDs, and low-income students.

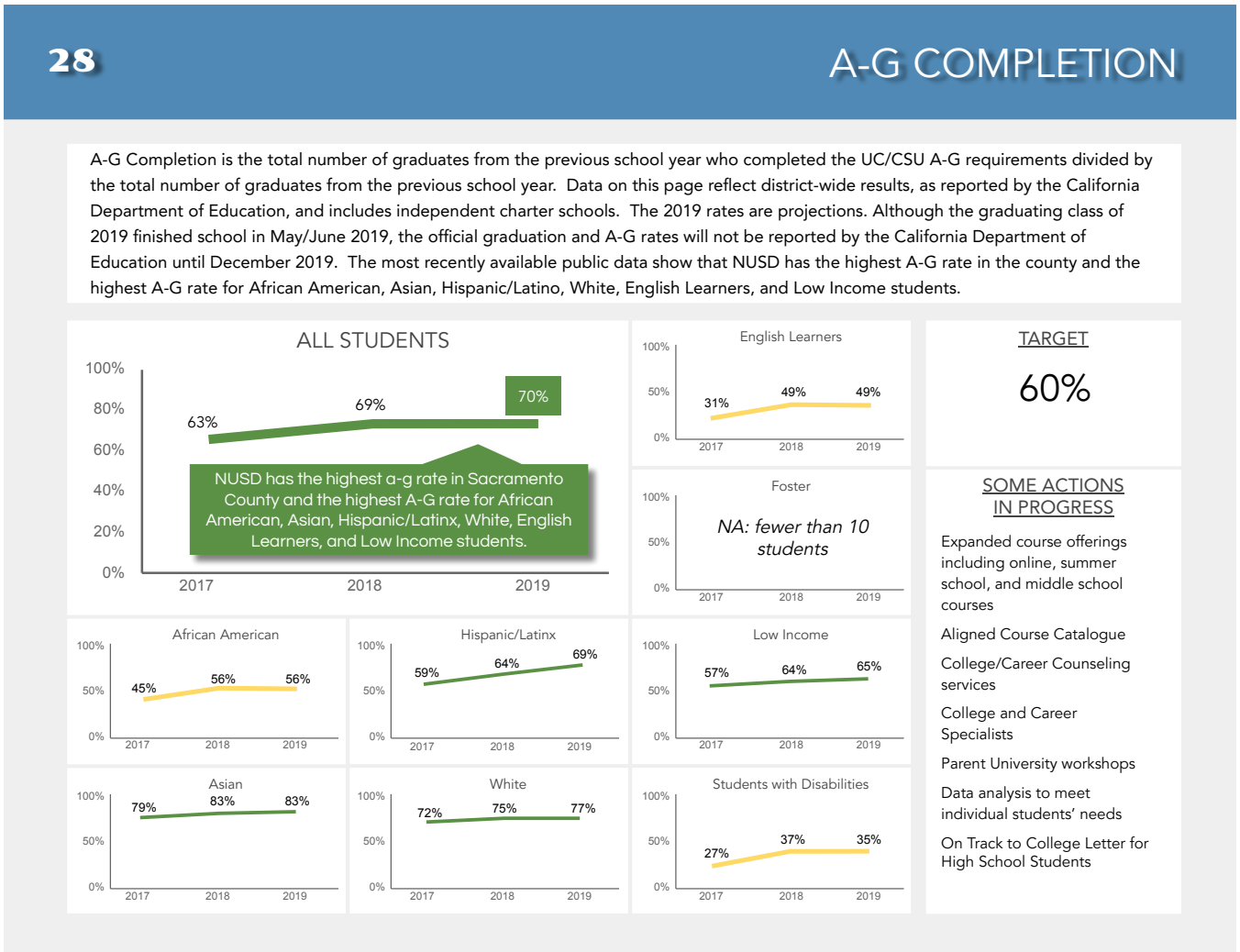
Planning questions for districts

- What data tools and resources are in place to conduct A–G data analysis in your district or school?
- What opportunities are there for administrators, teachers, and counselors to review A–G data collaboratively (e.g., transcripts, data on course grades, rates of course completion)?
- What bright spots and barriers have you noticed in your district's or school's A–G data, both overall and for different student demographic groups?

Spotlight Practice: Natomas Unified School District

Natomas USD consistently conducted a comprehensive analysis of A–G course offerings and completion to determine strategic priorities. In its Fall 2019 District Progress Report (Figure 2), the district reported historical trends in A–G completion rates for different courses overall and by key demographic groups. While the reporting of these A–G completion rates were part of the district's accountability monitoring, they also provided the data for administrators to identify and prioritize staffing, increase course offerings (e.g., online, summer, and middle school courses), and conduct monitoring activities (e.g., on-track-to-college letters to students and families) to support A–G completion.

Figure 2. Fall 2019 District Progress Report, Natomas Unified School District



Challenge: How Can Course Offerings Be Revamped to Improve Opportunities for A–G Access?

> *We've always had in our CTE [Career Technical Education] department some folks out there that fight A–G at times. And they say, "Hey, kids are not all going to go to college." And so the happy medium was: We want kids to be in your [CTE] program. … We want kids to take whatever courses they want, but whatever sequence of courses they take needs to add up to A–G.*
> —Whittier Union HSD site administrator

Because districts aim to support students with achieving a range of college- and career-readiness goals, leaders must figure out how to offer rigorous courses aligned to both graduation and various postsecondary education and career requirements. In participant districts, data analysis

highlighted the need for course-level changes, prompting an overhaul of course offerings to revise and expand opportunities to meet full A–G requirements. For example, these districts pointed to students' challenges with completing math, science, and world language courses and the need to expand offerings in these subjects to include courses of greater interest to students.

District strategies

Eliminate non-A–G courses. Many districts that conducted A–G data audits identified courses that were not A–G approved and were serving as barriers to completing the A–G sequence. These tended to be remedial courses, courses that had been offered for years, or courses meeting a local graduation requirement.

The following are examples of districts' strategies:

- Covina-Valley USD eliminated its "frosh success" elective course offering when they determined that the course was acting as a barrier to students' college prep progression.
- Arcadia USD had previously offered a non-A–G physical science course that was challenging for many students; the district revamped it to be an A–G-approved physics course.

Expand A–G course offerings. In response to gatekeeper courses, study districts developed new A–G courses and sequences to provide more opportunities for access. For many districts, this specifically involved efforts to develop A–G courses in math, science, and world languages. Districts often adjusted the sequencing of these courses to further increase access points available to students.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Nuview Early Bridge High School, part of a small charter district, expanded its offering of electives through its partnerships with Mount San Jacinto College and Moreno Valley College.
- Covina High School offered American Sign Language as an additional world language option, which SWDs and ELs excelled in.
- Sanger USD modified its science sequence to include Conceptual Physics-Biology-Chemistry so that students could complete the district's required 3 years of science.
- Natomas USD moved its A–G science course offerings from 11th/12th grade to 9th/10th grade so that students had more options to meet and exceed the UC/CSU science requirement.

Align A–G, career technical education (CTE), and graduation requirements. Districts devoted time and staffing to align most, if not all, of their courses to A–G. They often aimed to "triple dip" courses by ensuring that courses met graduation, A–G, and CTE requirements. In some instances, courses were also aligned to Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Advanced Placement (AP) Capstone, International Baccalaureate, or other program requirements.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Val Verde offered 42 career pathways and spent several years getting all courses in these pathways approved as A–G courses.
- Students in San Francisco USD were able to complete 2 years of an integrated CTE pathway with all A–G-approved courses.
- Through partnerships with local community colleges and industry professionals, Whittier Union HSD embedded career academies in every school, giving students opportunities to take A–G-approved courses in business and computers, hospitality, film and media, architectural engineering, and other career pathways.

