

# ROADMAP FOR 9TH GRADE SUCCESS



**DATA**



**TEAMS**



**INTERVENTIONS**



**TRANSITION**



**INSTRUCTION**



ROADMAP STRATEGY  
COMPASS



# DATA

## PROVIDE DATA ACCESS

## DEVELOP DATA LITERACY

### TIMELY, ACTIONABLE DATA

## PROVIDE DATA ACCESS

### 1.1 ASSESS DISTRICT DATA SYSTEM CAPACITY AND ENHANCE WHERE NEEDED

Assess district data system capacity to ensure that it can provide real-time 9th Grade On Track (9GOT), Key Performance Indicators ((KPI) -- attendance, behavior, grade, and GPA data -- to Teams and Team Leads (TL) on a consistent basis. This data should be disaggregated by key demographics, access to services, and broken down to examine course level performance by section and teacher.

### 1.2 ESTABLISH DISTRICT-SCHOOL DATA PARTNERSHIP

Develop and sustain the relationship between the district and school data persons to help them design and ensure access to data systems that are responsive to the end-user.

### 1.3 DESIGNATE SCHOOL LEVEL DATA CHAMPION(S)

Develop the capacity of a school-level data champion (DC) to present data to the team in an actionable format and to embed a culture of data-informed decision making at the school level.

### 1.4 ESTABLISH A DISTRICT AND SCHOOL DATA REPORTING CALENDAR

Develop a data calendar that clearly articulates what data will be looked at, why the data was chosen, when the data will be looked at, what will be looked for in that data, and how the team will respond.

## DEVELOP DATA LITERACY

### 2.1 ASSESS SCHOOL AND DISTRICT STAFFS' DATA LITERACY SKILLS

Schools and district formatively assess the administrator, team lead, team, and data champions' data literacy through the use of data protocols.

### 2.2 ARTICULATE A PLAN FOR DEVELOPING TEAMS' DATA LITERACY SKILLS

Provide professional development that builds the data literacy capacity of the administrator, team lead, team, and data champion on the different types of data (quantitative and qualitative) and their uses.

### 2.3 BUILD UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO USE RELEVANT QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

Ensure the data literacy of the administrator, team lead, team, and data champion about the On-Track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and their predictive power, and the importance of using qualitative data like surveys and empathy interviews. By building skills in the use of different kinds of data, teams will be able to understand system and student level growth.



# TEAMS

ESTABLISH FOUNDATIONAL STRUCTURES AND CONDITIONS FOR 9TH GRADE ON-TRACK WORK

ESTABLISH SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES FOR OPERATIONALIZING THE WORK OF THE 9TH GRADE TEAM

SYSTEMATIZE 9TH GRADE SUCCESS BY RECRUITING AND ENGAGING ALL STAKEHOLDERS

## HIGHLY EFFECTIVE 9TH GRADE SUCCESS TEAMS

### ESTABLISH FOUNDATIONAL STRUCTURES AND CONDITIONS FOR 9TH GRADE ON-TRACK WORK

#### 3.1 ARTICULATE TEAM PURPOSE AND WORKING AGREEMENTS

Articulate mission-driven team purpose and working agreements.

#### 3.2 ESTABLISH A CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Establish a year-long calendar of sacred 9th-grade success team meetings that meet a minimum of twice/month, and ideally every week. Make sure the time is protected and at least 45 minutes.

#### 3.3 ESTABLISH UNDERSTANDING OF 9TH GRADE SUCCESS RESEARCH

Establish strong working command of seminal 9th grade success research in both the 9th grade success team and building-wide.

#### 3.4 PARTICIPATE IN TRAINING AND NETWORKING

Participate in foundational 9th-grade success trainings and schedule quarterly opportunities for structured collaboration with other schools around best practices and common challenges.

#### 3.5 ESTABLISH A 9TH GRADE SUCCESS TEAM WITH CROSS-DISCIPLINARY MEMBERSHIP AND CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES

Organize a cross-disciplinary 9th-grade team that includes core and elective teachers, special education and English language teachers; 9th-grade counselors, and other relevant members of the student support team that work with 9th graders (e.g., City Year, GearUp). Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the administrator, team lead, and team members.

#### 3.6 APPOINT TEAM LEAD

Appoint exceptional 9th grade Team Leads and provide them with a reduced teaching load or stipend.

