







# Indicators of School Quality

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# Indicators of School Quality

Springpoint's work is grounded in an unwavering belief that all young people - regardless of environment or background - can find success in high school, college, and beyond. We believe the job of high school is to ensure a high quality education for all students that encompasses a broad vision of student success. And yet many high schools have failed to provide all young people with the education they deserve, instead contributing to the systems of oppression that limit opportunities for students from historically marginalized groups. We must do high school differently.

Doing high school differently means designing schools grounded in a deep understanding of the students served and committing to orienting all model elements around those students. Springpoint has identified seven indicators of school quality that create a high quality, student-centered learning environment. These seven indicators are grounded in the tenets of positive youth development theory, which recognizes that young people's ability to achieve academic success is interrelated with their success in achieving key developmental outcomes of social and emotional learning and identity formation. They highlight what positive youth development looks like in practice when schools have the structures, teaching strategies, learning experiences, and supports in place that intentionally reinforce a deep understanding of and commitment to students.

Springpoint believes the following tenets of positive youth development, when practiced by the school community consistently, enable the personal development necessary for students to achieve and excel academically.

- ④ **Students need caring, trusting, and supportive relationships with adults and with their peers.**
- ④ **Students need and respond to high expectations.**
- ④ **Students need authentic opportunities to contribute.**
- ④ **Students need rigorous learning experiences that intentionally engage their interests, prepare them for success beyond high school, and include feedback that enables them to succeed and reflect.**



In order to design schools that disrupt systems of inequality and directly respond to students' needs, these youth development tenets must be undergirded by equity practices. In schools that are designed with positive youth development at the core, all students are encouraged to assess their circumstances, understand existing disparities, shape their identities, and strengthen their sense of agency. These practices support adolescent development and create an environment where deep, meaningful learning can flourish. However, without clearly developed systems in place for the school community to deeply engage with the systemic inequities that students encounter daily, efforts to build authentic relationships and relevant learning experiences for students or to support students in building their own identities cannot take root in the school. This work also requires structures to enable adults to examine their own implicit biases, build intercultural competence, and understand the depth of equity that exists so that they may design systems and experiences for students that ensure a high quality education for all young people measured through a broad vision of student success.

## About this Framework

This document provides a framework, including a set of definitions for each of the components of the seven indicators of school quality in practice. The framework, which is a living document, is intended to help guide educators who are designing and operating school models that will achieve a community's shared vision of student success. Positive youth development and educational equity—which should underpin all systems, structures, and practices in a school—are named across all seven indicators because these must exist holistically in order to create learning environments where all students thrive.

The indicators are both concrete, to help educators build a strong vision of excellence, and broad, to allow for customized implementation suited to the unique realities of students and communities. We do not believe there is a “one-size-fits-all” approach to achieving an effective, coherent school model that serves students well.

Last, the indicators are comprehensive and aspirational by design. While school designers and practitioners will likely want to strive for exemplary expressions of these practices, it is important to recognize that the journey to becoming an excellent school takes years of thoughtful practice and iteration. We hope they support designers in building a vision of excellence and informing school practice along the way.

# A Note About Equity Commitment & Practices



Given the imperative of ensuring equity and justice for all members of an educational community, this framework attempts to holistically capture the expression of school-based equity practices. At schools that prioritize equity as a schoolwide value held by all stakeholders, these equity practices are integral to all systems and structures. These schools develop a cycle of assessing learner outcomes to identify and address inequities, focusing on historically marginalized groups. As a result, all learners experience the benefits of the practice, and the school actively seeks to change any practices that negatively impact any learner or group of learners.