Planning questions for districts

- What are you learning about barriers experienced by students, including BIPOC students, to completing the A–G course sequence?
- What changes in course offerings have the potential for the greatest impact on students' A–G progress?
- What systems are in place to design new courses and align existing ones to different requirements (A–G, graduation, CTE, etc.)?

Spotlight Practice: Nuview Union School District

Nuview Bridge Early College High School (NBECHS), a small charter school, identified several ways to increase A–G course options for students. Since 2015, the school has partnered with Mount San Jacinto College and Moreno Valley College to offer dual credit college courses, including classes taught by NBECHS teachers with master's degrees. As reflected in NBECHS Elective Course Offerings (see below), the school has increased options for enrolling in world language courses, electives, and vocational courses as well as CSU "Golden 4" classes (oral communication, written communication, quantitative reasoning, and critical thinking).

The following is an excerpt from the 2022–23 elective course offerings at NBECHS:

MRWC—Mathematical Reasoning With Connections (C). This class is designed as a fourth-year math course following Integrated Math I, II, and III that will provide a bridge into multiple college and career options, including STEAM, CTE, and nontechnical pathways. This class combines concepts in trigonometry, geometry, and algebra that lead to calculus in a way that is substantially different from a traditional curriculum. This class emphasizes collaboration and exploration by using math activities, problem-posing, and use of technology. Students successfully completing MRWC will have acquired content skills and attitudes towards learning that will be expected in entry-level mathematics. Prerequisite of Integrated Math III with a "C" or higher.

Anatomy and Physiology (D). This course will develop a student's understanding of the human body by exploring 13 organ systems. Students will gain critical thinking skills through practical application, laboratory activities, independent research, and project-based learning. In order to receive MVC credit, students cannot miss this class to attend another college class/extracurricular activity. Grades 11–12.

Spanish I (E). Learn basic information to hear, speak, read, and write Spanish. Also focus on different Spanish-speaking countries and learn about common cultural traditions through songs, telenovelas, poems, short stories, and film. By the end of the year, you will be able to have short conversations with your Spanish-speaking friends!

Spanish II (E). Focus on the history and culture of more Spanish-speaking countries and learn how to write, read, listen, and talk about chores, your neighborhood, professions, healthy lifestyles, your childhood, and more. Be more confident with your skills and be able to have longer, spontaneous conversations in Spanish. Prerequisite of Spanish I with a "C" or higher.

Spanish III (E). Delve deep into the culture of Spanish-speaking countries with a focus on current events, historical connections, and immigrant culture. Focus on reading, listening, and speaking about vacations, sports, hobbies, school, advice, relationships, friendships, art, music, and our aspirations for the future. Our studies focus on authentic texts such as songs, a telenovela, novels, poems, films, and a Broadway musical. Prerequisite of Spanish I Native or Spanish II with a "C" or higher.

Spanish I Native (E). This class goes over literature, short reading passages and comprehension questions and vocabulary, [and] grammar (tenses, accents, and pronouns). We also focus on culture like "Dia de los Muertos," Cesar Chavez, "el Dia de los Niños," and other events. We also have a Dance Unit: Introduction to Salsa, Bachata, Merengue, Cumbia, and Banda, in which students must participate. Fulfills "2 years" of world language requirement for A–G if passed with "C" or above. Placement test required.

Spanish II Native (E). Native II is a continuation of Native I with the expansion/continuation of grammar tenses in the indicative and subjunctive. We continue to focus on culture and customs practiced by our families and ancestors. As for literature, we read El Zarco and Pedro Parramo as well as short reading passages from "Nuevas Vistas." Fulfills "third year" of world language requirement for A–G if passed with a "C" or above. Prerequisite of Spanish I Native or Spanish II with a "C" or higher.

Beginning Art (F). Beginning art will guide students to develop basic techniques for working in pencil, pen, and paint mediums. The class is organized to build skills through practice and culminates in a series of independent projects where students learn to plan, execute, and present the creative process. Students will create an online portfolio to showcase their work.

Challenge: How Can Districts Facilitate A–G Course Approvals and Ensure Consistency in Courses Across Schools?

> *If we didn't have district alignment, students who fail a semester of any of these courses would not be able to make it up. In order to have a successful credit-recovery program, you have to have some alignment of making up that same course. So we got each department to confirm Algebra I is going to be this course code, Algebra II is this code.*—San Francisco USD Administrator

Because the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) course-approval process drives a school's ability to offer A–G courses, delays in a district's submission of new or revised courses can inhibit access to A–G courses and have far-reaching effects on the opportunities available to students. For example, when schools are unable to meet UCOP's submission and revision deadlines for A–G courses, they cannot include these courses in their master scheduling processes, which typically start in early spring of each school year.

Obtaining A–G course approvals from UCOP can be a time-consuming process. Study districts typically spent several years revamping existing courses that needed A–G approval while new courses were also being developed. Districts also identified the critical need for course lists to be updated annually on the UCOP Course Management Portal (CMP), as colleges may question why students haven't attempted courses that appear on a school's A–G course list.

District strategies

Centralize processes for UCOP course approvals. In districts without centralized processes for UCOP course approvals, individual high schools tended to facilitate the course approvals, which led to a range of different course titles and codes. The result was that A–G core courses like English I had different standards, syllabi, and materials. Study districts centralized processes for developing, approving, and updating courses to address this challenge.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Most districts—including Val Verde, Sanger, Nuview Union, and Natomas—used courses that had previously been A–G approved by UCOP as models for developing or revamping their own courses.
- Oakland USD created a course-development template corresponding to the UCOP CMP submission areas that included curriculum units, assessments, and materials.
- Whittier Union HSD established a collaborative process with teachers, the teachers' union, site administrators, the curriculum department, and the Board of Education for developing, reviewing, submitting, and editing A–G courses.

Manage timelines for course approvals. The study districts reported that the revamped process for submitting courses to UCOP for approval was straightforward to navigate. The most common challenge for many was managing both UCOP's and the district's deadlines for course approval. These challenges included the following:

- ensuring that sites completed course materials according to UCOP's submission schedules;
- experiencing inconsistent response times from UCOP after submitting a course for approval; and
- obtaining approved course titles and codes from UCOP in time for sites to complete master scheduling in the summer.

As an example of a strategy to address these challenges, districts like Val Verde USD and Oakland USD created an A–G course approval calendar for the year to map out all internal deadlines (e.g., identify new courses for development, create required materials for submission, clean up course titles and codes).

Planning questions for districts

- How does your district facilitate consistent course-development processes and course titles and codes across schools?
- What internal roles and timelines has your district established for developing, submitting, and revising courses for A–G approval?
- Does your district have a process for annually reviewing and updating your A–G course list on UCOP's CMP?

Spotlight Practice: Val Verde Unified School District

Val Verde USD centrally managed the district's UCOP CMP account, as mapped out in the "University of California A–G Course Management Portal" slide (Figure 3). The district's secondary coordinator developed processes for creating and modifying A–G courses through CMP to create consistency across secondary schools. In addition, processes were mapped out to verify and reconcile errors in course titles, course codes, and offering status between the district's student information system—AERIES—and CMP.

Figure 3. Overview of University of California A–G Course Management Portal, Val Verde Unified School District

University of California
A-G Course Management Portal

The Course Management System-**CMP** (sometimes also called UC Doorways) and the District Student Information System-**SIS** need to be in COMPLETE alignment for students to get accurate A-G credit. A robust system needs to be in place for this to occur.

WHY: Always start with your WHY!

VVUSD's why- ALL MEANS ALL

- Every Student on the A-G pathway
- No Door closed

THEN work to remove BARRIERS - **Knowledge, Systems, Access, Success**

Who: make sure this is clear

- Manages adding new courses to the SIS?
- Manages CMP
- Continuously on board new people with knowledge- Admin, Counselors, Educators, Families and students

What: SYSTEMS for New Course Additions and Course Corrections

- SIS
  - Course Requests- Ethnis Studies Course Request, New AERIES Course Code Request Form (If at all possible I model after existing class in other district)
  - Curriculum Council
  - Course Catalog
- CMP
- NCAA (don't forget!)