#### 3.7 APPOINT DEDICATED 9TH GRADE ADMINISTRATORS AND COUNSELORS

Appoint dedicated 9th-grade administrators at each high school. Appoint dedicated 9th grade counselors for each 9th grade academy or a 9th and 10th-grade counselor in a looping system.

#### 3.8 SCHEDULE COMMON PLANNING TIME

Schedule guaranteed common planning time (that is supported and monitored by school leadership) for 9th grade teams to meet at least 2x monthly to analyze and respond to student and systems level barriers to student success opportunities for advancing student success.

#### 3.9 ESTABLISH A CALENDAR OF TRIANGLE MEETINGS

Establish a year-long calendar of triangle meetings between administrators, team lead(s) and 9th Grade Success Coach.



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## HIGHLY EFFECTIVE 9TH GRADE SUCCESS TEAMS

### ESTABLISH SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES FOR OPERATIONALIZING THE WORK OF THE 9TH GRADE TEAM

#### 4.1 ROUTINIZE THE USE OF ACTION-ORIENTED AGENDAS

Routinize the use of action-oriented agendas to guide the focus of each meeting.

#### 4.2 UTILIZE DISCUSSION PROTOCOLS

Utilize discussion protocols to structure constructive data analysis, kid talk conversations, and analysis/discussion of student work.

#### 4.3 EXAMINE AND RESPOND TO TREND AND STUDENT LEVEL DATA

Examine trend-level data disaggregated by course, gender, race, and program to identify and respond to trends and establish problems of practice every 4-6 weeks.

Examine and respond to student level data in 9th Grade Success Team meetings to identify students who need support or intervention based on grades or attendance. Refer these students to the proper type and tier of intervention. The focus of the 9th Grade Success Team should be on students who need Tier II supports. (weekly).

#### 4.4 ESTABLISH SHORT, MEDIUM, AND LONG TERM 9TH GRADE SUCCESS GOALS AND BENCHMARKS

Set specific short, medium and long term goals related to the Key Performance Indicators in the areas of grades and attendance. Teams should also set quarterly and annual goals for 9th Grade On-Track, student connection, and team efficacy.

### SYSTEMATIZE 9TH GRADE SUCCESS BY RECRUITING AND ENGAGING ALL STAKEHOLDERS

#### 5.1 IDENTIFY AND CONNECT SYSTEMS

Identify other internal (e.g. School Improvement/strategic plans, Instructional Leadership Teams/initiatives, Student Support Teams etc) and external systems (e.g. outside agencies, families, and communities) responsible for student success and systematically connect the work of the 9th grade team with those systems.

#### 5.2 TRAIN ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Articulate a plan to train all stakeholders around 9th grade on track metrics and importance.

#### 5.3 COMMUNICATE GOALS AND PROGRESS

Communicate goals and progress with stakeholders quarterly (at minimum).

#### 5.4 CELEBRATE PROGRESS

Celebrates [student, teacher, team, and school] on-track progress quarterly (at minimum).



# INTERVENTIONS

CULTIVATE A GROWTH MINDSET IN ADULTS

ESTABLISH DATA-DRIVEN INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

IMPLEMENT PROACTIVE AND HIGH LEVERAGE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

## INTERVENTIONS

### CULTIVATE A GROWTH MINDSET IN ADULTS

#### 6.1 PROVIDE TRAINING ON THE IMPACT OF DISCOURSE ON RESULTS

Train staff on how to recognize and shift discourse that creates harm (i.e. how things are talked about when teacher teams problem-solve, plan their work, create policy, and explain things to one another).

#### 6.2 PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING ON BUILDING AND SUSTAINING STUDENT-EDUCATOR TRUST AND FAMILY-EDUCATOR TRUST

Provide ongoing training and collaboration around how to build trusting relationships with culturally and academically diverse students and families.

### ESTABLISH DATA-DRIVEN INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

#### 7.1 OPERATIONALIZE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Define clear thresholds for each tier for grades, attendance, and behavior. Review progress against KPIs regularly as team and in triangle meetings.

#### 7.5 TRACK STUDENT MOVEMENT BETWEEN TIERS AT REGULARLY SCHEDULED INTERVALS AS A KEY MEASURE OF EFFICACY

Track movement between tiers to monitor the impact of team interventions and to inform necessary adjustments.

#### 7.2 TRAIN STAFF ON TIERED STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

Provide training and collaboration time for teachers to be able to distinguish between Tier 1, 2, and 3 support needs to address course performance, attendance and behavior. There is clear integration and symbiosis between this work and the multi-tiered system of supports.

