Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools

Recommendation 1
Monitor the progress of all students, and proactively intervene when students show early signs of attendance, behavior, or academic problems.

Recommendation 2
Provide intensive, individualized support to students who have fallen off track and face significant challenges to success.

Recommendation 3
Engage students by offering curricula and programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success and that improve students' capacity to manage challenges in and out of school.

Recommendation 4
For schools with many at-risk students, create small, personalized communities to facilitate monitoring and support.

This recommendation is one of four described in the Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools Practice Guide (Rumberger et al., 2017). Although each recommendation can be implemented independently, dropout prevention experts believe the recommendations will be most effective when implemented together as part of a cohesive approach.

Recommendation 3

Engage students by offering curricula and programs that connect schoolwork with college and career success and that improve students' capacity to manage challenges in and out of school.

Student engagement occurs when students find their classes meaningful, feel a sense of belonging, and maintain strong relationships with teachers, peers, families, and the school community. Engagement is important because it leads to positive behaviors such as good attendance, preparedness, and improved course performance, reinforcing students' connection to school. Disengagement can stem from feelings of irrelevance, lack of capability, or an unsafe environment.

Schools should implement proactive, schoolwide strategies and targeted interventions for at-risk students to address disengagement. These approaches should focus on making instruction relevant, fostering supportive relationships, and helping students navigate challenges.

Strategy 1

Directly connect schoolwork to students' options after high school.

SC Principal Standards: PADEPP Standard 1 (Vision), Standard 2 (Instructional Leadership), Standard 5 (School/Community Relations)

Schools and teachers should emphasize making schoolwork relevant by directly linking it to students' post-high school options, such as careers or further education. Schools can implement this by offering curricula and programs aligned with specific career pathways or postsecondary education goals, providing students with a clear connection between their academic work and future opportunities. For career-focused programs, schools can provide integrated courses that blend career and academic subjects, as well as dual-enrollment opportunities with local colleges Access the WWC Intervention Report: Career Academies (What Works Clearinghouse, 2015) and these infographics (Regional Educational Laboratory [REL] Midwest, 2021) for a summary of findings and evidence supporting this model). For college-focused programs, students' graduation plans should include sufficient dual-credit courses and support, such as supplemental math or English classes, to succeed in college preparatory work. Schools should also increase the relevancy of coursework by creating a continuum of experiential learning outside the classroom. The continuum may build in complexity as students move up through grades, possibly culminating with an internship in 12th grade. Such experiences build awareness in students between what they are learning and their future careers or aspirations. Post-high school transitions for students with disabilities should be considered and planned for in both career and college-focused programs (for more information, see Facilitating Postsecondary Success: Strategies to Remove Service Roadblocks for Students with Disabilities [REL Mid-Atlantic, 2024]). Intentionally connecting school and students' future choices helps foster collaboration among teachers to create a cohesive schoolwide curriculum and ensures students see the value of their education and remain engaged in their academic journey.

Example

At Lincoln High School, the faculty implemented a career-focused program centered on health sciences to help students see the relevance of their coursework. Ninth-grade students explore careers in healthcare through guest lectures and field trips to local hospitals. By 10th grade, they take integrated courses like "Biology for Healthcare Professionals," which combines biology concepts with real-world applications, such as understanding how cells function in medical treatments. Starting in 11th grade, students can enroll in dual-enrollment courses at the nearby community college to earn both high school and college credits in subjects like anatomy and pharmacology. Senior year culminates in a hands-on internship at local clinics, where students apply their learning in a professional setting. Throughout the program, students create individualized graduation plans to ensure they complete the required dual-credit courses and receive extra support, such as advanced writing workshops, to prepare for college-level work. This continuum of relevant, experiential learning fosters engagement and connects students' academic efforts to their future aspirations.

The following tables provide additional examples from the Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools Practice Guide (Rumberger, 2017).

Table 1. Checklist for effective college-focused programs

Key elements of college focused programs	Examples of elements in practice
All students receive college preparation coursework and any additional academic support needed to meet these expectations.	Each student's graduation plan aligns with course requirements for admission to the state's university system, such as a minimum of four years of math and two years of a laboratory science. Students who enter ninth grade behind in math get a daily supplemental math course to get them back on track for meeting college entrance requirements.
The school has an established partnership with a local college. As part of this partnership, a college faculty member serves as a liaison between the college and the school.	School leadership partners with the chair of the psychology department at a local community college. The department chair acts as the primary contact for designing a dual-enrollment course, facilitating college tours, and establishing dual-credit agreements.
Students' course of study includes dual-enrollment courses that allow students to experience college-level coursework.	School leadership and a faculty member at a local community college work together to design a college course that teaches critical-thinking skills, with a focus on writing and presentations. The course introduces students to the rigors of college coursework and shows students that they belong in a college environment.
Students' course of study allows them to earn college credits, with an explicit goal of having a degree or certain number of transferable credits upon graduation.	Each student's graduation plan results in up to two years of college credit that can be transferred to a four-year institution and/or result in an associate's degree. Credit is earned through dual-enrollment courses offered at a nearby college and dual-credit classes offered at the high school that qualify for both high school and college credit.