HOW:

1. Get report of misalignment- I use **CCGI** (could get CALPads report, or even hand report from CMP and SIS)
   a. Create list- Excel sorted by courses
   b. Identify errors
2. Log into SIS under courses
3. Log into CMP
4. RECONCILE ALL- FUN FUN FUN

Common Issues:

- SIS name is different from CMP (even capitalization errors or spacing!!!)
- SIS course number is different from what shows on CMP
- SIS A-G tagg does not match CMP
- Course may not be listed at all the schools
- Course may need to be updated for multiple years in CMP and/or SIS
- Course A-G status changed (i.e and elective course became a VAPA, or Lab Science)
- Out of District course doesn't match your system- registrar may need to make adjustments
- School does "interesting" course title - "HH" home hospital needs to be removed
- College level course does not get credit for the high school (do nothing)
- And on and on and on….

A–G Counseling Challenges and Strategies

Early in high school, students and families need to make high-stakes decisions about course selection that have substantial impact on college preparation trajectories. Navigating the complexities of the A–G requirements to make informed decisions about course planning may be challenging for students. A–G counseling practices encompass the range of tools, processes, and resources that counselors employ to build understanding of A–G requirements and monitor students' A–G progress. Districts in this study uniformly identified counselors as playing a central role in their A–G success. While most schools reported counselor-to-student ratios of 300–400 to 1, the study districts implemented advising practices to minimize these caseload challenges.

Challenge: How Do Schools Deepen Understanding of A–G Requirements With Students and Families?

> *The community college staff are … advising students on the college side, but our counselors are also advising them for high school. So they meet more frequently as they get to senior year—they probably meet with them four times. And junior year, maybe three times. … As the students start to figure out what they want to do, then we start to give them more advice on not just specific colleges … but we give them that opportunity to figure out which courses, regardless of the colleges, are the best for their specific route. And our counselors are really good about taking that time to meet with every individual student and advising them of the best path for their own career choice.*—Nuview Union School District site administrator

Many districts across California conduct workshops, presentations, and other activities to explain A–G requirements to high school students and their families. However, some districts have yet to develop a comprehensive program that communicates A–G requirements and their importance throughout students' schooling so that students are better able to select and sequence the necessary college preparatory courses aligned with their postsecondary goals. While balancing academic advising, social-emotional counseling, master scheduling, and other school responsibilities, many counselors spent inordinate amounts of time ensuring that students and their families had the information needed to plan and prepare for a range of postsecondary and career options, including attending a 4-year college if they chose.

District strategies

Build A–G awareness at the elementary and middle school levels. College awareness and planning were typical processes at the high school level several years ago. Study districts realized that building awareness earlier was critical to developing a strong college-going culture. These districts focused on college awareness and exposure at the elementary school level and on A–G requirements starting at the middle school level.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- At Val Verde USD, college days introduced elementary school students to different colleges and careers while middle school students participated in A–G workshops where counselors reviewed A–G and graduation requirements and discussed A–G course selections for high school.
- Counselors and students in Natomas USD used the Multi-Year Academic Planner (MYAP) in Edgenuity to plan and track A–G progress through middle and high school.
- At Nuview Union School District, intensive A–G advising began at the middle school level as high school counselors reviewed A–G requirements with feeder middle schools and discussed course options during the high school's summer bridge program.

Develop a comprehensive A–G informational curriculum. Districts invested time and resources in developing comprehensive A–G informational curricula with activities focused on exploring A–G requirements, course planning, and tracking A–G progress as well as developing college and career exploration tools. These curricula included a range of different activities (e.g., grade-level presentations, small-group workshops, and individual meetings) as well as tools (e.g., A–G planning templates, informational pamphlets, student handbooks, QR codes to facilitate Q&As about A–G, and A–G on-/off-track monitoring sheets).

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Arcadia High School counselors used the Naviance system to develop individual 4-year course plans, prioritize classes, and explore careers with students.
- San Francisco USD created a comprehensive college and career curriculum that included lessons and materials explaining A–G requirements, strategies for transcript evaluation, and A–G planning resources for students.
- Whittier Union HSD created its Step to Success series, a set of comprehensive college and career exploration and planning videos, course-selection sheets, and other resources for each high school grade level.

Hold parent forums to share A–G requirements. Counselors continually explored ways to engage parents around A–G, implementing activities like parent nights, college nights, university presentations for parents, EL Advisory Committee presentations, newsletters, A–G status letters, pamphlets, and the like.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Nuview Early Bridge High School counselors conducted numerous A–G outreach activities with parents and families, including parent nights and workshops as well as individual parent meetings to review college and A–G requirements.

- Sanger High School counselors implemented a range of activities to explain A–G requirements for parents, including information sessions, school site council presentations, a parent handbook, community presentations in Spanish and Hmong, and individual meetings offered during extended hours.

Planning questions for districts

- How do counselors balance academic, social-emotional, and college-readiness advising responsibilities?
- How do counselors communicate A–G and college information across elementary, middle, and high school grade levels?
- How does your district use staff other than counselors (e.g., teachers, students/alumni, community-based organization partners, etc.) to supplement A–G awareness building?

Spotlight Practice: San Francisco Unified School District

San Francisco USD spent several years developing and refining a comprehensive college-readiness curriculum. The curriculum included lessons targeting college and A–G awareness building at different grade levels. The sample ninth-grade lesson (Figure 4) focused on introducing graduation and A–G requirements, building high school and college-readiness vocabulary, and exploring strategies for developing a 4-year college prep plan.

Figure 4. Sample Ninth-Grade A–G Awareness Lesson, San Francisco Unified School District

Office of Counseling & Post-Secondary Success
COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS CURRICULUM

College Essential Lesson
High School
GRADE: 9

OBJECTIVES	ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors
• Introduce or increase awareness of the SFUSD Graduation Requirements & A-G/college admission requirements • Introduce high school & college readiness vocabulary • Learn about strategies and resources to help best navigate the first year of high school & begin a 4 year plan	• M2: Self-Confidence in ability to succeed. • M3: Sense of belonging in the school environment. • B-SS3: Create relationships with adults that support success. • B-LS 7: Identify long- and short-term academic, career and social/emotional goals • B-LS4: Apply self-motivation and self-direction to learning.

OVERVIEW

Grades Matter! & Let's Talk About College...
- Establishing Important Vocabulary
- What Does A-G Mean? What else do I need?
- Understanding high school lingo & supports
- College Requirement Comparisons including NCAA Eligibility
- Creating a RIGOROUS 4-Year Plan
- Exploring Systems (Intro level)

Academic Vocabulary:
- ❑ A-G requirements
- ❑ Transcript
- ❑ Validation
- ❑ Academic Review/Audit Sheet
- ❑ Credit Recovery
- ❑ College Requirements
- ❑ UC/CSU
- ❑ Concurrent Enrollment
- ❑ Repeat
- ❑ GPA
- ❑ Waiver (World Language)
- ❑ SAT/ACT Validation (World Language)

MATERIALS

- ✓ Student Pre-Survey and Post-Survey (administer at start and end of lesson)
- ✓ Why A-G Handout/A-G Handouts- provided or your own
- ✓ Index cards (or half slips of paper)
- ✓ Optional: 7 prizes for quiz (pencils, stickers, bookmarks, etc.)
- ✓ Transcript for each student
- ✓ 4 Year Plan (Optional: you can edit for your school's sequence)
- ✓ A-G/Grad Requirements Youtube Video w/ sound (or use slides 9-13. See note below): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c98lWQZDYwc&t=2s

September 2018

Challenge: How Do Schools Monitor A–G Progress Given Data Challenges and Large Student Caseloads?

