

# SECTION II – IDEAS FOR YOUR EVENT

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## Ideas for Celebrating College Decision Day

College Decision Day will look different at each high school. It is important to plan an event that fits the needs of your students and community. During the planning and implementation stages of your College Decision Day event, it is very important to keep your school staff apprised of the event schedule. Work with members of your school’s staff to identify the most effective schedule possible for your specific high school.

**Celebrate your seniors and their families, and acknowledge their decision to enroll in college.**

- *Create a “College Wall.”* Seniors write the names of the college where they plan to attend on banners or strips of construction paper to hang in a main hallway. Utilize art teachers (if available) for additional promotional materials to create a “college-going culture” on the walls of your school.
- *Announcements.* Make announcements over the school audio/video system to acknowledge students who decided to enroll and share where they will be going to college.
- *Assembly.* Host an all-school assembly to celebrate the postsecondary accomplishments of each of your seniors and their families. This event assembly could be an add-on to an already established school event or a stand-alone assembly. Make sure to invite students of all grade levels to participate.
  - *Consider giving prizes or “SWAG”:* Ideas might include a calculator, tablet, I-pod, college survival kit, pencils, flags, t-shirts
  - *Serve cake or cupcakes* or other refreshments
- *Community Event or Fair.* Host an afterschool community-wide picnic or celebration. This may require a larger budget, but will involve more community members and students of all ages.
  - *Food:* Pizza and BBQ are always a hit.
  - *Entertainment:* Consider a DJ or local band, plan a flash mob, or provide games for all ages.
- *Guest speakers.* Whether you host a school assembly or a community event, invite high school alumni, elected officials, college admissions and financial aid representatives, local business leaders and parents to congratulate the students on their decision to go to college and to emphasize, from personal experience, the importance of college.
- *Interviews.* Interview seniors about their college plans and write articles for local newspapers and the school newspaper. Incorporate quotes from seniors in public service announcements for local radio, intercom/homeroom announcements, or ads in the school newspaper. Or, create a special section in the school newspaper that gives the names of seniors and their selected college.



## College Decision Day SC

- *College gear.* Encourage students and school staff to wear college t-shirts on the day of your event and/or a particular day of the week.
- *Social media.* As students bring in evidence of their postsecondary plans in the form of a college acceptance letter, military orders, or a similar offer letter, take pictures of the students with those letters/forms and post it through the school's social media channels using the hashtag: #CollegeDecisionDay, and #ReachHigher.
- *Involve teachers and staff.* During College Decision Day, ask teachers to share their college experience, wear their alma mater gear and post signs on classroom doors showing where they went to college. Promote the idea of college, not a specific school.

### **Provide early awareness of the steps needed to enroll in college for younger students and families.**

- *Workshops.* Provide workshops to younger students and their families.
  - Possible topics: decision making, learning styles, study habits, the importance of GPA and high school course selection, college test prep, how to get help with grades and test prep, essay writing, applying to college, college admission criteria, paying for college, "I'm admitted – now what?", etc.
- *College spotlight.* In the months or weeks leading up to College Decision Day, choose a different college or university to feature in each morning's announcements. Play the school's fight song. Ask trivia questions and award prizes for correct answers.
- *Adopt-a-College.* Each classroom can "adopt" a college to represent for the rest of year. This can be the teacher's alma mater or the class may select a college/university. Students can decorate the classroom door with the college/university colors and logo.

### **Conduct one-on-one or classroom visits with seniors and ask students if they have:**

- Applied to college?
- Been admitted to college?
- Officially notified the college or university that they will enroll?
- Completed the FAFSA?

### **Gather students' college choices in advance. Some schools require seniors to bring evidence of their postsecondary plans in the form of a college acceptance letter, military orders, or similar offer letter.**

- *Day of event:* The simplest and quickest way to ensure you have the college decision for each student is by handing the student a blank note card a few minutes before the event begins. Ask each student to write down their name and selected college. This method is sometimes used during graduation ceremonies.