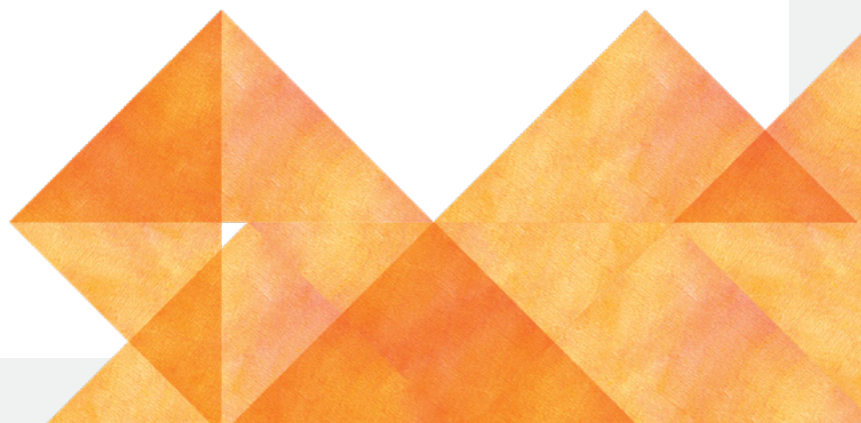
Because we believe that every young person can achieve at high-levels, when there are differences in outcomes based on demographics, this gives us important information; it tells us that there are ways that our schools and the systems within are failing certain populations. This information can not only fuel our sense of outrage and conviction, but push us to better understand the root causes of why. In our work

with schools, we have found that the following are common places where inequities are perpetuated and amplified. As such, these are often good places to look and learn more.

- ④ **Mission & Values.** A school's mission and values are a litmus test for decision-making and guide the everyday interactions that make up a student's experience in a school. Equity must be an explicit, prioritized schoolwide value that is practiced regularly and embedded into a school's systems and structures in order to meaningfully impact students' experiences and outcomes. This includes creating structures that enable adults to examine their own implicit biases, build intercultural competence, and understand what levels of equity exist in their school and community so that they may design systems and experiences for students that ensure a high-quality education for all young people measured through a broad vision of student success.

- ⊗ **High Expectations.** A strengths-based approach to adolescent development and academic achievement is a key pillar of equity practices. Research shows that students are more likely to successfully embrace and complete challenging learning opportunities when they believe they are capable of succeeding and understand what effort it will take to achieve mastery. Adults support this growth mindset by fostering caring relationships, consistently communicating clear, high expectations for all students, and by providing appropriate scaffolds and supports.
- ⊗ **Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices.** Effective culturally responsive teaching practices ensure students develop independent learning skills, feel seen and acknowledged in their classroom, build positive relationships with their teacher and their peers, achieve academically, and develop a critical consciousness about the world we live in.
- ⊗ **Data Practices.** Data paints a picture of a school's—and each individual student's—progress. Understanding who is and is not being served by a school's systems and practices requires regular reflection on both qualitative and quantitative data. Evolving to ensure equitable outcomes for students also requires mechanisms for changing a school's approach based on what the data reveals.

Additionally, throughout the framework, the language of “historically marginalized groups” is used to allow for flexibility to apply to a range of contexts and ensure equity-based responses. For example, schools might focus on equity responses such as making sure that Black boys and young men are not disproportionately subjected to disciplinary action; girls and young women are included in upper-level STEM courses; and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) learners, learners with disabilities, and English language learners are included in advanced classes. Because some marginalized groups may not be disaggregated in formal/standardized data sets, such as LGBTQIA+ identities, and because equity practices must be responsive to the lived experiences of the students in a school, communities should define for themselves what inclusion and equity mean in their school and regularly revisit this definition to ensure representation, access, and success for all students.



# The Seven Indicators of School Quality.



## 1. Coherent Mission

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students have a clearly defined mission that is rooted in an unwavering belief in the potential of all students and that is deeply understood by and resonant for all stakeholders.

- a. Positive Youth Development
- b. Equity at the Center
- c. Shared Mission
- d. Coherence
- e. Goal-Setting



## 2. Positive School and Classroom Culture

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students ensure that students are well known, respected, and part of a community that radiates affirmation and a sense of what's possible for young people.

- a. Positive Relationships
- b. Routines and Rituals
- c. Shared Values and Norms
- d. Assets-based Identity Formation



## 3. Rigorous and Purposeful Learning Experiences

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students leverage their understanding that students thrive when their education is rigorous, relevant, and clearly connected to the development of college and career readiness competencies.

- a. Rigor
- b. Purpose
- c. Progression, Transparency, and Feedback
- d. Personalization



## 4. Academic Systems

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students are guided by a schoolwide, mission-aligned, instructional vision that articulates how learning should happen and strategically informs adult development.