> *There are frequent conversations between counselors and their students about A–G expectations. With our freshmen, with our parent community, we ensure they know what to expect. … Our expectation overall is that all students graduate A–G eligible. The minute a student gets off track, our counselors are really good about meeting with the students to see how they can recover a D or make up a class.*
> —Val Verde USD site administrator

Continual A–G progress monitoring is central to keeping students on track for A–G completion. However, counselors face time and resource constraints with efficiently maintaining these monitoring processes. Counselors structured processes to ensure that individual students had an A–G plan in place and that their progress was accurately monitored every semester. Doing so required significant advising time and resources, including tools to navigate the limits of existing data systems.

District strategies

Evaluate transcripts manually. Counselors across focus districts conducted manual evaluations of individual students' transcripts, typically twice a year. While some schools used UC's Transcript Evaluation Service, most counselors preferred to assess transcripts themselves and annotate students' A–G progress.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- At least twice a year, Oakland USD counselors annotated transcripts with notations on graduation and A–G progress.
- Sanger USD counselors visited classrooms before registration periods each semester and reviewed evaluated transcripts during brief check-ins with students.
- Nuview Union counselors collaborated with community college counselors when meeting with students to review transcripts and plan future courses.

Monitor A–G progress with data-tracking tools. Some counselors noted that their district's student information systems failed to accurately capture certain nuances in A–G validation rules, which led to errors in, for example, calculating grade point average, counting credits from international transcripts, or counting credits from repeated courses. As a result, schools relied on other tools and trackers to monitor A–G progress.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Sanger USD counselors used the California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) to support students with exploring careers and mapping course plans.
- San Francisco USD created its own data-monitoring sheets with individual students' A–G progress so that sites could send home appropriate progress letters as well as identify needed interventions.
- Counselors at Covina-Valley USD created customized Google Sheets to monitor off-/on-track status, A–G courses taken/failed, and missing courses.
- Natomas USD counselors used the MyAP program in Infinite Campus to generate student graduation and college plans, print transcripts, and support counselor–student check-ins.

Intervene immediately. Counselors across districts immediately intervened when students were off track in their A–G progress. Traditional interventions like credit recovery in junior or senior year were reimagined by exemplar districts. Interventions included monitoring of D/F grades at the end of each marking period, identifying learning interventions that students needed, sending progress letters to parents, and immediately placing students in credit recovery when they failed a course.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Santa Fe and Pioneer High Schools in Whittier Union HSD implemented a unique bell schedule with a rotating block of 20 minutes at the end of every course to allow for direct interventions with students not passing their A–G courses.
- San Francisco USD centrally generated data-monitoring sheets with individual students' A–G progress so that sites could send home appropriate progress letters as well as identify needed interventions.
- Sanger USD counselors proactively monitored A–G progress throughout the school year and identified intervention options as soon as students became off track.
- Val Verde USD high schools built a 30-minute intervention time into their schedules twice a week during which teachers provided targeted intervention support and counselors worked with groups of students on A–G requirements and course scheduling.

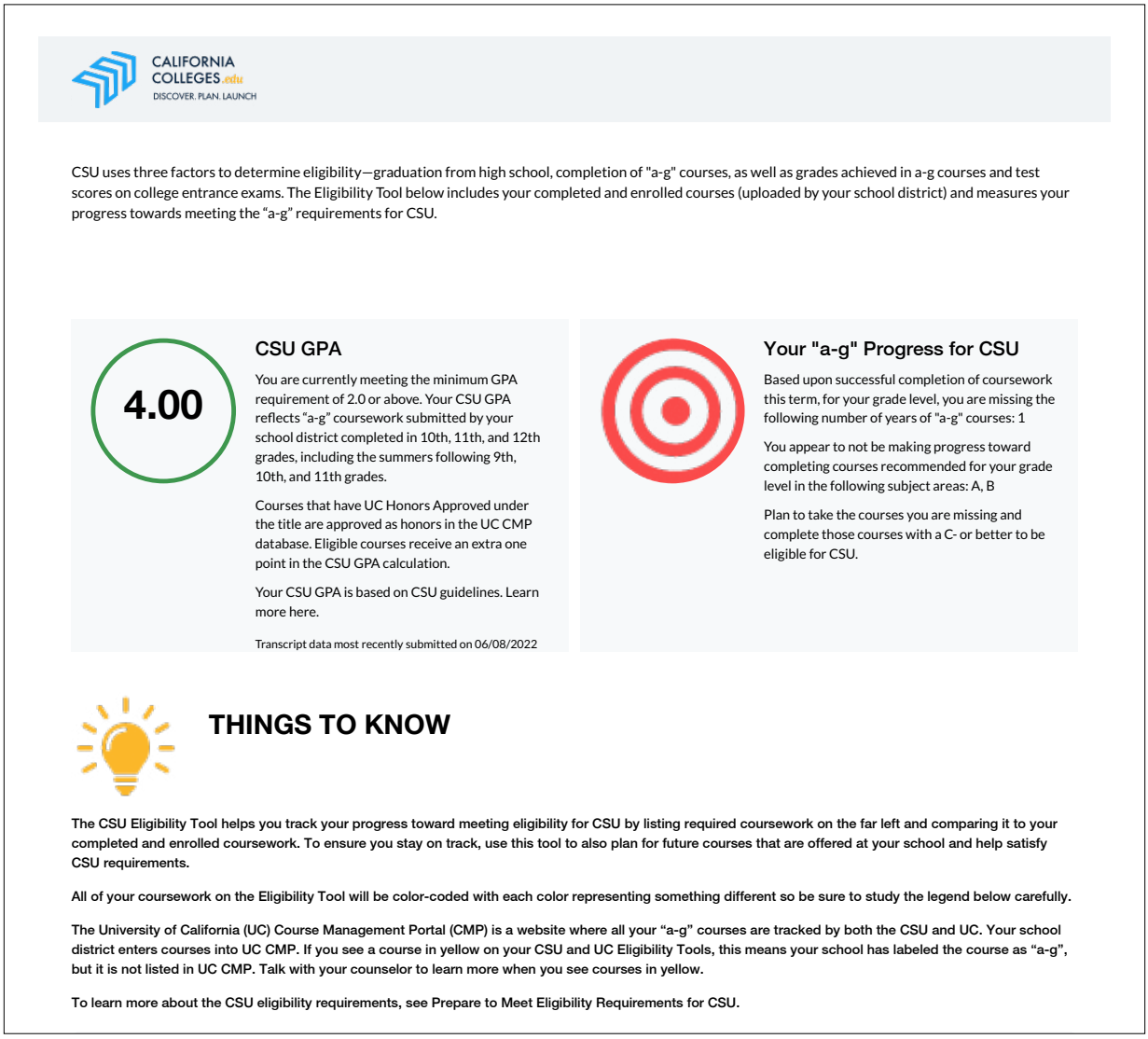
Planning questions for districts

- How does your district ensure consistency in applying A–G validation rules when conducting transcript evaluations?
- How can data tools and resources be used to improve counselors' A–G monitoring?
- How do counselors, teachers, and administrators use A–G course data during the school year to identify needed interventions?

Spotlight Practice: Sanger Unified School District

Sanger High School adopted CCGI to support students with college and career planning. On their CCGI accounts, students were able to develop A–G course plans, explore colleges and fees, and research careers and associated degrees. The screenshot of a student's CCGI account (Figure 5) shows the student's CSU grade point average and A–G progress as well as college-readiness resources that are available on the platform and how to interpret them (e.g., CSU Eligibility Tool).