Table 2. Checklist for effective career-focused programs

Key elements of career focused programs	Examples of elements in practice
Learning materials are chosen and adapted to focus on an industry that is connected to regional workforce needs.	The school reviews data from the local and state economic and workforce-development agencies and identifies health science as a high-demand industry in their area. The school then chooses learning materials that focus on careers within the health science industry, such as patient care and community health.
The career coursework and experiences are aligned with industry standards.	An engineering program aligns coursework with manufacturing industry standards for entry-level employment. The school establishes an industry advisory board with local employers to identify relevant certification standards.
The academic curriculum enables students to learn skills related to the industry.	Students in a medical sciences program learn to calculate medication dosages in their Algebra I class or study biometrics in their statistics class.
Local community colleges or technical schools advise on the industry-related curriculum and relevant student outcomes.	A school focused on advanced manufacturing partners with the local technical college to offer a dual-credit course in computer-integrated manufacturing. A representative from the college serves on the school's industry advisory board to advise on the manufacturing training curriculum.
Students participate in work-based learning that links classroom activities with work experiences, such as job shadowing and career mentoring.	A school focused on hospitality and tourism partners with local employers to offer job-shadowing experiences at area hotels and tourist attractions over spring break.
Counselors create an individualized graduation plan (or Individualized Career Plan [REL Southwest, 2024]) for each student based on students' career and education goals.	Starting in ninth grade, students work with their counselors to complete individual graduation plans. Plans align students' career goals with their course of study, work, and extracurricular experiences, as well as give students feedback on how their academic progress relates to their post–high school goals.
The career coursework is regularly evaluated against student outcomes and the needs of local industry and partners.	At the end of every year, a team of school staff examines academic outcomes (such as test scores) and measures of student engagement (such as climate surveys and attendance rates) to evaluate how the program can better meet student needs. Data are shared with the industry advisory board for input on how the program can be more relevant to local employers.

Table 3. Sample University of California Curriculum Integration courses that integrate academic and career technical education content

The University of California Curriculum Integration (UCCI) office develops courses that integrate academic subjects with career technical education content. UCCI courses also meet the University of California standards for course content and rigor needed to count toward admission to the University of California or California State University systems.

Examples of courses:

Physics and Engineering: Motion by Design

Students develop an understanding of fundamental concepts in physics and engineering and apply these concepts to a product-design cycle. Students design marketable products and develop skills in computer programming, 3-D modeling, and engineering technology. Assignments include designing a rotating pulley using computer-assisted design (CAD) software and producing a quality-control report that includes data from product testing.

✓Meets the University of California standards for a laboratory science course.

English 12 and Entrepreneurship: The Business of Agriculture

Students learn about the agriculture industry while building the communication, critical-thinking, and business skills needed to develop and pitch a business plan. Students develop knowledge and skills in conducting research, reading nonfiction, oral communication, legal concepts, and marketing. Assignments include a group project analyzing and presenting solutions to sustainability issues within the California almond industry and developing a business plan based on an analysis of market opportunities within their neighborhood.

✓Meets the University of California standards for an English course.

Table 4. Sample college-focused lessons that teach specific academic standards

The Realizing the College Dream curriculum guide (Educational Credit Management Corporation, n.d.) offers ideas for lessons that increase students' awareness of college while also teaching middle school and high school academic standards in core subject areas. An example follows.

Lesson

Students compare and contrast different financial-aid packages from four different institutions for a fictional student, building an understanding of concepts such as net cost and the basic types of financial aid. Students present the advantages and disadvantages of each financial-aid package and present their recommendation for the college they think the student should attend, and why.

Related Mathematics and Social Studies Standards (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and National Council for the Social Studies):

- *Mathematics number and operations:* Students develop fluency in operations with real numbers, vectors, and matrices, using mental computation or paper-and-pencil calculations for simple cases and technology for more complicated cases; students judge the reasonableness of numerical computations and their results.
- *Production, distribution, and consumption:* Learners expand their knowledge of economic concepts and principles, and use economic reasoning processes in addressing issues related to the four fundamental economic questions (6th–8th grades).