#### 7.6 ESTABLISH A TIER 3 TEAM

Assemble a team of adults who will meet at least twice monthly to identify, plan, implement, and evaluate outcomes-based supports for students in need of Tier 3 interventions.

#### 7.3 ARTICULATE CLEAR REFERRAL PROCESSES AND PROTOCOLS

Develop a data-informed, clear referral processes for Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports.

#### 7.7 REFLECT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIER 1 GAPS AND TIER 2 INTERVENTIONS

Analyze and respond to the Tier 1 gaps that are creating and sustaining Tier 2 support needs.

#### 7.4 UTILIZE DATA TO MONITOR AND ADJUST INTERVENTIONS AS NEEDED

Use student-level quantitative (KPI) and qualitative indicators to monitor, evaluate and make adjustments to interventions.

#### 7.8 IDENTIFY AND RESPOND TO ROOT CAUSES

Conduct a root cause analysis of student and trend level issues and focus interventions on identified root causes.



# INTERVENTIONS

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## INTERVENTIONS

### IMPLEMENT PROACTIVE AND HIGH LEVERAGE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

#### 8.1 PROVIDE COMPETENCY-BASED CREDIT RETRIEVAL OPPORTUNITIES

Provide credit retrieval as part of a comprehensive system in which credit retrieval links to essential standards of a unit and students are required only to show proficiency in the those standards.

#### 8.2 AMPLIFY STUDENT VOICE THROUGH EMPATHY INTERVIEWS AND STUDENT SURVEYS

Bring student voice to the table with either empathy interviews or surveys. Use empathy interviews to bring in-depth voice of individual students to better understand their experience and inform next steps. Use surveys when looking to gather aggregate information on students' strengths, interests, needs, and perceptions on a range of issues related to students academic and socio-emotional well-being.

#### 8.3 PROVIDE EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION AND ONGOING SUPPORTS TO 9TH GRADERS ON HOW TO "DO SCHOOL" WELL

Provide interventions that build student capacity to do school better over time.

#### 8.4 SYSTEMATIZE REGULAR CHECK-INS WITH STUDENTS

Pair struggling 9th graders with a school-based adult mentors to work with students year-round to track, goal set, and support students with attendance, engagement, and academic progress.

#### 8.5 IMPLEMENT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative practices provide alternatives to exclusionary discipline and support creating a positive and welcoming school community for 9th grade students. Restorative practices represent an approach to discipline that is grounded in building positive relationships, providing opportunities for community members to take responsibility for their behaviors, and for the community to solve problems constructively. It requires training for teachers, support staff, students and parents and protocols for implementation.

#### 8.6 PROVIDE HIGH DOSAGE TUTORING TO IDENTIFIED STUDENTS

Implement high dosage tutoring for academically at-risk students. High Dosage Tutoring by definition is tutoring that takes place in small groups of 6 or fewer, that meet at least four times per week.

#### 8.7 PROVIDE FOCUSED INSTRUCTION ON CORE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES

Explicitly teach and support student development of evidence-based, high-leverage interpersonal and intra-personal skills.





# TRANSITION

CREATE A PERSONALIZED AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR 9TH GRADE STUDENTS

PROVIDE EARLY PREPARATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL ENTRY

PROVIDE PROACTIVE SUPPORTS

## COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF 9TH GRADE TRANSITION SUPPORTS

### CREATE A PERSONALIZED AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR 9TH GRADE STUDENTS

#### 9.1 BUILD A DEVELOPMENTALLY RESPONSIVE MASTER SCHEDULE

Consider a schedule that offers 9th graders fewer transitions and fewer courses to manage each term.

#### 9.2 ESTABLISH COHORTS OF 9TH GRADERS THAT SHARE SAME COURSES AND CORE TEACHERS

Organize 9th grade into small learning communities where cohorts of students share the same courses and same set of teachers. This is especially helpful in larger high schools where multiple 9th Grade Success Teams are important to reach every 9th grader.

#### 9.3 ESTABLISH A 9TH GRADE ACADEMY STRUCTURE

9th grade academies create unique learning communities for 9th graders which include their own area of the building, dedicated staffing of 9th grade teachers and support staff, and rite of passage experiences for 9th grade students. This requires training of teachers and support staff, high-priority master scheduling, and authentic family engagement.