Figure 5. Sample California College Guidance Initiative Account Screenshot, Sanger High School



CALIFORNIA COLLEGES.edu
DISCOVER. PLAN. LAUNCH

CSU uses three factors to determine eligibility—graduation from high school, completion of "a-g" courses, as well as grades achieved in a-g courses and test scores on college entrance exams. The Eligibility Tool below includes your completed and enrolled courses (uploaded by your school district) and measures your progress towards meeting the "a-g" requirements for CSU.

4.00

CSU GPA

You are currently meeting the minimum GPA requirement of 2.0 or above. Your CSU GPA reflects "a-g" coursework submitted by your school district completed in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades, including the summers following 9th, 10th, and 11th grades.

Courses that have UC Honors Approved under the title are approved as honors in the UC CMP database. Eligible courses receive an extra one point in the CSU GPA calculation.

Your CSU GPA is based on CSU guidelines. Learn more here.

Transcript data most recently submitted on 06/08/2022

Your "a-g" Progress for CSU

Based upon successful completion of coursework this term, for your grade level, you are missing the following number of years of "a-g" courses: 1

You appear to not be making progress toward completing courses recommended for your grade level in the following subject areas: A, B

Plan to take the courses you are missing and complete those courses with a C- or better to be eligible for CSU.

THINGS TO KNOW

The CSU Eligibility Tool helps you track your progress toward meeting eligibility for CSU by listing required coursework on the far left and comparing it to your completed and enrolled coursework. To ensure you stay on track, use this tool to also plan for future courses that are offered at your school and help satisfy CSU requirements.

All of your coursework on the Eligibility Tool will be color-coded with each color representing something different so be sure to study the legend below carefully.

The University of California (UC) Course Management Portal (CMP) is a website where all your "a-g" courses are tracked by both the CSU and UC. Your school district enters courses into UC CMP. If you see a course in yellow on your CSU and UC Eligibility Tools, this means your school has labeled the course as "a-g", but it is not listed in UC CMP. Talk with your counselor to learn more when you see courses in yellow.

To learn more about the CSU eligibility requirements, see Prepare to Meet Eligibility Requirements for CSU.

Challenge: What Counseling Practices Will Support All Students—Including BIPOC, EL, and SWD Students—With Their A–G Enrollment and Completion?

> *If we have teachers who statistically are giving Ds and Fs to more of our Black and Brown students, that's a pretty big deal. … How do administrators, counselors, and teachers talk about grading policies? How do we keep pushing that conversation respectfully?*—Oakland USD administrator

> *It becomes a difficult conversation because a lot of the students that are English learners … are more eager to get out of school and help their parents financially. So it's always a mapping out of what's going to be better in the long run. Yes, you might get that quick gratification right now, but if you stick it out and maybe pursue something else, whether it be a vocational school, community college, university, or military, you might get the bigger return, bigger gratification in the long run to be able to help [your family].*—Sanger USD counselor

Equity gaps in A–G completion are evident in many districts among students who are BIPOC, ELs, and SWDs. While counselors may implement best practices appropriate for advising all students, there are often knowledge gaps for counseling practices that specifically address the needs of these student populations. Exemplar districts were working to close equity gaps in A–G achievement, including exploring ways that counseling practices could better support BIPOC students, SWDs, and ELs in particular. Not only did counselors implement the same best practices in advising across populations, but they also employed culturally and linguistically inclusive practices.

District strategies

Personalize counseling practices. Counselors in exemplar districts implemented personalized counseling practices through structures that fostered trusting relationships with students. Counselors got to know students and their families well, knew their college and career plans, and found ways to maintain frequent advising contacts during the school year.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Sanger High School placed students in a cohort model so that they worked with the same counselor for 4 years.
- Val Verde USD counselors conducted at least two or three individual meetings with students and parents each year, especially when planning for college.
- To provide peer/near-peer A–G encouragement, Natomas USD high schools used peer mentors and San Francisco USD hired college ambassadors.
- Covina-Valley USD counselors continued to communicate with and advise students when they enrolled in college.

Develop EL and SWD student-advising practices. While counselors employed similar strategies with ELs and SWDs as they did with other students in terms of reviewing A–G requirements and course planning, they also targeted their advising to include additional encouragement, coordination with other staff, and navigation of course requirements.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Counselors carefully reviewed international transcripts and supported students in navigating English and English language development (ELD) courses for A–G (San Francisco USD); provided information on additional credit, credit-recovery, and dual enrollment options (Sanger USD); and provided newcomer resources as well as A–G information resources in multiple languages (Oakland USD).
- Counselors collaborated with case managers to develop and monitor college plans for SWDs (Natomas USD), and they worked with teachers to ensure greater inclusion and co-teaching models (Arcadia and San Francisco USDs).

Institute antiracist and inclusive counseling practices. Some counselors discussed practices framed around antiracist and culture-, gender-, and language-inclusive frameworks. Schools structured opportunities for teachers to address the root causes of racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in A–G enrollment and completion, including addressing mindsets and expectations for BIPOC students, analyzing disaggregated A–G course data, and examining cultural and linguistic factors affecting students' A–G achievement.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Through professional learning communities and professional development, Sanger USD administrators spent several years shifting adult mindsets and expectations for students of color with regard to the elimination of remedial courses and students' ability to excel in college prep, Honors, and AP courses.
- Counselors in Oakland USD attended districtwide planning meetings with an antiracism lens, such as examinations of access to A–G courses, teacher mindsets regarding BIPOC students, grading patterns, and analysis of disaggregated data. Oakland High School also partnered with 100% College Prep, a nonprofit supporting the school's Black students with college planning and applications.

Planning questions for districts

- In your district, are there gaps in BIPOC, EL and SWD students' understanding of A–G requirements? If so, what are they? How are you addressing these gaps?
- What systems barriers may be contributing to BIPOC, EL and SWD students' A–G achievement?
- How does your district support cultural and linguistic inclusion practices among counselors?

Spotlight Practice: Whittier Union High School District

Whittier Union HSD received many recognitions for its college-readiness efforts, including for its progress in closing the equity gap in AP achievement among underrepresented students. In 2020, the College Board recognized Santa Fe High School and Whittier High School with the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award (Figure 6). Teachers and counselors at both schools actively recruited and supported female students in AP Computer Science courses.

Figure 6. College Board Recognition for AP Program Diversity, Whittier Union High School District

Whittier Union Schools Recognized by College Board for Diversity in Advanced Placement Program

The College Board has honored two Whittier Union high schools for expanding young women's access to Advanced Placement (AP) Computer Science classes, recognizing Santa Fe and Whittier high schools with its 2020 AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award.

Santa Fe and Whittier received the award for fostering equal gender representation in AP Computer Science Principles (CSP) during the 2019-20 school year. The schools are two of 1,119 high school campuses across the United States recognized by the College Board.

"While computer science is traditionally a male-dominated field, Santa Fe is breaking the mold with a flourishing female interest in all things computer," Santa Fe computer science teacher Monica Dixon said. "We are committed to opening doors for all students, but especially where they may have been closed before."

Whittier High has offered AP CSP since the 2017-18 school year, while Santa Fe High has offered it since the 2018-19 school year.

"Diversity in computer science is important because we need all different sorts of minds learning, creating and developing new ideas," Whittier High computer science teacher Dan Whittington said. "As women join the computer science world, it inspires more female students to study it. We want to see people with different ideas take their computer science expertise and apply it to their field of interest."

Santa Fe and Whittier instructors and counselors work hard to recruit female students for computer science courses, providing access to role models, including software engineers and other prominent industry leaders, emphasizing that computer science education opens the door to an expanded field of career opportunities.

"AP CSP is more accessible than traditional computer science courses, encouraging the enrollment of underrepresented students and providing good preparation for more advanced courses," Santa Fe High computer science teacher Benjamin Balarie said. "At Santa Fe, the enrollment is due to a combination of direct recruitment efforts, counselor recommendations and student word of mouth."

Santa Fe began offering AP Computer Science A, an advanced level course that focuses on coding, since 2019.