Table 5. Continuum of experiential learning

	Ninth Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Health careers academy	Employees from the local hospital discuss their professions at career day.	Students complete a spring break job shadowing experience at the local hospital, learning about different medical careers.	Students take a medical clinical class that combines instruction in clinical skills with a twice weekly internship at the local hospital.	The summer after junior year, students complete an internship in the medical field.
Early college pathway	Alumni who are enrolled in college return to talk with students about their experience.	Students tour area colleges and prepare a presentation about a college they are interested in attending, including admissions requirements, academic programs, and extracurricular opportunities.	Students complete college essays during their English language arts class and compare financial aid packages during math or social studies class.	Students complete a dual enrollment course at the local community college.

Strategy 2

Provide curricula and programs that help students build supportive relationships and teach students how to manage challenges.

SC Principal Standards: PADEPP Standard 1 (Vision) Standard 2 (Instructional Leadership); Standard 4 (Climate); Standard 7 (Interpersonal Skills), Standard 8 (Staff development)

Non-academic skills play an important role in improving student engagement and academic outcomes (see the Four Pillars of Support for High School Students' College and Career Readiness infographic [REL Appalachia, 2022]). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) identifies five key non-academic competencies crucial for success: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Schools should implement explicit training on these skills through classroom curricula or separate programs tailored to students' engagement levels. These programs can teach skills such as stress management, decision making in high-stakes situations, and setting and tracking goals. Fostering positive relationships with peers, teachers, and families helps students feel a sense of belonging and reduces disengagement.

For students at risk of low engagement, schools can offer targeted programs such as peer mentoring for transitions or those showing signs of disengagement. For example, older students trained as mentors can lead group sessions for younger students, helping them build non-academic skills and form positive peer relationships. To benefit all students, non-academic skill instruction can be integrated into daily classroom activities, such as group work lessons that emphasize constructive collaboration and reflection. Teachers should also be trained to reinforce these skills and foster trust during everyday interactions. Districts and states can support schools and teachers by developing grade-specific benchmarks and providing opportunities for students to practice skills through role-playing, service-learning projects, and internships. These strategies ensure students can apply non-academic skill competencies both in and out of school, fostering a supportive environment that enhances engagement and long-term success. To learn more about teaching nonacademic strategies to support students' postsecondary transitions, access the Building Bridges to College and Career - Supporting Self-Efficacy: Training Materials (Park & Biagas, 2019) and Building Bridges to College and Career: Social Emotional Preparation materials (Campbell et al., 2019).

Example

At Lincoln High School, non-academic skills are integrated into the school culture through classroom activities, mentorship programs, and community engagement. In English class, students practice self-awareness and responsible decision making by analyzing characters' actions in literature and discussing how these relate to real-life choices. For example, after reading a novel, students reflect on a character's challenges and write about how they might handle similar situations in their own lives.

The school also offers a peer mentoring program for incoming ninth-graders to ease their transition to high school. Trained 11th-graders and 12th-graders meet weekly with small groups of new ninth-graders to lead discussions on topics like time management, conflict resolution, and building positive relationships. Mentors use real-life examples and role-playing activities to help younger students develop strategies for navigating academic and social challenges.

In addition to classroom integration, Lincoln High School provides dual-credit leadership courses where students learn advanced skills, such as stress management and public speaking, while organizing a schoolwide event like a wellness fair. Teachers reinforce these skills daily by fostering a sense of belonging through class discussions and recognizing students' efforts to improve.

The school partners with local organizations to provide service-learning opportunities for juniors and seniors. For instance, students participating in a community food bank project use teamwork and problem-solving skills to organize a distribution event. These experiences allow students to practice non-academic competencies in real-world contexts, reinforcing their connection between schoolwork and life beyond graduation.

The following tables provide additional examples from the Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools Practice Guide (Rumberger et al., 2017).

Table 6. CASEL Framework for Social and Emotional Competencies

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has developed a framework for the skills students need to effectively manage daily challenges. Their framework focuses on skills grouped under five core competencies:

Self-awareness

- identifying emotions
- accurate self-perception
- recognizing strengths
- self-confidence
- self-efficacy

Self-management

- impulse control
- stress management
- self-discipline
- self-motivation
- goal-setting
- organizational skills

Social awareness

- perspective-taking
- empathy
- appreciating differences
- respect for others

Relationship skills

- communication
- social engagement
- relationship-building
- teamwork

Responsible decision making

- identifying problems
- analyzing situations
- solving problems
- evaluating
- reflecting
- ethical responsibility

For strategies practical to promote self-assessment and reflection in students, see the Supporting Students' Independent Learning with Self-Assessment Strategies infographic (REL West, 2021).