#### 9.4 ESTABLISH 9TH GRADE ADVISORIES OR SEMINARS

9th grade advisories should utilize vetted SEL curriculum to teach students the SEL skills and competencies associated with education success: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision making. They should also teach students about how to be successful in high school through understanding graduation requirements, how to access grades.

#### 9.5 CONDUCT STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES

Conduct student-led conferences at least twice a year to showcase student performance (i.e. portfolio, student work samples) and incorporate student-driven academic, action planning, monitoring and reflection.

#### 9.6 ESTABLISH MENTORSHIP FOR ALL

Every student is assigned to an adult who is responsible for monitoring and supporting that student's academic and personal progress.

#### 9.7 ENGAGE 9TH GRADERS IN COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Schedule and promote ongoing activities to engage 9th graders and create sense of belonging and group identity.

### PROVIDE EARLY PREPARATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL ENTRY

#### 10.1 INSTITUTE AN 8TH TO 9TH GRADE ORIENTATION

Institute an 8th to 9th grade orientation for students to acclimate them to the school (facilities, programming options, extra-curricular opportunities), teach explicitly what high school "success" means (on-track...), and how to access key programs and supports.

#### 10.2 INSTITUTE A HIGH-IMPACT SUMMER TRANSITION PROGRAM

Institute a high-impact Summer Bridge program—a targeted 4-6 week 8-9th grade summer transition program aimed at strengthening preparation for high school for high-risk 8th graders; for optimal impact, the program should focus on foundational academic skills in ELA and Math while also building the SEL skills known to impact student achievement at the high school level. Students at high risk of 9th grade failure are required to attend the summer bridge program.



# TRANSITION

CREATE A PERSONALIZED AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR 9TH GRADE STUDENTS

PROVIDE EARLY PREPARATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL ENTRY

PROVIDE PROACTIVE SUPPORTS

## COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF 9TH GRADE TRANSITION SUPPORTS

### 10.3 ESTABLISH ONGOING PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Provide an orientation for families to acclimate them to the school (facilities, programming options, extra-curricular opportunities), teach explicitly what high school “success” means (on-track...) and how to access key programs and supports.

### 10.4 CONDUCT SUMMER ACTIVITIES

Conduct summer activities to help students get to know one another and the teachers they will have in 9th grade.

## PROVIDE PROACTIVE SUPPORTS

### 11.1 PRIORITIZE 9TH GRADERS WHEN MAKING TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS AND COUNSELING

Assign the strongest teachers to 9th grade.

### 11.5 SET EARLY TIMELINES FOR HIGH SCHOOL ADMISSION

Set high school admission timeline early enough in the spring so that high schools can receive data about incoming students well before the end of the prior school year.

### 11.2 ESTABLISH AN EARLY WARNING INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Teachers are given timely data about the students they will teach in advance of the start of the school year, receive professional development on how to use these data to inform instruction, and are held accountable for doing so.

### 11.6 REVIEW DATA ON INCOMING STUDENTS

School leadership, guidance, and key 9th grade team members review data on all incoming students and plan course work and supports accordingly.

### 11.3 PROVIDE SUPERVISED STUDY HOURS

Provide supervised study hours to all students where they can get help with academic self-management skills (This can be integrated into advisories).

### 11.7 DEVELOP ONGOING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN KEY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Develop partnerships between middle and high school administrators and counselors to identify the collective and individual needs of incoming 9th graders and collaborate to ensure a successful high school transition for all students.

### 11.4 PROVIDE ACCESS TO 8TH GRADE DATA

Collect and provide high schools with data on incoming 9th graders in the spring prior to entry.

### 11.8 PROVIDE PROACTIVE, TARGETED COUNSELING SUPPORTS

Counselors' work is based on a curriculum that addresses: supporting the high school transition, developmental and academic supports, and post-secondary planning.





# INSTRUCTION

IMPLEMENT FAIR GRADING PRACTICES

DEVELOP LEARNING-CENTERED PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES

DEVELOP STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING COMMUNITIES

## HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION

### IMPLEMENT FAIR GRADING PRACTICES

#### 12.1 CREATE A PROPORTIONAL GRADING SCALE

Giving a zero in a 100-point grading scale is unfair and has an immense negative impact on a student's course average. Each grade band should have the same proportional impact - A, B, C, D, and F. With a 100-point grading scale, the lowest grade that should be given is a 50 out of 100. Just two or three zeros are enough to cause failure for an entire semester, and even one course failure in ninth grade can lead a student to drop out of high school, incurring a lifetime of personal and social consequences. Another great option is to use the 0-4 grading scale that mirrors the GPA scale used in most high schools.