"Whittier Union continues to champion equity in education, providing underrepresented students with the support and resources they need to achieve their higher education goals and dream careers," Superintendent Martin J. Plourde said. "Congratulations to Santa Fe and Whittier for their College Board recognition. The schools are setting a high bar of success for the entire District."

Course-Scheduling Challenges and Strategies

Even when districts expand A–G course offerings, some students—especially students who are BIPOC, ELs, and SWDs—may not be equitably placed in those courses. Districts' scheduling policies may unintentionally maintain the status quo unless leaders explicitly address scheduling and placement challenges. Course scheduling is an often-overlooked component of a school's approach to college readiness but is central to ensuring equitable access to a rigorous sequence of college prep courses. Study districts described key processes related to master scheduling, course-enrollment policies, and credit-recovery opportunities.

Challenge: How Can Schools Approach Master Scheduling in Ways That Ensure Equitable Access to A–G Courses?

> *If a school shows me how they seat their master schedule, I'll show them what's most important to them. It's blindingly obvious. … You have to have a blank slate, and you have to seat the classes based on what the kids need … and not just things like teacher conferences.*—Covina-Valley USD administrator

> *Everything is student driven. Our entire master schedule is built by student choice, and that changes from year to year. … No school should ever offer courses because a teacher wants it. It needs to [be] because students want it and there's enough demand.*—Arcadia USD administrator

Master scheduling of courses (including facilitating a school's course offerings, teacher assignments, and instructional time) can be a complex process that is not often explicitly examined when considering improvements in A–G completion rates. Consequently, there are gaps in knowledge of how school leaders innovate master scheduling processes to ensure equitable access to college prep courses. A common challenge that schools in this study faced when completing their master schedules was ensuring that students had equal opportunities to enroll in A–G courses, including Honors and AP courses, while offering courses that were aligned to student interests and needs.

District strategies

Offer student-centered courses. Some exemplar districts not only gathered students' course requests but also used students' interests to drive course offerings. Rather than rolling over master schedules from one year to the next, these schools created a new schedule each year and used student feedback and interests to determine which courses to offer. Although doing this meant changes in teacher assignments, had resource implications for materials, and led to shifts in course continuity, administrators reported that it also increased course engagement among students.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Arcadia High School's course schedule was based entirely on student interests, and staff provided a program-adjustment month during which students explored different courses, attended open workshops, and asked questions before finalizing their course schedules.
- When seniors expressed interest in certain college courses, Nuview Early Bridge High School leaders worked with their partner community colleges to determine if these classes could be offered.

Prioritize ELs and SWDs during master scheduling. While districts have different programs to consider when conducting master scheduling, many exemplar districts prioritized ELs and SWDs during these processes. Many schools scheduled ELs and SWDs before other students to ensure that these students were more likely to obtain needed classes and experience fewer scheduling conflicts.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- In Natomas USD, ELD was structured as a cluster model with core English classes to maximize opportunities to earn English credits, while SWDs were increasingly programmed into co-teaching and inclusion programs to keep them A–G eligible.
- Sanger and Val Verde USD counselors worked with case managers to ensure that SWDs were programmed in alignment with their Individualized Education Program goals.

Implement flexible course scheduling. A key component of many study districts' A–G reform was flexible course scheduling. Districts reported that changes in their bell schedules fundamentally shifted access to A–G courses. Flexible scheduling was linked to increases in the number of A–G courses and sections, electives, and credit-recovery options.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Covina-Valley USD implemented a seven-period day to increase A–G offerings, EL course options, credit recovery, and teacher conferences.
- Santa Fe and Pioneer High Schools in Whittier Union HSD implemented a unique bell schedule with a rotating block of 20 minutes at the end of every course to allow for direct interventions with students not passing their A–G courses.
- High schools in Oakland implemented a seven- or eight-period day and alternating block scheduling to offer more A–G options and embedded credit-recovery programming.

Provide open access to courses. Some study schools enacted an open-access policy that allowed all students to enroll in any course offered, including Honors and AP courses. These policies were central to ensuring that BIPOC students in particular could access college prep courses where they have been underrepresented. Districts provided guidance on course selection but ultimately left enrollment decisions up to students and their parents.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Whittier Union HSD established an open-access policy for all courses, including dual enrollment courses, and did not experience any increases in D/F grade rates.
- As part of its open-access policy, Covina-Valley USD removed all prerequisites, assessments, and essays needed to enroll in upper-level classes.

Planning questions for districts

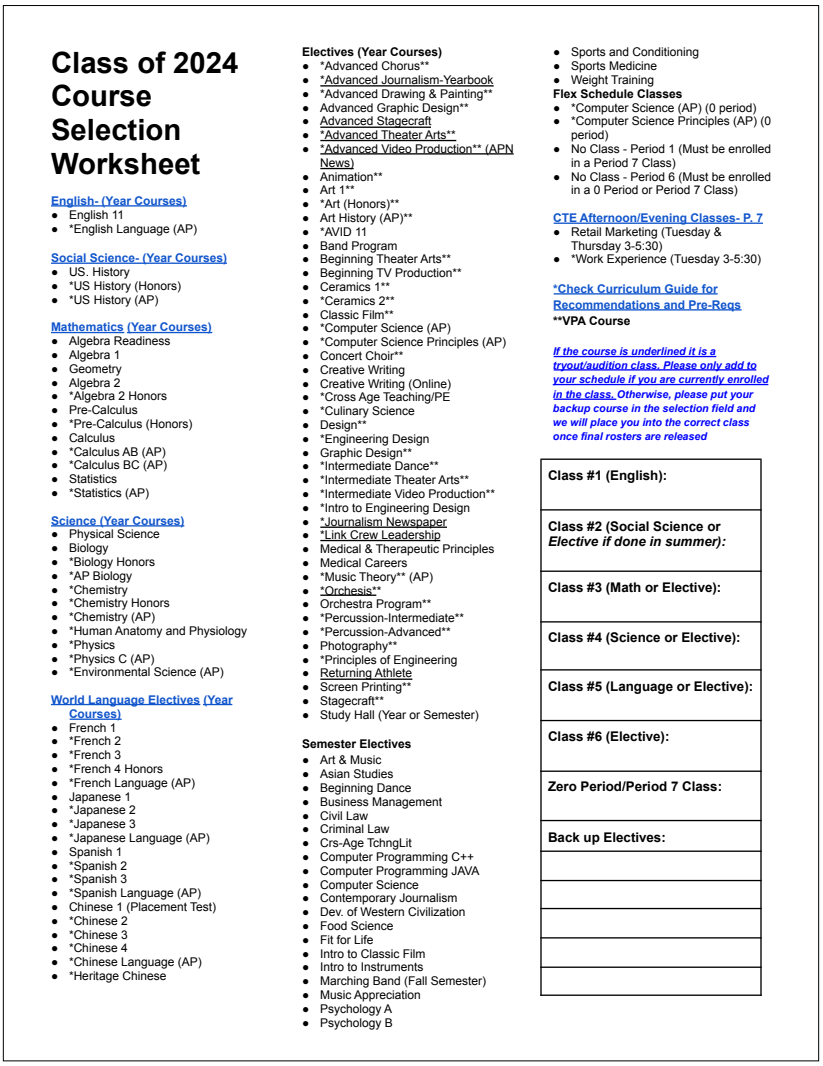
- How can student choice and feedback be amplified to inform course offerings?
- Are there opportunities to create flexible bell schedules to allow for more A–G course options?
- What barriers stand in the way of alternative schedules like seven-period days or block scheduling?
- Are there open-access policies for all courses offered? If not, what have been the challenges in implementing these policies?