Table 7. Everyday strategies for teachers to foster student engagement

Strategy	Why?	What does this look like?
Acknowledge each student as they enter your classroom	Noticing each student every day helps students feel connected to school and shows that someone cares. Greeting students at the beginning of each day or class with a simple question or positive comment lets students know they are valued in the school.	• "Hi [student name]. It's good to see you." • "How was your weekend?" • "How is your project coming along?"
Praise students' effort and process	Emphasize the role of students' effort and persistence in feedback on their work. This will reinforce that students have the ability to improve in a subject through work and that ability is not a fixed trait.	• "I like the way you approached this problem. Can you tell me about what you did?" • "I see that you worked hard on this assignment." • "Your response is very creative. Can you explain your thinking?"
Help students set goals and monitor progress toward the goals	Having students set ambitious, yet achievable, goals and marking progress toward those goals helps students develop strategies for self-management. Goal-setting also develops students' belief in their capacity to reach a goal through hard work.	• "What is a goal you want to achieve this week?" • "What do you think is the biggest obstacle to achieving this goal?" • "How can you overcome that obstacle?"
Use a student-centered approach to classroom discipline	At the beginning of the school year, establish clear expectations for student behavior in collaboration with students. When a student misbehaves, ask the student to reflect on the reasons for the behavior and strategies that could have led to better decisions.	• "What kind of classroom norms do we need so that every student has an opportunity to share ideas?" • "How do you think your behavior made your classmates feel?" • "What other strategies could you have used in this situation?"

Table 8. Sample Role-Playing Activity for Conflict Management Skills

The instructor leads the class in a role-playing exercise in which students work in pairs to demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate ways to manage conflict.

The instructor divides the class into pairs. Student A is told to borrow an object from student B. Student B should then imagine that some time has passed and student A has failed to return the borrowed object. Student B then role-plays trying to get the object back in two ways: (1) in an out-of-control manner, using an aggressive attitude or action, and (2) an in-control manner, using a positive attitude or action.

Once the students have role-played both scenarios, the instructor should generate a discussion with students on the differences between the two ways in which they attempted to get their object back. The goal of the discussion is for students to realize that there is a positive way to manage conflict, and

that this can often yield better results. During the discussion, the instructor should try to highlight skills such as stress management, self-control, social values, dealing with anger or hostility, and peer group behaviors. Examples of discussion prompts:

- If this situation occurred outside of school, how many of you would initially react in an out-of-control manner?
- How might you react differently in school?
- What are some of the skills needed to be able to react in an in-control manner?
- What are some of the benefits of acting in an in-control manner in this situation and in situations like this?

Strategy 3

Regularly assess student engagement to identify areas for improvement, and target interventions to students who are not meaningfully engaged.

SC Principal Standards: PADEPP Standard 1 (Vision) Standard 2 (Instructional Leadership); Standard 4 (Climate); Standard 8 (Staff Development)

Schools should conduct annual school climate and student engagement surveys to support student success. These surveys can provide valuable insight into students' experiences and perceptions, complementing early warning indicators like attendance and grades. These data sources help staff identify underlying issues, such as why students may have low attendance or declining academic performance (for more information, access the Shifting the Current School Climate infographic [REL Northwest, 2018]). For example, survey results might reveal that students lack trust between themselves and teachers or perceive low expectations for their postsecondary success, shedding light on reasons for disengagement.

When selecting a survey tool, prioritize options that are valid and reliable. Ensure the survey aligns with the school's goals for student engagement and incorporates factors research has linked to positive student outcomes. Use the data to identify strengths and areas for improvement (see Survey Says School Climate Data Can Drive School Improvement [REL Mid-Atlantic, 2019]) at both the schoolwide and subgroup levels. For example, if incoming ninth-graders report struggling with peer relationships or low teacher trust, consider implementing peer mentoring programs or interpersonal skills building initiatives. If students express that coursework feels disconnected from their future goals, focus on integrating curriculum that ties academic skills to college and career opportunities. This approach ensures data-driven strategies to enhance student engagement and achievement.

