



Engaging Students in On-Track Conversations

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Purpose

Success Teams are responsible for creating multiple opportunities to engage students in On-Track conversations. These opportunities can include school-wide events and Freshman Seminar or Advisory programs. Tool Set C provides examples on how one NCS partner school approached student engagement around On-Track goals.

How & When to Use

Success Teams can use Tool Set C to generate their own ideas for the work. It is important to distribute activities and responsibilities among team members to avoid burnout.

Success Team conversations focused on supporting incoming freshmen should happen in the spring so the team is ready to maximize opportunities, such as freshman orientation, later in the summer to engage students.



Connections to Framework

The [Freshman Success Framework](#) is the foundation for effective school practice on On-Track and student success. The Network for College Success has seen the greatest and most sustainable gains for freshmen when schools develop high-functioning educator professional learning communities, which we call Success Teams.

This Tool Set focuses on the below actions of a Success Team stemming from the Freshman Success Framework.

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Elements	Success Team	
Setting Conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops effective meeting strategies, such as establishing a mission statement and clear purpose, and building norms and action-oriented agendas Shares Success Team roles and responsibilities conducive to freshman success work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With principal and Team Lead, establishes foundational knowledge, sets purpose, and creates freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection Engages in regular, calendared Success Team meetings to 1) analyze data and 2) develop, monitor, and adjust interventions
Implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops, implements, tracks, and evaluates Tier 2 interventions, making adjustments when appropriate 	
Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains strengths-based and action-oriented communication to support students Celebrates student and adult successes around On-Track and student connection goals Engages faculty in frequent communication on student progress and successful strategies 	
Instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates, implements, and evaluates instructional strategies around student engagement 	

This Tool Set also highlights the actions stemming from the Framework for the Principal and Team Lead in support of the Success Team work.

Team Lead

- Setting Conditions: Acquires foundational knowledge on the importance of freshman course performance as well as tools and strategies to lead the Success Team
- Setting Conditions: With principal and data technician, establishes Success Team meeting calendar that includes regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment
- Setting Conditions: With principal and Success Team, sets freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection, and develops benchmarks to monitor progress

Principal

- Setting Conditions: Selects, programs, sets purpose, and provides foundational knowledge on freshman success work for core set of grade-level teachers
- Setting Conditions: Provides and protects team meeting calendar, with regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment
- Implementation: Reviews and interrogates interim freshman success-related data in light of Success Team goals, and strategizes with team leadership around next steps



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Ideas for Engaging Students to Stay On Track

A menu of engagement activities aligned with the school calendar to support timely and relevant student engagement in On-Track efforts.

Ideas for Engaging Students to Stay On Track

Summer Prior to Entering Ninth Grade

Begin exposing incoming freshmen to the concept of On Track through transition activities. Use current students to deliver this information whenever possible! Possible activities include:

- Pre-Orientation/High School Investigation Day
- Freshman Connection
- Department teacher phone calls and/or individual meetings
- Back-to-School Orientation in August

Quarter 1

Get into the specifics about what freshmen must do to be considered On Track. Example activities:

- Grade-level assembly during 1st week of school, market as “On-Track pep rally”
- Classroom guidance lessons (On-Track Unit)
- Have students evaluate their first 5-week progress report. Using On-Track criteria, students evaluate whether they are On Track or off track. Can be done through any class, advisory period, or during a guidance lesson.
- Post pictures of On-Track students in lunchroom or high-traffic area
- Tie 1st quarter awards to On-Track status
- All freshman teachers should use On-Track language in their classes and relate students’ performance in their classes to being On Track or off track
- Small group meetings with off-track students, led by upperclassmen

Ideas for Engaging Students to Stay On Track

Quarters 2-3

Don't let the fire burn out from 1st quarter! Students will pick up on it and begin to think that it's not important anymore. Continue the On-Track talk throughout the 2nd and 3rd quarters. Example activities:

- On-Track breakfast club
- Field trips only for On-Track students
- Facilitate healthy department competition, such as a pizza party for the department with the most On-Track students
- Small group meetings for marginally off-track students, led by upperclassmen
- One-on-one meetings for severely off-track students, led by counselors, teachers, or administrators
- Grade-level meetings that center around On-Track trends for the entire grade
- Department/or advisory activities that help students to track their own data, such as attendance rate, number of D's/F's, detentions, etc.
- Gradebook checks that occur once weekly during a class (rotate which class throughout school year, so time is not taken from the same class each time)
- Pass out FAQs or myths/facts that clear up any misconceptions about being off track

Ideas for Engaging Students to Stay On Track

Quarter 4

During the final quarter, help each student understand what he/she must do in order to get back On Track. This is often very time-consuming because it is so highly individualized and may vary from student to student. Dividing students among the Success Team and using adult mentors can help alleviate the burden.

- Small group or one-on-one meetings with off-track students. At the end of the meeting, students should be able to articulate exactly what they need to do to get back On Track.
- It is important to communicate to students that they can ALWAYS get back On Track, no matter how off track they may currently be. It may take more work for some students, but it is always possible.
- Culminating On-Track field trip or reward that students can work toward
- Final On-Track awards given at end-of-year ceremony
- Expose students to their sophomore year On-Track “to-do” list



Engaging Students in On-Track Conversations

On-Track Unit Plan

An instructional unit created and implemented by the guidance department of a Network for College Success partner school. Teachers can modify the unit for use during seminar and/or advisory classes.