Spotlight Practice: Arcadia Unified School District

Arcadia High School annually gathered students' feedback on the course offerings they were interested in pursuing. In Phase 1 of the Course Selection Information process (Figure 7), counselors held course-selection workshops during English classes. Starting in mid-March, students had opportunities to explore these courses, ask questions, and learn about their instructors during a monthlong drop-in window. Finally, students confirmed their course selections using the Course Selection Worksheet (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Course Selection Information Process, Arcadia Unified School District

Figure 8. Course Selection Worksheet, Arcadia Unified School District



Class of 2024 Course Selection Worksheet

English- (Year Courses)
- English 11
- *English Language (AP)

Social Science- (Year Courses)
- US. History
- *US History (Honors)
- *US History (AP)

Mathematics (Year Courses)
- Algebra Readiness
- Algebra 1
- Geometry
- Algebra 2
- *Algebra 2 Honors
- Pre-Calculus
- *Pre-Calculus (Honors)
- Calculus
- *Calculus AB (AP)
- *Calculus BC (AP)
- Statistics
- *Statistics (AP)

Science (Year Courses)
- Physical Science
- Biology
- *Biology Honors
- *AP Biology
- *Chemistry
- *Chemistry Honors
- *Chemistry (AP)
- *Human Anatomy and Physiology
- *Physics
- *Physics C (AP)
- *Environmental Science (AP)

World Language Electives (Year Courses)
- French 1
- *French 2
- *French 3
- *French 4 Honors
- *French Language (AP)
- Japanese 1
- *Japanese 2
- *Japanese 3
- *Japanese Language (AP)
- Spanish 1
- *Spanish 2
- *Spanish 3
- *Spanish Language (AP)
- Chinese 1 (Placement Test)
- *Chinese 2
- *Chinese 3
- *Chinese 4
- *Chinese Language (AP)
- *Heritage Chinese

Electives (Year Courses)
- *Advanced Chorus**
- *Advanced Journalism-Yearbook
- *Advanced Drawing & Painting**
- Advanced Graphic Design**
- Advanced Stagecraft
- *Advanced Theater Arts**
- *Advanced Video Production** (APN News)
- Animation**
- Art 1**
- *Art (Honors)**
- Art History (AP)**
- *AVID 11
- Band Program
- Beginning Theater Arts**
- Beginning TV Production**
- Ceramics 1**
- *Ceramics 2**
- Classic Film**
- *Computer Science (AP)
- *Computer Science Principles (AP)
- Concert Choir**
- Creative Writing
- Creative Writing (Online)
- *Cross Age Teaching/PE
- *Culinary Science
- Design**
- *Engineering Design
- Graphic Design**
- *Intermediate Dance**
- *Intermediate Theater Arts**
- *Intermediate Video Production**
- *Intro to Engineering Design
- *Journalism Newspaper
- *Link Crew Leadership
- Medical & Therapeutic Principles
- Medical Careers
- *Music Theory** (AP)
- *Orchesis**
- Orchestra Program**
- *Percussion-Intermediate**
- *Percussion-Advanced**
- Photography**
- *Principles of Engineering
- Returning Athlete
- Screen Printing**
- Stagecraft**
- Study Hall (Year or Semester)

Semester Electives
- Art & Music
- Asian Studies
- Beginning Dance
- Business Management
- Civil Law
- Criminal Law
- Crs-Age TchngLit
- Computer Programming C++
- Computer Programming JAVA
- Computer Science
- Contemporary Journalism
- Dev. of Western Civilization
- Food Science
- Fit for Life
- Intro to Classic Film
- Intro to Instruments
- Marching Band (Fall Semester)
- Music Appreciation
- Psychology A
- Psychology B
- Sports and Conditioning
- Sports Medicine
- Weight Training

Flex Schedule Classes
- *Computer Science (AP) (0 period)
- *Computer Science Principles (AP) (0 period)
- No Class - Period 1 (Must be enrolled in a Period 7 Class)
- No Class - Period 6 (Must be enrolled in a 0 Period or Period 7 Class)

CTE Afternoon/Evening Classes- P. 7
- Retail Marketing (Tuesday & Thursday 3-5:30)
- *Work Experience (Tuesday 3-5:30)

*Check Curriculum Guide for Recommendations and Pre-Reqs

****VPA Course**

If the course is underlined it is a tryout/audition class. Please only add to your schedule if you are currently enrolled in the class. Otherwise, please put your backup course in the selection field and we will place you into the correct class once final rosters are released

Class #1 (English):
Class #2 (Social Science or *Elective if done in summer):*
Class #3 (Math or Elective):
Class #4 (Science or Elective):
Class #5 (Language or Elective):
Class #6 (Elective):
Zero Period/Period 7 Class:
Back up Electives:

Spotlight Practice: Covina-Valley Unified School District

To increase equitable access to Honors and AP courses, Covina-Valley USD eliminated course prerequisites and assessments. In the district's Student Handbook (Figure 9), administrators and counselors fostered awareness of the level of rigor incorporated into AP courses and encouraged students to reflect on the motivation, study skills, responsibility levels, and other dispositions needed to succeed. Those who indicated such readiness were able to enroll in any Honors or AP course.

Figure 9. Course Prerequisites and Assessments, Student Handbook, Covina-Valley Unified School District

COVINA-VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Are you ready to take an honors or advanced placement course?
The curriculum is similar to the college preparatory course, but it is more rigorous. Read through the following and if this describes you and you meet the prerequisites for the course, then you are ready to take an honors or AP course. Your teachers, counselor and parents/guardians are good resources for you in making the decision to take an honors or AP course.

- ☐ I am a self-starter. I do not need to be prodded to do my work, since I am interested in the subject matter and want to excel. The grade is not the primary motivation for my learning.
- ☐ I have consistent attendance, with few absences or tardies.
- ☐ I do all assigned work and turn it in on time.
- ☐ My work is organized and I manage my time and organize my material.
- ☐ I enjoy learning the subject.
- ☐ I can read 20 pages of literature per night without sacrificing homework from other classes.
- ☐ I am able to work both independently and in groups. When working on a group assignment, I cooperate and I am a contributing member of the group.
- ☐ I have above average writing skills and I am knowledgeable in the rules of standard written English.
- ☐ I respond positively to constructive guidance.
- ☐ I want to be in an advanced level course.
- ☐ I have demonstrated English language writing and reading skills in the 9oth percentile or above.
- ☐ I have the maturity of a high school honors level student.
- ☐ I am responsible and accept the consequences of my actions without trying to blame others.
- ☐ I am accepting of the differences of others, welcome the input of others in class discussions and group work, and I freely give positive input in class discussions and group work.

Specialized Academic Instruction (SAI)
All special education students are mainstreamed into the general education environment to the extent appropriate. Students identified through the Individualized Education Program process will receive accommodations and modifications to the general education curriculum. Students identified through the IEP for SAI services will receive instruction that is more explicit, more intensive and more supportive than general education instruction. Students may be grouped by ability and grade in subject specific classes with a specially trained teacher or co-teacher. Paraprofessionals may be utilized to maximize small group instruction.

C-VUSD High School and Post High School Planning Guide 8

Challenge: How Can Schools Engage Students in Credit Recovery to Complete the A–G Sequence?

> *There were students that didn't have a chance to do credit recovery. … Basically, you're tapping out that you're going to community college, which is not a bad option if that's what you choose to do. But you could … be a ninth grader and not even know that you weren't going to have access each step along the way. There is always a spot where some educator, administrator, a counselor, teachers, [or] a department chair controlled allocations of courses.*—Natomas USD administrator

Students who are unsuccessful in A–G-approved courses during their first attempt need access to viable credit-recovery programs. Unfortunately, traditional credit-recovery programs, such as night school or summer school, may fail to meet the needs of some students. The study districts implemented innovative credit-recovery programs with more options in terms of time, platforms, and learning supports.