- a. Instructional Model
- b. Curriculum and Standards
- c. Systems to Support Strong Instruction
- d. Graduation Pathways



## 5. Student Supports

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students ensure that students have a comprehensive set of supports, resources, and opportunities to advance along a pathway to graduation.

- a. Transparency of Student Performance
- b. Primary Person
- c. Collaborative Systems to Support a Primary Person Model
- d. Student Agency
- e. Collaboration with Families and Student Supporters



## 6. College and Career Planning

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students ensure that every student has a clear and viable postsecondary path to college and career success that represents informed and authentic choice.

- a. Empowering Postsecondary Choices
- b. College and Career Learning Sequences
- c. Enrichment Experiences
- d. College Counseling



## 7. Strategic Development and Use of Resources

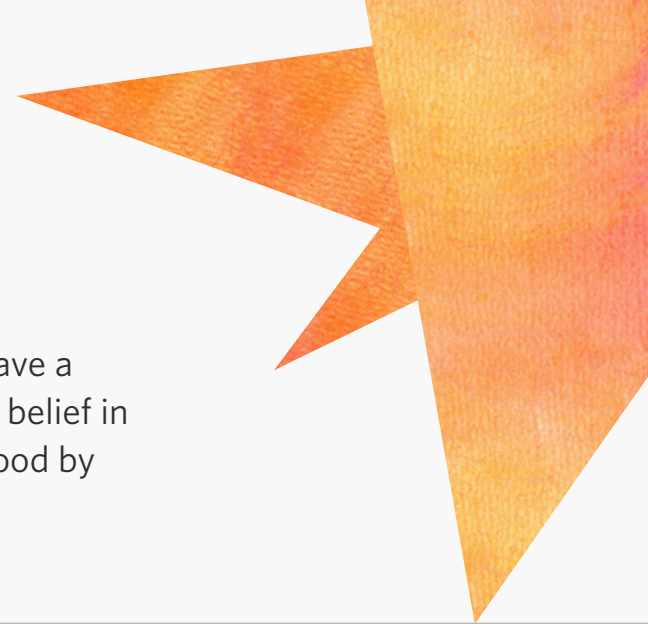
Secondary schools that effectively serve all students optimize people, time, and other resources and engage in constant iteration in order to meet a mission grounded in positive youth development.

- a. Human Capital
- b. Roles and Responsibilities
- c. Strategic Use of Time
- d. Community Partnerships
- e. Continuous Improvement



# 1. Coherent Mission

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students have a clearly defined mission that is rooted in an unwavering belief in the potential of all students and that is deeply understood by and resonant for all stakeholders.



## 1a. Positive Youth Development

### DEFINITION

The school mission is grounded in the tenets of positive youth development and explicitly articulates an unwavering belief in all students, especially the importance of high expectations for all.

### LOOK FORS

- ⊗ The school's mission is grounded in an unwavering belief in all students and as a result the tenets of positive youth development, especially high expectations for all, are consistently present.
- ⊗ Adult expectations for students (e.g., academic, college and career, etc.) are consistently monitored and insufficiently high expectations for any student or group of students is always or almost always addressed.

## 1b. Equity at the Center

### DEFINITION

Equity and anti-racism are mission priorities, and these values are operationalized throughout all of the school's systems and structures.

### LOOK FORS

- ⊗ All adults, through instructional practices and school systems and structures, enable each learner to be held to the same outcomes and provide equal opportunities for deeper learning to all learners.
- ⊗ An equity focus is incorporated into all school systems and strategies, and the school community consistently engages in reflection, self-assessment, and internal auditing to uncover and eliminate all inequities.



## 1c. Shared Mission

### DEFINITION

The mission is deeply understood and resonant with all stakeholders including administration, teachers, support staff, students, families, and key community members. There are authentic opportunities for a diverse array of stakeholder and student feedback, and the school community is able to see how feedback is being used to shape the path forward.

### LOOK FORS

- ⊗ All or almost all stakeholders (students, families, teachers, community members) understand the school's mission and are able to articulate how it resonates with them.
- ⊗ School structures consistently incorporate a diverse array of student voices into the school's work on mission alignment, goal-setting, and iteration. These structures consistently empower stakeholders to communicate productively across lines of difference and power, and they include mechanisms for ensuring no learner voices, such as those from historically marginalized groups, are excluded.
- ⊗ Feedback from stakeholders, particularly students, is consistently solicited and used to shift schoolwide practices to meaningfully support the school's mission.

