

Navigation 101: What we are seeing and learning on the path to preparing all students for college and careers

This document provides a summary of findings from The BERC Group conducted evaluation of the 149 schools that received Navigation 101 grants during the 2009-2010 school year, as well as a description of strategies to improve program implementation.¹ BERC is currently facilitating an evaluation of the 2010-2011 Navigation 101 grantees. The report from this evaluation will be completed in the fall of 2011 and will include several case studies of schools with especially strong Navigation 101 programs, which will further enhance our understanding of how to implement Navigation 101 in the ways that best support student college and career readiness.

What is Navigation 101?

Navigation 101, which originated in the Franklin Pierce School District in Washington, is a program designed to prepare all students, regardless of income, for college and career. The five key elements of Navigation 101 include:

- ✓ **Curriculum-driven student advisories**
Help students and teachers develop more personalized relationships
- ✓ **Student planning portfolios**
Paper or electronic, which support student planning and reflection
- ✓ **Student-led conferences**
Comprised of the student, parents/guardians, and teachers, conferences provide the student with the opportunity to discuss her achievements and challenges
- ✓ **Student-informed scheduling**
When done in partnership with student-led conferences, empowers the student to make informed, college-ready choices about future course selection
- ✓ **Evaluating data**
The use of student success data, including gatekeeper course tracking, graduation rates, and college bound data to monitor student progress and program development indicate areas of strength, as well as challenges

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and College Spark Washington are partners in an effort to support the college and career readiness of students through Navigation 101. A primary goal of this partnership is to support schools in developing strong, sustainable, comprehensive college and career readiness programs. To support Navigation 101 implementation, we award grants to schools and commission program evaluations. Our goal to improve the college and career readiness of all Washington students.

¹ http://www.collegespark.org/files/2010_Nav_Report.pdf

The BEREC evaluation states that the majority of schools implemented advisories, required students to create portfolios, and conducted student-led conferences. However, many schools struggled with student-informed scheduling and evaluating data.

Why is Navigation 101 important?

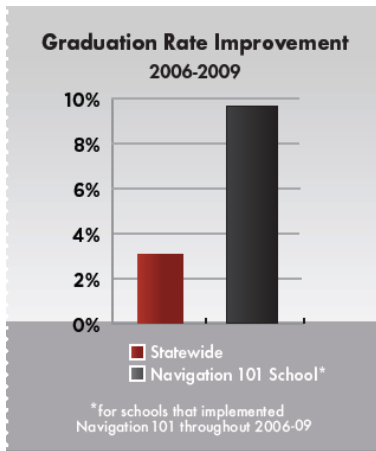
A current focal point of education is to prepare all students to become college and career ready, and research shows that comprehensive school guidance and counseling programs that provide all students with equal access to mentoring, college-related information, and academic assistance increase students' college readiness.

Navigation 101 encompasses these three areas in a concise framework to help all students plan for their future.

“Navigation 101 is a robust program that has the potential impact of preparing students to be college ready. School districts across the state have implemented the program to varying degrees, some successfully while others continue to struggle.” (BERC, i)

Evidence of Positive Impact

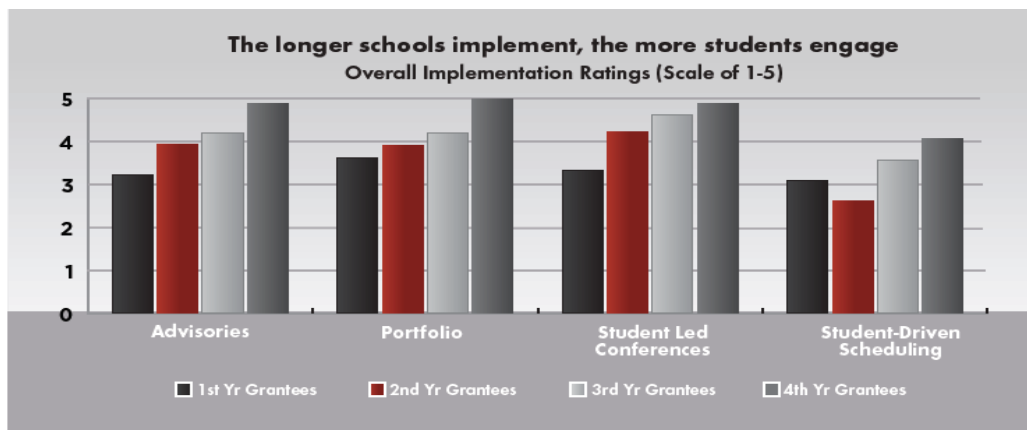
- ✓ Between 2004 and 2009, schools implementing Navigation 101 improved college-going rates by 10 percent, 3 percent higher than the improvement rate for all Washington high schools.
- ✓ Schools implementing Navigation 101 for four years saw the greatest gains in graduation rates. These gains were three times as high as the State of Washington.