Example

At the beginning of the school year, a high school administers a school climate and student engagement survey to all students. The survey measures trust between students and teachers, students' sense of belonging, perceptions of academic rigor, and the relevance of coursework to future goals. The results show that ninth-grade students have lower levels of trust in teachers and feel disconnected from their coursework.

Attendance records also confirm that ninth-graders have higher absenteeism compared to other grades. Based on the data, the school implements a two-part plan:

1. **Building Relationships**: The school launches a peer mentoring program, pairing ninth-grade students with trained 11th grade and 12th grade student mentors who meet weekly to discuss goals, challenges, and behavioral and interpersonal skills. Teachers also participate in professional development to improve student-teacher relationships through consistent communication and positive feedback.
2. **Connecting Coursework to the Future:** A team of teachers collaborates to redesign ninth-grade lessons, incorporating real-world projects tied to career paths.

Throughout the year, the school tracks changes in attendance, grades, and survey responses. By mid-year, ninth-grade students report feeling more supported and engaged, attendance improves, and teachers note increased participation and effort in class. The school uses this data to refine and sustain its initiatives for future cohorts.

The following table provides sample engagement survey questions from the Preventing Dropout in Secondary Schools Practice Guide (Rumberger et al., 2017).

Table 9. Sample student engagement survey questions

Questions/Statements	What is Being Measured
How much do you agree with the following statements? • I usually look forward to this class. • I work hard to do my best in this class. • Sometimes I get so interested in my work I don't want to stop. • The topics we are studying are interesting and challenging.	Academic Engagement
How much do you agree with the following statements? • When my teachers tell me not to do something, I know they have a good reason. • I feel safe and comfortable with teachers at this school. • My teachers always keep their promises. • My teachers will always listen to students' ideas. • My teachers treat me with respect.	Student-Teacher Trust
How much do you agree with the following statements? • My classes give me useful preparation for what I plan to do in life. • High school teaches me valuable skills. • Working hard in high school matters for success in the workforce. • What we learn in class is necessary for success in the future. • I have someone who is helping me with my college and career goals.	Importance of School for the Future

Potential Roadblock 1

Teachers are focused on traditional academics and resistant to integrating non-academic skills or a career curriculum.

Suggested Approach. Schools should provide teachers with the reasons for including non-academic skills in their teaching to ensure teachers fully understand why these skills are important and how they support academic growth. It is helpful for schools to provide examples to teachers of how non-academic skills can be integrated into traditional academics. Schools can partner with industry experts to support teachers' use of a career curriculum. Schools can create an industry advisory board that helps with lesson planning, hosts job site visits, or offers feedback on student work. Providing teachers with professional development and time to collaborate across subjects ensures lessons align with state standards while integrating career themes. Emphasizing that a career focus can engage students and using existing resources for integrated lessons can further ease the transition. Districts can assist by fostering collaboration between career and academic staff and offering schools flexibility in curriculum choices.

Potential Roadblock 2

"We do not have enough staff to deliver a program focused on building students' capacity to manage challenges in and out of school."

Suggested Approach. Schools with limited staff can still help students build the non-academic skills needed to manage challenges by integrating these lessons into the regular curriculum. Teachers can model skills, use structured group work, and provide explicit instruction on decision making and problem solving within their existing subjects. Districts and states can support this approach by adopting non-academic skill standards, offering sample lesson plans, and providing professional development for teachers.

For students needing extra support, schools can implement a peer mentoring program integrated into the school day. Peer mentors can be trained and overseen through a credit-bearing leadership course, with one class per week dedicated to mentoring sessions using an established curriculum. This approach ensures non-academic skill instruction and mentorship are part of students' daily routines without requiring additional staff.

Potential Roadblock 3

"We do not have enough time during the day for students to practice problem solving or anger management skills."

Suggested Approach. Schools can address time constraints for teaching problem solving and anger management skills by leveraging natural opportunities throughout the school day. Train all staff, including support staff, to recognize moments where students can apply these skills. This approach integrates skill practice into daily interactions, making it part of the school culture without requiring additional time in the schedule.

Additional Resources

WWC Intervention Report: Career Academies (What Works Clearinghouse, 2015):
What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) identified one study of career academies that falls within the scope of the Dropout Prevention topic area and meets WWC group design standards without reservations. The study included between 1,379 and 1,454 students (depending on outcome) who applied to an academy before their ninth grade or 10th grade years. The WWC considers the extent of evidence for career academies on the educational attainment of high-school aged youth to be small for three outcome domains—completing school, staying in school, and progressing in school.