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## 1d. Coherence

### DEFINITION

All decisions and changes are made with the mission as a litmus test.

### LOOK FORS

- ⊗ All or almost all of the school's systems, structures, and practices are aligned to the mission of the school, and the mission is consistently used as a litmus test for decisions.
- ⊗ Decisions are consistently made in a transparent way, and dissenting opinions are always acknowledged.
- ⊗ All stakeholders can articulate how decisions are made and their role in the decision-making process.

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## 1e. Goal-Setting

### DEFINITION

The school leader has articulated a concrete vision for how the mission will be met. The school community understands what the most important priorities are at all times and maintains clear goals and indicators to know if they are making sufficient progress in these areas.

### LOOK FORS

- ⊗ The school leader has articulated a specific set of priorities for the year that, when achieved, will move the community closer to achieving its mission and addressing any gaps in student outcomes. All or almost all of these priorities are tied to measurable end-of-year goals.
- ⊗ The school leader has developed a comprehensive plan for achieving these priorities and established systems and structures to consistently monitor progress as well as to adjust the plan as needed to achieve these goals.
- ⊗ Systems and structures are in place to consistently communicate the school's goals and progress to stakeholders, and as a result all or almost all stakeholders (students, families, teachers, community members) understand the school's goals, how these goals align to the mission, and how focusing on these goals will move the school closer to achieving its mission.



## 2. Positive School and Classroom Culture

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students ensure that students are well-known, respected, and part of a community that radiates affirmation and a sense of what's possible for young people.

### 2a. Positive Relationships

#### DEFINITION

The school actively seeks to build nurturing and trusting relationships with all students. Adults are accessible, supportive, and trustworthy. Student-adult and student-student relationships are characterized by mutual respect and serve as a key source of support for students in their creation and pursuit of academic and personal goals.

#### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ All or almost all students have several adults in the building who they trust and who help them meet their full potential.
- ⊗ All or almost all of the members of the school community show respect for one another by actively recognizing accomplishments and progress and by supporting one another to aim higher, rendering an overall trusting environment that enables risk-taking, personal growth, and eagerness to learn from mistakes.
- ⊗ Students indicate that they consistently feel supported by their relationships in achieving academic and personal goals and can cite examples of how this consistently happens.

### 2b. Routines and Rituals

#### DEFINITION

Institutional structures and rituals are leveraged to enable students and staff to develop a shared sense of identity and belonging as members of the school community. Structures and rituals are grounded in cultivating trust, building connections, and celebrating accomplishments and the community.

#### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ The school has strategically developed consistent routines and rituals (daily, weekly, quarterly, etc.) that successfully promote student voice and cultivate a sense of identity and belonging within the school community.
- ⊗ In all or almost all classrooms, rituals and routines foster students' understanding of the expectations and how to be successful. These rituals and routines reinforce belonging and growth mindset.
- ⊗ All or almost all stakeholders articulate a sense of shared identity and belonging to the school community.

## 2c. Shared Values and Norms

### DEFINITION

The community has a clear set of shared values that are understood, internalized, and upheld by students and staff. These values are aligned to the broader goal of fulfilling the tenets of positive youth development.

### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ The school has a set of shared values aligned to the five tenets of positive youth development to support students in reaching their full potential. These are understood, internalized, and upheld by all or almost all members of the community.
- ⊗ These norms and values engender a safe and inclusive environment that allows all or almost all members of the school community to feel safe, supported, and open to taking intellectual risks.
- ⊗ Students and adults always or almost always hold each other (student-student, adult-student, adult-adult) accountable to the shared values and norms of the school.

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## 2d. Assets-based Identity Formation

### DEFINITION

The school intentionally takes an assets-based approach in creating an environment that is inclusive and affirming of students' identities and provides authentic opportunities for students to develop strong personal identities. All students feel welcome and known, and staff are able to cultivate relevant and responsive pedagogical approaches.

### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ Learning experiences are consistently designed to support students in exploring and constructing their identities while making meaning of the world around them.
- ⊗ There are consistent examples in all or almost all classes of culturally responsive instructional practices that enable students to see their identities reflected in the classroom (e.g., teachers educating themselves about the cultural experiences of their specific students, engaging in collectivist and individual learning experiences, and teachers helping students to connect new content to culturally relevant examples and metaphors from students' communities and everyday lives).
- ⊗ There are strategically selected, consistent schoolwide rituals/traditions that explicitly celebrate students' identities and provide exposure to role models who share students' backgrounds.



## 3. Rigorous and Purposeful Learning Experiences

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students leverage their understanding that students thrive when their learning experiences are rigorous, purposeful, and clearly connected to the development of college and career readiness competencies.

### 3a. Rigor

#### DEFINITION

Learning experiences are grounded in college-ready standards (e.g., CCSS, NGSS, etc.) and ask students to explore essential questions, solve problems, and make meaning of the world around them as they build mastery of the skills and content needed to be prepared for college, career, and life.

#### LOOK FOR

- ④ All or almost all learning experiences are aligned to college-ready standards (e.g., CCSS, NGSS, College Board, or other research-based standards) and the school's instructional vision.
- ④ All or almost all learning experiences foster disciplinary reasoning (e.g., thinking like a mathematician, scientist, historian) and require students to be critical thinkers engaged in learning through writing, discussing, collaborating, analyzing, computing, and problem solving so that they may thrive in dynamic environments.
- ④ All or almost all instruction centers on engaging students in the cognitive lift through productive struggle (e.g., engaging in texts at or above their proximal zone of development), helping them to construct knowledge and develop insights, and ensuring that they have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery.

## 3b. Purpose

### DEFINITION

Learning experiences center on compelling topics and real-world problem solving, engaging students in purposeful work, building agency, and encouraging positive identity development.

### LOOK FOR

- ④ All or almost all learning experiences focus on relevant and engaging topics that imbue the learning with purpose (e.g., topics tied to student interests, passions, and identities; current global, national, or local events; and/or themes that affect the communities to which students belong).
- ④ All or almost all learning experiences focus student inquiry on real-world problem solving and application and always or almost always require students to create authentic products and engage with authentic audiences of peers, community members, and experts.
- ④ Learning experiences always or almost always encourage students to build agency and explore identity by providing opportunities for students to develop and use their voices, learn from diverse perspectives, develop a critical consciousness, and/or advocate for change.

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## 3c. Progression, Transparency, and Feedback

### DEFINITION

Learning experiences clearly define what is required of students and have a strategic and logical sequence that makes clear how the learning experiences build upon one another, how they tie back to a driving question, and how they are intended to support students in mastering skills and knowledge.

### LOOK FOR

- ④ All or almost all learning experiences have a strategic and logical sequence that makes it clear how the learning experiences build upon one another, how they tie back to an essential question, and how they are intended to support students in mastering skills and knowledge.
- ④ Students always or almost always understand where their work has met expectations and where they are still progressing through consistent use of high-quality and authentic exemplars, criteria, and regular teacher feedback (both in real time and on completed tasks) that is clear and actionable. Students own the process of reflecting upon and improving their work.
- ④ Students always or almost always fully understand the culminating task or assessment for a learning experience and can explain how their learning builds towards it. At any given time, students are able to explain what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how it connects to what they have done and what is coming next.

## 3d. Personalization

### DEFINITION

Learning experiences are designed to meet students' needs and ensure mastery of content and skills, with appropriate scaffolds and systems for data capture, progress monitoring, intervention, and support.

### LOOK FOR

- ④ Learning experiences always or almost always provide every student with appropriate and individualized scaffolding and support to master the content and skills.
- ④ Data from formal and informal assessments is consistently used to monitor student progress, make instructional decisions grounded in that data (e.g., scaffolds/extensions needed, etc.), and ensure that no opportunity gap exists for learners from historically marginalized groups.
- ④ Systematic interventions and supports are embedded both inside and outside of the classroom such that all or almost all students are always or almost always supported in meeting high expectations.
- ④ These systems above always or almost always enable recuperation and acceleration based on students' individual needs, including by strategically leveraging asynchronous and anytime/any place learning.



## 4. Academic Systems

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students are guided by a schoolwide, mission-aligned, instructional vision that articulates how learning should happen and strategically informs adult development.