“We have doubled the number of college-ready student in the last three years based on numbers in rigorous classes, applications submitted, and students attending post-secondary options.” *Teacher*

“...Navigation 101 provides stability and support for kids; while the rest of their schedule changes, something is consistent.” (BERC, 15)

- ✓ Data also shows the longer that the schools implement Navigation 101, the stronger the program elements.



Emerging Promising Practices²

- ✓ **Raising expectations for all students:** overall students reported that staff expected them to go to college, and personnel at all schools noted the importance of college-going culture and reported an increase in the awareness and expectation for all students to attend college. These perceptions suggest a trend toward higher expectations for all students.
- ✓ **Progression from informed student to good decision maker:** students reported they are more informed of courses to take to get ready for college and enter their field of choice, which is a promising development in that it exemplifies the natural progression from informed student to good decision-maker.
- ✓ **Student ownership and responsibility:** staff across schools shared the perspective that Navigation 101 empowers students to be more responsible for their learning. This is a promising development since it has been shown that when students lead their learning a great deal can be achieved.

Program Components

Advisories

Why they are important

Advisories provide a structure for students to develop personalized relationships with teachers. The BERC evaluation states that “one key driver of change across all schools was the strong staff-student relationships developed through...advisory.” Reports an advisory teacher, “It’s building relationships with those kids. They have someone they can go to, they have at least one person they can always go to who will look out for what they are doing.” (BERC, 48)

Students also benefit from having structured time during the school day when they can explore issues of college and career readiness, which in the past were dependent on an individual student’s independent exploration and took place outside the school day.

What’s going well

Teachers report positive relationships with students created through advisory. “I have one student [in advisory] who has never been a student in any of my regular classes who comes to me on a regular basis for help with his English homework. We would have never had that connection without Navigation 101.”

Challenges to implementation

Teachers report that less than six out of ten students have an advisor who monitors and supports their college and career readiness. Some teachers have reported feeling inadequately prepared to lead an advisory, which could include helping students with course selection, post-secondary planning and goals, developing a portfolio, and preparing for student-led conferences. These

² BERC Executive Summary and 51 &52

teachers reported that they lack training in college requirements and the skills and knowledge to be successful advisory leaders. Related, some teachers raised concern about the advisory curriculum (see below). Lastly, creating time in the schedule for regular, consistent advisories has been a challenge for some schools.

How to get better

What schools can do To ensure that each student has an advisor, create a school culture where all teachers, staff, and counselors participate in advisory. Offer teachers professional development to enhance their skills and knowledge. Treat advisory as an “untouchable” in the school schedule and establish a consistent schedule. Engage and include the school and district leadership.

What partners can do Develop and offer professional development that explores the advising/mentoring role and its impact on student career and college readiness, as well as the direct benefits of Navigation 101 to the advisor. Provide examples of structures that supplement advisory, such as counselors or career specialists providing highly specialized information and guidance in classrooms. For schools unable to schedule advisory, highlight alternative settings, such as core classes, for Navigation 101 instruction.

Communication

Why it is important

Communications structures and practices exist at every school to share news, accomplishments, and general information with students, families and community members. When implementing a new program, it is critical to communicate early and often with your stakeholders to gain support and buy-in.

What’s going well

Many schools have found it effective to leverage existing communication structures already in use, such as the school website, daily announcements, school and district newsletters, and local newspapers.

Challenges to implementation

Parents reported a lack of knowledge about Navigation 101 goals and objectives. Staff agreed that communication with parents and community members has been limited. Internal communication within the schools about the purpose and scope of Navigation 101 and teachers’ roles and responsibilities has also been limited. According to survey results, less than 5 percent of schools distributed the Navigation 101 newsletter (*Navigator*) to parents, less than 6 percent to students and less than 20 percent to staff.

How to get better

What schools can do Identify communication tools (paper, web-based) and processes (assemblies, conferences) that are part of existing strategies or those that can be easily developed to share information about Navigation 101 with internal and external

audiences. Engage students in using social media to share information about Navigation 101 with their peers. Provide the [Navigation 101 program guide](#), available in English, Russian Spanish, and Vietnamese to students and families to help them understand what the program is and how it will help them.

What partners can do Provide professional development on communicating and engaging stakeholders. Ensure that schools have easy-to-use factsheet and newsletters about Navigation 101. Ask school leaders to plan and set goals for how they will communicate with internal (students, teachers, staff, counselors) and external (parents, community members) stakeholders. Ask each school to identify a communications point person.

Curriculum

Why it is important

The Navigation 101 curriculum provides a consistent road map for all Navigation 101 grantees to implement in each advisory. It provides advisory teachers with a baseline starting point -- focused on college and career-ready skills and knowledge -- to use in their classroom. For many students, Navigation 101 is a primary source of college and career information-- the materials that prompt them to think about how to connect their interests and dreams to college and career and learn the specific steps they need to take to become college & career ready. The curriculum is based on Washington EALRs, GLEs, and national standards from the American School Counselor Association.