District strategies

Extend time options for credit recovery. Schools across study districts adopted different time options to engage students in credit-recovery programs. Districts reported higher attendance and completion of programs that embedded credit recovery during the school day or focused on asynchronous learning with teacher supports.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Some districts and schools (e.g., Covina-Valley, Oakland, and Sanger USDs) offered credit recovery within the school day during a zero period or seventh period.
- Schools (such as Sanger High School) employed online credit-recovery programs like Edgenuity where students could complete assignments asynchronously.
- Val Verde USD facilitated online credit recovery in which students completed their activities independently but also met with a teacher twice a week via Zoom.

Develop creative credit-recovery programming. Exemplar districts developed creative programs, policies, and support roles to help students with credit recovery. These strategies included short-term programs and monitoring activities that shifted credit recovery from independent student experiences to supported, manageable activities designed for recovering multiple credits each year.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Fremont High School in Oakland USD created its mastery-based Boost model for credit recovery where students earned a 10 percent grade increase during a 6-week program embedded during the school day.
- Sanger High School designated a Credit Recovery Advocate role who had a flexible schedule and supported students during the day and after school.

Institute proactive policies for credit recovery. Exemplar districts closely monitored students' performance in A–G courses and implemented policies to accelerate enrollment in credit recovery. Districts noted that timely attention to credit recovery was essential to ensuring that students didn't accumulate several courses that needed repeating, which could be discouraging by the time students reached their junior or senior years.

The following are examples of districts' practices:

- Sanger USD counselors monitored students' credit-recovery progress on a weekly basis.
- Oakland USD implemented an equity-based framing around master scheduling and credit recovery. Administrators, teachers, and counselors routinely examined root causes for grades in courses, monitored who showed up to credit recovery, and analyzed performance in credit recovery by demographic groups.
- In Whittier Union HSD, students were proactively scheduled into courses they previously failed so that they could recoup credit and get back on track to complete A–G requirements.

Planning questions for districts

- What successes and challenges with credit recovery has your district experienced?
- What opportunities do students have to enroll in credit recovery in ninth and tenth grades?
- How is performance in credit recovery monitored and supported? What equity gaps exist in credit-recovery performance?

Spotlight Practice: Oakland Unified School District

Fremont High School in Oakland USD developed a unique mastery-based credit-recovery program called Boost (Figure 10). Teachers in each department agreed on the curricular content that needed to be mastered to demonstrate a 10 percent grade boost. Students completed these requirements within a 6-week program that was embedded during the school day. Because of the short time frame, students had the opportunity to recover credits from multiple courses during the school year.

Figure 10. Credit Recovery Plan, Fremont High School, Oakland Unified School District

FREMONT HIGH SCHOOL

Credit Recovery Plan
2021-22 School Year

For the 2021-22 school year, we will budget for a credit recovery course for all 4 core content areas (math, science, English, social studies). Math, science, and social studies credit will be recovered through 7th period credit recovery class, or through independent study with a Fremont teacher.

Earning credit by re-taking an academic class, meaning going into the original class:

- Students who never took the class before will be prioritized to re-take the course
- Where there is space in math, science, and social studies sections, students will re-take a class if they failed it previously as one of their 7 academic classes.

Credit Recovery - Grade Boost for math, science, history and English classes:

- Built into the 7th period credit recovery class or held through an independent study format with Fremont at an alternative time
- Priority placement goes to students who are trying to become a-g eligible (boosting a "D" to a "C" from a previous class/year)
- A student can utilize the 7th period credit recovery class to boost a previous F to a D, if this is the only way they can recover all credits needed to graduate on time
- Students can earn multiple grade boosts (i.e raise an "F" to a "C") during a quarter if they complete multiple rounds of the benchmarks set by each department for a single (10%) grade boost
- Students will be dropped if they are not attending/participating in credit recovery opportunities when the teacher notifies counselor(s) to revisit graduation plan with family

Credit Recovery - Grade Boost benchmarks by department: Grade changes after successful completion of grade boost deliverables to be documented through this form

1. Math (mainly Algebra I and Geometry): Students earn 1 grade boost (10%) by completing the following:
   - Pass summative test that demonstrates key skills/concepts for algebra or geometry (test is used as diagnostic, if students pass it at any point they earn the grade boost)
   - Complete three units worth of material that leads up to the summative test. For each unit students:
     i. Complete material provided by teacher
     ii. Pass a quiz to demonstrate mastery of that content
2. Science (mainly biology, physiology and chemistry): Students earn 1 grade boost (10%) by completing the following:
   - **Biology Expectations**: The teacher will be responsible for notifying the student of expectations based on their prior grade in the course.

FREMONT HIGH SCHOOL

Credit Recovery Plan
2021-22 School Year

     i. Students complete 1 week of introductory assignments ***and 4 weeks of content assignments/assessments*** (topics at the discretion of the teacher) in order to raise grade approximately 10%
     ii. Students complete 1 week of introductory assignments ***and 6 weeks of content assignments/assessments*** (topics at the discretion of teacher) in order to raise grade approximately 20%.
3. History (mainly World and U.S. History): Students earn 1- grade boost (10%) by completing either of the following:
   - Students complete an argumentative essay that uses primary sources at their pace with support from the teacher. Essays are scored using the District-Wide History Writing Task that is SBAC aligned.
     i. When students have submitted an essay that reflects the desired goal and demonstrated an understanding of the subject matter they have met expectations for grade boost. The essay may be revised with the support of the teacher and resubmitted.
   - Students complete one topic per week, with assignments for each topic. The student is expected to turn in all assignments with a satisfactory grade to complete the grade boost.

Credit Recovery - Rotations: Each rotation is 6 weeks long.

1. **Completed work early:**: If a student earns a boost in less than a 6 week marking period the teacher can submit a grade change form and the student can then have No Class until the next rotation begins, at the start of the next marking period.
2. **Work not completed after 6 weeks**: If a student has space in their schedule they can remain in the class for the next rotation. If a student does not have space in their schedule (needs more rotations to be eligible to graduate) the teacher should coordinate with the student on independent study to complete the course work.
3. **Week 3 Progress Report**: We will ask teachers at the halfway point of each marking period to make sure that we are all on the same page about student progress. This is especially important for students that need multiple rotations of credit recovery per semester to stay on-track.

Credit Recovery - Grade Reporting: Teachers will submit grades in two places to ensure documentation of grade boost:

1. **Grade Change Form**: Credit Recovery is a grade change from a previous grade. To properly capture the completion of the boost teachers must submit the grade change form.
2. **AERIES Entry:** Because students are on rosters for a marking period, attendance and grading must occur.. Marking period grades are not reflected on transcripts so the Grade Change Form is how the grade change is documented. .In AERIES please enter CR or

Conclusion

This Resource Guide describes strategies and approaches of exemplar school districts for developing systems and policies to advance A–G achievement. Even though the nine districts studied in this project surpassed the statewide A–G completion rate, there is still room for learning and improvement. Some districts continue to experience equity gaps in A–G enrollment and completion, especially with Honors, AP, and dual enrollment courses. Nonetheless, the A–G restructuring of these districts point to several policy and practice recommendations that hold promise for improving schools' A–G access and completion rates.

As this Resource Guide spotlights, California districts should consider improvements in local policies and systems to address the challenges that surfaced in this study, such as the following:

- conduct A–G access and completion equity audits;
- revamp A–G course offerings and sequences to address gatekeeper courses;

- centralize processes for submitting and updating A–G course offerings for approval by UCOP;
- institute open-access policies for A–G courses, including Honors and AP courses;
- develop flexible bell schedules, such as seven- or eight-period days and block schedules;
- use common tools for monitoring A–G progress;
- offer more options for credit recovery, including programs embedded in the school day; and
- increase funding for counselors, especially BIPOC and bilingual counselors.

Our hope is that the strategies described in this guide will be viewed not as cookie-cutter solutions that are appropriate for every district but rather as approaches to learn about, debate, adjust, and consider within the context of a district's particular college-readiness needs.

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