### 4a. Instructional Model

#### DEFINITION

The school has articulated a clear, succinct, mission-aligned instructional vision, and all academic systems work to meet that vision.

#### LOOK FORS

- ⊗ The school has articulated a mission-aligned instructional vision that clearly and consistently defines what student learning experiences should look like and what students must master to be college and career ready, participants in a robust democratic society, and citizens in a global world.
- ⊗ The instructional vision is understood and embodied by all or almost all stakeholders.
- ⊗ All or almost all academic systems (assessments, rubrics, promotion criteria, learning model, etc.) consistently support this vision.
- ⊗ Professional development is always or almost always aligned to the instructional vision and effectively supports all or almost all adults' professional growth.

## 4b. Curriculum and Standards

### DEFINITION

All courses are strategically standards-aligned and/or competency-aligned, resulting in coherence across grades and subject areas that promotes college-and career-readiness for all students.

### LOOK FOR

- ⓧ All or almost all courses are standards-aligned and sequenced with articulated prerequisite skills and knowledge so that students enter at the appropriate level. Standards and/or competencies are consistently used to define the skills and attributes for graduation/promotion and are aligned to a rigorous and coherent vision of college and career readiness.
- ⓧ There is a clearly articulated progression of performance levels on all or almost all prioritized standards and/or competencies. This enables teachers and students to use a common language in identifying strengths and areas of growth in student work.
- ⓧ All or almost all stakeholders share an understanding of what the standards and/or competencies look like at distinct performance levels.

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## 4c. Systems to Support Strong Instruction

### DEFINITION

The school leverages an array of teacher supports and collaborative structures to systematically improve instruction.

### LOOK FOR

- ⓧ The school always or almost always strategically leverages an array of teacher supports and collaborative structures (such as observations and feedback, coaching, regular professional development, intellectual preparation protocols, critical friends groups, etc.) to systematically improve instruction in alignment with the school's instructional vision. This results in all or almost all teachers improving their instructional practice and improvement in outcomes for all or almost all students.
- ⓧ Instructional teams always or almost always use protocols that create a shared understanding of what the standards and/or competencies look like at distinct performance levels and are grounded in data.
- ⓧ Leaders and teachers consistently engage in looking at student work protocols to assess student progress, adjust whole-class instruction, and determine individualized supports such that student work improves over the course of a unit.



## 4d. Graduation Pathways

### DEFINITION

The school has developed a robust set of course offerings that support multiple pathways and all students have access to college preparatory coursework.

### LOOK FOR

- ④ The school has developed a robust set of course offerings that support multiple pathways, and all or almost all students have access to college preparatory courses, such as AP classes and dual-enrollment. Student enrollment and outcomes are consistently reviewed and practices are adjusted to ensure that no opportunity gap exists for learners from historically marginalized groups.
- ④ Pathways allow sequencing of courses that results in a coherent, but flexible, course of study for all or almost all students. Pathways include proactive opportunities for remediation and acceleration.
- ④ Promotion and graduation decisions are always or almost always based on mastery of skills and knowledge, not on seat time or activity completion.



## 5. Student Supports

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students ensure that students have a comprehensive set of supports, resources, and opportunities to advance along a pathway to graduation.

### 5a. Transparency of Student Performance

#### DEFINITION

Students understand the requirements for progressing through their courses and graduating college and career ready. Systematic processes are leveraged such that students know at all times how they are performing in a course and where they are on their pathway to graduation.

#### LOOK FORS

- ⊗ All or almost all students understand the requirements for progression through their courses or their pathway to graduation and to college and career.
- ⊗ All or almost all students receive regular feedback and updates on their progress in their courses and all or almost all students understand what they need to do to improve their performance.
- ⊗ There is a transparent and accessible tracking system used consistently by all or almost all students that provides advisors, teachers, and families with real-time information about grades, mastery of learning, progress towards earning credits, and progress towards graduation requirements.

### 5b. Primary Person

#### DEFINITION

Each student has a primary person with whom he or she meets to discuss progress to graduation and has a meaningful relationship based on trust and personal connection. This adult has a manageable caseload, understands that their primary responsibility is to serve as the student's academic case manager to ensure that each student is making adequate academic progress, and is available to check-in as frequently as the student needs.