#### 12.2 ENCOURAGE RETAKES AND RE-DOS

Rewarding effort to learn from mistakes cultivates a growth mindset and motivates students to keep learning, even after a failure.

#### 12.3 ACCEPT LATE WORK WITH NO PENALTY

The purpose of student work is to demonstrate understanding, not to assess whether a student can do the work on time. By accepting late work with no penalty, the grade represents the student's academic ability, not whether they can do the work by the deadline.

#### 12.4 GRADE STUDENT WORK, NOT BEHAVIOR

Grade progress toward mastery, not student behavior. Grading behavior over what a student has learned gives misinformation to students, families, and post-secondary institutions. Teaching students the connection between behaviors and learning is worthwhile, and if the behaviors being taught are correct, the academic performance of the student will improve.

#### 12.5 CONSIDER USE OF INCOMPLETE INSTEAD OF F AND SUPPORT PATHWAYS TO DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY BEFORE END OF YEAR

By assigning a student an Incomplete instead of an F, the student receives the message that there is still possibility to finish a course they haven't yet completed to expectation. By allowing students to have extra time with support to complete the course, consequences of an F are avoided for both the student and the school. It's necessary to develop a plan and timeline to support the student in completing the course. A first semester or first or second trimester Incomplete can be brought up to a passing grade through work done before the end of the school year and beyond if the district decides. A second semester or third trimester Incomplete can be brought up to passing through work up to a district determined deadline the following school year.

#### 12.6 IMPLEMENT STANDARDS-BASED GRADING

Standards based grading creates a more equitable learning environment because students are given clear learning targets and rubrics that they can use to reach mastery of classroom content. Students are empowered not just to learn concepts, but to master them, perpetuating deeper learning of content.

#### 12.7 ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT A FAIR GRADING POLICY

Adopt a fair grading policy that includes a proportional grading scale, retakes, re-dos, late work with no penalty, standards-based grading and a broader use of the Incomplete.



# INSTRUCTION

IMPLEMENT FAIR GRADING PRACTICES

DEVELOP LEARNING-CENTERED PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES

DEVELOP STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING COMMUNITIES

## HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTION

### DEVELOP LEARNING-CENTERED PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITIES

#### 13.1 EMBED LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Embed literacy instruction across the content areas to help students develop higher level comprehension skills.

#### 13.2 DEVELOP CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE, STANDARDS-ALIGNED CURRICULUM

Develop curriculum units that are aligned to grade level priority standards, and centered on culturally responsive materials. Design content to be comprehensible for all learners (i.e. use varied sources of input- text, stories, video, poetry, music, etc.).

#### 13.3 ADMINISTER COMMON ASSESSMENTS

Administer common assessments to determine timely actionable next steps for students and teachers.

#### 13.4 ANALYZE STUDENT WORK TO INFORM ONGOING IMPROVEMENT

Review assessment data and student work to determine whether or not students have learned the intended skills and knowledge of the unit, share effective teaching practices and address areas for improvement.

#### 13.5 ESTABLISH PEER COLLABORATION, OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK LOOPS

Conduct learning walks, inter-visitations, and lab classes.

### DEVELOP STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING COMMUNITIES

#### 14.1 INTEGRATE ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCIES

Integrate academic, social, and emotional learning (develop interpersonal, intra-personal and cognitive competencies through intentional skill building) across all content areas and school contexts.

#### 14.2 DESIGN LESSONS TO ACCOMMODATE FOR LEARNER VARIABILITY

Design lessons that accommodate and foster the varied identities, needs, abilities, interests of all learners (i.e. articulate clear learning goals, align a success criteria and learning progressions containing multiple learning pathways).

#### 14.3 DEVELOP LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

(e.g. provide clear, actionable, asset-based feedback; utilize student feedback loops and exit tickets).

#### 14.4 IMPLEMENT A STANDARD SET OF RITUALS AND ROUTINES

Implement classroom rituals and routines to support an inclusive learning community - e.g. incorporate communal talk/task structures (provide language scaffolds to ensure equity of voice) and cognitive routines (detail goes here) into all learning opportunities.