College and workforce outcomes for Indiana and Minnesota students who concentrate in career and technical education (REL Midwest, 2021):
These infographics highlight key findings from a REL Midwest study that examined whether high school graduates in Indiana and Minnesota who completed a large number of career and technical education courses in a single career-oriented program of study (concentrators) had different college and workforce outcomes from graduates who completed fewer (samplers) or no career and technical education courses (non-participants).

Facilitating Postsecondary Success: Strategies to Remove Service Roadblocks for Students with Disabilities (REL Mid-Atlantic, 2024):
Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) include a secondary transition section to help students with disabilities prepare for life after high school. However, navigating postsecondary pathways can be challenging for students, families, and school staff. This infographic highlights these challenges and provides five key strategies to support smoother transitions to college, careers, and community participation.

Measuring Career Readiness in High School Literature Scan (Warner et al., 2019):
REL Appalachia explores how to define and assess career readiness for high school students. It reviews multiple frameworks that identify key competencies, including academic knowledge, technical skills, and employability traits such as problem solving and communication. The report also examines various assessment tools and strategies to measure career readiness, emphasizing the importance of aligning educational programs with workforce demands.

High-Quality Advising: Building Systems for Implementing Individualized Career Plans (REL Southwest, 2024):
This infographic describes the purpose of individualized career plans, also known as ICPs, how they prepare students for the future, and the practices that schools can adopt to implement high-quality ICPs.

Career and Technical Education Credentials in Virginia High Schools: Trends in Attainment and College Enrollment Outcomes (Harris et al., 2021):
In 2013, the Virginia legislature added a CTE credential requirement to the Standard diploma for students who entered ninth grade for the first time in 2013 or later. The policy focuses on Standard diploma graduates, who are less likely to enroll in, persist in, or complete college than graduates who earn Virginia's other main diploma, the Advanced Studies diploma. At Virginia CTE leaders' request, REL Appalachia conducted a descriptive study of attainment rates of CTE credentials, completion rates of CTE programs of study, and college enrollment rates from 2011 to 2017, the years before and after the policy change.

Four Pillars of Support for High School Students' College and Career Readiness (REL Appalachia, 2022):
Teachers, counselors, and school leaders play a vital role in building, assessing, and strengthening four pillars of support students need to graduate from high school with multiple options for the future. This infographic includes an overview of the four pillars as well as questions and research-based strategies for educators to assess and strengthen supports for students.

Building Bridges to College and Career - Supporting Self-Efficacy: Training Materials (Park & Biagas, 2019):
These training materials from REL Appalachia include a PowerPoint presentation and handouts with tools and resources on nonacademic strategies to support students' postsecondary transitions. The materials also describe research on the link between social-emotional skills and students' successful postsecondary transitions, and they provide evidence-based strategies to help students develop self-efficacy, a skill associated with students' successful transitions. These materials were originally presented at the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Peer Group Conference to VCCS career coaches who work in high schools to support students' postsecondary transitions.

Building Bridges to College and Career: Social Emotional Preparation (Campbell et al., 2019):
REL Appalachia shared tools and resources on preparing students with social emotional skills for successful postsecondary transitions. The session provided research-based strategies for building school culture, growth mindset, and self-efficacy for all educators including teachers, principals, school counselors, leaders from schools and school districts, university college and career readiness. counselors, and career and technical education (CTE) staff.

Exploring How Social and Emotional (SEL) Competencies Influence College and Career Readiness in the REL Pacific Region (REL Pacific, 2018):
REL Pacific stakeholders were interested in learning how social and emotional learning competencies impact students' academic success and college readiness. Through coaching, trainings, and research, REL Pacific and its partnerships examined intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies that may be related to student success.

Supporting Students' Independent Learning with Self-Assessment Strategies (REL West, 2021):
When teachers explicitly teach students the strategies of self-assessment, they become better at independently using those skills. This infographic provides sample questions teachers can use with K–8 students to support their reflection on their learning as they read, write, and problem solve.

Shifting the Current School Climate (REL Northwest, 2018):
A positive school climate promotes belonging, which is the foundation for holistic well-being. When people in a school treat one another with respect and cultivate a welcoming physical and emotional space, students are more likely to feel like they belong. This sets them up for improving behavioral and interpersonal skills as well as academic success. The infographic describes both schoolwide and classroom-level actions that adults can take to foster a positive environment.

Survey Says School Climate Data Can Drive School Improvement (REL Mid-Atlantic, 2024):
This REL infographic discusses why school climate is important and how school climate can be measured.

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