#### LOOK FORS

- ⊗ A primary person is identified for all students, and the primary function of the role is to act as academic case manager for a manageable caseload of students (under 20:1).
- ⊗ Adults in the primary person role effectively support all or almost all students in making academic progress by meeting regularly with all or almost all of their students to check in on progress and make plans for any needed support, marshalling critical resources as necessary.
- ⊗ All or almost all students understand how to access academic support through their primary person and consistently do so.

## 5c. Systems to Support a Primary Person Model

### DEFINITION

Systems and structures enable adults to consistently and effectively monitor student progress, identify when additional support is needed, and marshal resources to provide students with appropriate support as needed.

### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ Critical staff (e.g., teachers, primary person, special education coordinator, etc.) meet regularly to monitor all or almost all students' performances and to collaborate in addressing student needs.
- ⊗ Students are always or almost always matched with the most appropriate proactive and reactive interventions and/or acceleration, and all students who are off track have an individualized plan for support that is consistently monitored.
- ⊗ The school consistently conducts equity audits to ensure that all or almost all students and groups of students are monitored in terms of key access and outcome metrics.

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## 5d. Student Agency

### DEFINITION

Students own every step of their pathway to graduation, informed by an understanding of the school's graduation requirements, their performance level in each content and skill domain, their interests, and their experiences setting goals and reflecting metacognitively on their progress towards those goals.

### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ All or almost all students understand where they are on the pathway to graduation in relation to the school's graduation requirements.
- ⊗ All or almost all students are supported in crafting personal goals, reflecting on their progress, and adjusting their strategies for achieving their goals.
- ⊗ Students are consistently empowered to own their pathway to graduation (e.g., designing their course trajectory and outside experiences, such as internships, projects, etc.).
- ⊗ All or almost all staff members understand that their charge is to empower students as active agents in their own learning.

## 5e. Collaboration with Families and Student Supporters

### DEFINITION

There is regular communication between the school and families and/or adult supporters so that members of students' outside support networks consistently know if students are on or off track toward their next academic checkpoint on the way to graduation.

### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ The school has a process in place to regularly update families and adult supporters of student progress, both at predetermined checkpoints and on an ongoing basis.
- ⊗ All or almost all families are engaged through both the predetermined checkpoints and on an ongoing basis.
- ⊗ Intervention plans take into account all or almost all potential assets – family members, peer mentors, etc. – and consistently result in an action plan for students who are off track that is informed both by the student's family/adult supporters and the school.



## 6. College and Career Planning

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students ensure that every student has a clear and viable postsecondary path to college and career success that represents informed and authentic choice.

### 6a. Empowering Postsecondary Choices

#### DEFINITION

Members of the school community believe all students should graduate with a rigorous postsecondary plan and embrace the community's collective responsibility for supporting students in making an informed and authentic choice.

#### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ All or almost all stakeholders, including all or almost all students, believe in the importance of all students graduating with a rigorous postsecondary option.
- ⊗ All or almost all staff understand the landscape of opportunities available to students, the prerequisites students will need in order to access viable and sustaining postsecondary options, and their role in helping prepare students to make informed choices about their futures.

### 6b. College and Career Learning Sequences

#### DEFINITION

College and career learning sequences equip students with the knowledge, skills, and resources to assess a comprehensive range of postsecondary options such that students fully understand the implications of different pathways and can make fully informed choices about their path after high school, as well as evaluate the implications of current choices on postsecondary options.

#### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ The school has a comprehensive college and career learning sequence in place that strategically prepares all students to make informed and authentic choices about their futures by building students' understanding of the postsecondary options and the prerequisites required to pursue them, as well as providing opportunities to explore these college and career pathways. This sequence ensures students occasionally confer with a trusted adult to reflect on their progress towards their future goals.
- ⊗ All or almost all students understand the postsecondary options available to them and how their current performance is or is not preparing and/or opening the door or limiting possibilities for these pathways.

## 6c. Enrichment Experiences

### DEFINITION

All students are matched with meaningful experiences outside of the classroom that accelerate learning, promote identity development, provide opportunities to explore college and career pathways, and build students' competitive resumes.