On-Track Unit Plan

Overview

Purpose	To familiarize freshmen with the concept of “On-Track” status
Grade Level	First-semester freshmen
ASCA* Standards Addressed	A:A1.5 - Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning A:B2.3 - Develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement
# of Sessions	Three Total Session #1: What Does “On-Track” Mean? Session #2: What is my 4-Year Plan? Session #3: Am I On Track?
Time Required	45 minutes each
Evaluation Tools	Pre- and post-tests



On-Track Unit Plan

Session #1: What Does “On-Track” Mean?

Goals & Objectives	<p>Goal 1: Introduce students to the concept of On Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Students will learn the definition of “On-Track” • Objective 2: Students will explore the credit requirements for graduation • Objective 3: Students will identify the “checkpoints” that occur throughout the year <p>Goal 2: Develop an awareness of the importance of staying On Track throughout high school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Students will explore the relationship between freshman On-Track status and graduating from high school • Objective 2: Students will brainstorm and discuss possible consequences of falling off track in freshman year • Objective 3: Students will explore the relationship between attendance and On-Track status
ASCA* Standards Addressed	A:A1.5 - Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning
Time Required	45 minutes
Materials Needed	What Does “On-Track” Mean? PowerPoint
Evaluation Tools	Pre- and post-tests

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #1: What Does “On-Track” Mean? (cont.)

Lesson Plan

1. Complete pre-test with students (5 min.)
2. Begin PowerPoint
 - a. Making It to College activity and time for processing (8-9 min.)
 - b. On-Track lesson (5 min.)
 - c. Is This Student On Track? group activity (5 min.)
 - d. Attendance lesson (5 min.)
 - e. Activity and share-out (5-6 min.)
 - f. Checkpoints and wrap-up (5 min.)
3. Complete post-test with students (5 min.)

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #2: What is my 4-Year Plan?

Goals & Objectives	<p>Goal 1: To develop a 4-year individual plan of study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Students will use the transcript evaluation form to review the course requirements for graduation • Objective 2: Students will explore the relationship between creating a 4-year plan and staying On Track • Objective 3: Students will apply their knowledge of the graduation requirements to map out courses for the entire four years of high school
ASCA* Standards Addressed	<p>A:B2.3 – Develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement</p>
Time Required	<p>45 minutes</p>
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies of the transcript evaluation/4-year plan of study form • Small bag of candy
Evaluation Tools	<p>Pre- and post-tests</p>

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #2: What is my 4-Year Plan?

Lesson Plan

1. Complete pre-test with students (5 min.)
2. Pop-quiz for candy (5 min.)
 - a. What does the concept of On Track mean? (On-Track means you are performing in a manner that will allow you to graduate in four years. Must earn at least 5 credits by June of freshman year and can fail no more than one semester of one core course.)
 - b. An On-Track freshman is how many times more likely to graduate in four years than an off-track freshman? (3.5 times)
 - c. How many credits do you need to graduate from high school? (24 credits)
 - d. If you pass all of your classes freshman year, how many credits can you earn by the end of the year? (6 credits)
3. Pass out a transcript evaluation form to each student. Explain how it illustrates the graduation requirements, elective courses, and non-credit requirements. Discuss courses open to freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. (5 min.)
4. Instruct students to fill out their tentative 4-year plans on the transcript evaluation form. Explain that these plans are not set in stone and may change from year to year. Ask students why having a plan can help them stay On Track to Graduate. (25 min)
5. Complete post-test with students (5 min.)



On-Track Unit Plan

Session #3: Am I On Track?

(To be completed after 1st semester transcripts are available)

Goals & Objectives	<p>Goal 1: To assist students in identifying and evaluating their On-Track status after the 1st semester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Students will use the transcript evaluation form to evaluate their first transcripts • Objective 2: Each student will determine his/her On-Track status and develop a plan to get On Track or remain On Track for the 2nd semester
ASCA* Standards Addressed	<p>A:A1.5 - Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning</p> <p>A:B2.3 - Develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement</p>
Time Required	<p>45 minutes</p>
Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students' completed 4-year plans/transcript evaluation forms • Each student's transcript • Am I On Track? worksheet • "On Track" guide poster • A few pieces of candy
Evaluation Tools	<p>Pre- and post-tests</p>

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #3: Am I On Track?

(To be completed after 1st semester transcripts are available)

Lesson Plan

1. Complete pre-test with students (5 min.)
2. Pop-quiz for candy (1 min.)
 - a. What does the concept of On Track mean? (On-Track means you are performing in a manner that will allow you to graduate in four years. Must earn at least 5 credits by June of freshman year and can fail no more than one semester of one core course.)
 - b. If you pass all of your classes, how many credits can you earn by the end of 1st semester? (3 credits)
3. Define “transcript.” (A document that shows all the classes you passed in high school, your grades, GPA, and any special awards, activities, or honors that you received. Many colleges use it to make admissions decisions.) Pass out each student’s transcript. Discuss how to read a transcript – point out the following: identifying information, class rank, courses passed/failed, credits, service learning hours, and GPA. (10 min.)
4. Pass out each student’s transcript evaluation form/4-year plan that he/she completed during the last lesson. Instruct students to fill out the transcript evaluation form, checking off each 1st semester class that they passed. Pointing out the “Am I On Track?” poster, have students write on the form whether they are On Track and why. (10 min.)
5. Complete post-test with students (5 min.)