### LOOK FORS

- ④ The school provides all or almost all students access to programs that provide opportunities to explore college and career pathways, build students' competitive resumes, and cultivate social capital necessary to thrive in the world beyond high school.
- ④ The school systematically ensures all or almost all students are matched with an array of experiences outside of the classroom each year that meaningfully prepare them for college and career. The school consistently conducts equity audits to ensure all or almost all students have equitable access to and support in being matched with these opportunities.
- ④ Enrichment experiences always or almost always cultivate students' interests, passions, and desires.

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## 6d. College Counseling

### DEFINITION

All students receive support with the process of developing a strong college list that prevents undermatching; reflects an academic, financial, and personal fit; and has an appropriate mix of reach, target, and safety schools.

### LOOK FORS

- ④ The school has a process in place that supports all or almost all students in completing the mandatory components of the college process (e.g., SAT prep, FAFSA completion, drafting a personal statement, soliciting recommendations, completing mandatory paperwork, etc.)
- ④ All or nearly all students enter the application season with a balanced college list that aligns with their academic standing, financial needs, and personal interests.



## 7. Strategic Development and Use of Resources

Secondary schools that effectively serve all students optimize people, time, and other resources and engage in constant iteration in order to meet a mission grounded in positive youth development.

### 7a. Human Capital

#### DEFINITION

Systematic processes that incorporate student voice are leveraged to ensure that adults are proactively and intentionally recruited, onboarded, developed, recognized, and retained in order to build a seasoned and high-performing team. All members of the team share a firm belief in the tenets of positive youth development, the school's mission, and a commitment to pursuing instructional excellence.

#### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ The school has a comprehensive and robust process in place for recruitment, onboarding, development, recognition, retention, and performance management of staff. The process incorporates students' voices and is a significant driver of staff retention, performance improvement, and management, and is followed with fidelity.

### 7b. Roles and Responsibilities

#### DEFINITION

Roles and responsibilities are designed to ensure that there is sufficient focus and attention on each of the school's priority areas aligned to the mission. Clear ownership is assigned for each task or initiative based on an understanding of individual strengths in order to create an effective division of staff resources.

#### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ Staff roles are always or almost always strategically designed to achieve the school's mission.
- ⊗ All or almost all staff members' roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all or almost all staff members understand how their specific responsibilities are aligned to the school's mission.
- ⊗ Ownership of schoolwide goals is always or almost always strategically distributed and moves the school forward towards achieving them.

## 7c. Strategic Use of Time

### DEFINITION

The school strategically uses the school schedule and calendar to maximize the use of time in the context of the school's mission, vision, and priorities. Students' time is consistently allocated to high impact opportunities and experiences. Adults are able to collaborate effectively with each other, purposefully conference with students, and deliver on core professional responsibilities.

### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ The school's schedule is consistently strategic about how time is used to reflect and support the school's values and goals for students (e.g., sequencing of student schedules, time for adult collaboration, etc.).
- ⊗ Each stakeholder's time is consistently maximized in pursuit of these values and goals through the reimagining of traditional school constructs, including human capital, time, and space.
- ⊗ The school consistently assesses the effectiveness of its systems and structures to ensure no students' needs go unaddressed.

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## 7d. Community Partnerships

### DEFINITION

The school develops community partnerships aligned with key school needs and those partnerships are integrated into all elements of the school, resulting in proactive systems of support and intervention in place for predictable needs.

### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ The school has developed enduring, effective, mission-aligned community partnerships that result in proactive systems of support and intervention. Community partnerships are always or almost always characterized by shared goals and accountability.
- ⊗ The partnership between the school and the partner is almost always a symbiotic relationship with both the school and the partner mutually benefiting; as a result, the school consistently gains ties to and a deeper understanding of the community, and the community consistently gains a deeper understanding of the school.

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## 7e. Continuous Improvement

### DEFINITION

The school has established a continuous improvement process that involves a cycle of learning, evaluating, and iterating on the school's practices and model to better serve all students.

### LOOK FOR

- ⊗ There are comprehensive systems and structures in place to support data collection and analysis.
- ⊗ Weekly, quarterly, and annual structures exist to regularly prompt reflection on practice and to (re)evaluate the model through an intentional cycle of learning, evaluating, and iterating.
- ⊗ There are systems and structures in place to consistently monitor inclusion in the community, including access to advanced learning opportunities and disproportionate representation in remediation or disciplinary action, and the school iterates to address any inequities.