What's going well

There are a range of curriculum options available to schools including the paper and on-line lessons available through Navigation101.com as well as the lessons available on the [OSPI Website](#), the [Sparking the Future](#) lesson plans especially developed for potential first-generation college students, the materials and resources coalesced in the Washington College Access Network's [Aspirations to Actions](#) Toolkit, and materials provided through sources like [KnowHow2Go](#) and [Gear-Up](#). For the 2010-2011 school year, the lessons available through Navigation101.com were modified to be more engaging and on-line lessons for middle schools students became available. Practitioners in Washington State contributed directly to establishing engaging activities for the classroom-based lessons which are now used in 85 percent of the schools. Some schools also supplement with their own curriculum.

Challenges to implementation

During the 2009-2010 school year, many teachers and students agreed that the advisory curriculum lacked depth and meaning. Teachers mentioned the inadequate scope and sequence of the curriculum. However, based on this feedback, for the 2010-2011 school year, Envictus and several representatives from grantee schools redeveloped the paper and on-line lessons available at Navigation101.com to make them more engaging. Additionally, on-line lessons

for middle schools students became available during the 2010-2011 school year. Curriculum challenges that remain to be addressed include better differentiation for grade levels, and the development of materials that better address the needs of ELL, special education, and underrepresented student populations.

How to get better

What schools can do Implement the revised curriculum and continue to provide feedback on what is and isn't working and how it can be improved. Grantees are also encouraged to supplement the curriculum frameworks to meet their own needs and to share their home-grown curriculum resources with other grantees.

What partners can do Continue to engage practitioners in curriculum improvements. Provide opportunities for resource sharing amongst grantees. Communicate to grantees some of the sources where they can find supplemental curriculum and make recommendations on how the curriculum can be folded into existing lessons. Develop specific supplemental lesson plans for targeted populations.

Differentiated community resources

Why they are important

Community resources include job shadows, internships, campus visits, on-site speakers, and community service opportunities. Students are more engaged in school and their education when they have hands-on learning opportunities about topics and issues that have real-world connections and value.

What's going well

As a complement to advisory, some schools have begun to offer students real-world learning opportunities.

Challenges to implementation

Some schools may have strong community connections due to location, savvy parents and teachers, and alumni support, while other schools struggle to create real-world connections for their students.

How to get better

What schools can do Schools can leverage their existing community resources and partnerships to create hands-on, real-world learning opportunities. Schools might also tap into existing district partnerships and expertise to develop a community network of resources to support Navigation 101 implementation. Involve the school's career specialist, who may have valuable connections with local business and community groups interested in supporting hands-on learning opportunities. Consider joining the [Washington College Access Network](#) (WCAN) as a way to connect with other groups in your community working to address college and career readiness.

What partners can do Help create an awareness of existing Washington-focused resources, such as [WCAN](#) and the regional coalitions that engage in local conversations and resource sharing related to college and career readiness. Highlight schools that have expanded internships and college visits at Navigation 101 professional development events.

Gatekeeper courses

Why they are important

[Gatekeeper courses](#) can be “hurdles that slow or halt a student’s progress toward a degree.” They act as a gate, keeping students who don’t take them out of higher-level high school courses. Chemistry and Algebra II are two examples. Gatekeeper courses can also be defined as those courses that a student must have to be college eligible. To increase the quantity and diversity of students who attend college and other post-secondary options, schools have begun to increase the number of gatekeeper courses offered due to student demand. Research shows that these courses correlate with college enrollment and completion rates.

What’s going well

Teachers report that more students are requesting gatekeeper courses. Over 40 percent of teacher surveyed reported that students are encouraged to enroll in gatekeeper courses. Many attribute their success in this to the fact that student complete registration through the Navigation 101 classroom and then share registration plans, both for the near-term and long-term, with parents during student-led conferences.

Challenges to implementation

During 2008 and 2009, the majority of students graduating from Navigation 101 schools were not college-eligible because of required course deficiencies. In addition, increasing course offerings is not sufficient. Many students will require additional supports and interventions to be successful.

While 75 percent of students reported that they knew what courses they needed for graduation, only 59 percent reported that they knew what courses were needed for college entrance.

How to get better

What schools can do

Provide students with information about the college entrance course requirements early enough for them to choose high school courses; communicate these requirements along with high school graduation requirements. Make a high school college-eligible transcript the default for all students. To ensure that all students have the necessary support to succeed in gatekeeper courses, schools should consider what supports (tutors, after school programs, offering the courses more frequently) and programs (AVID, MESA, etc.) can be offered to ensure that students not only take the required courses to be college and career ready, but that they successfully complete them.

School leaders should also consider vertical teaming opportunities between middle and high school teachers which will create opportunities for conversation about the preparation middle school students need to be successful in high school. School and district leaders can examine the transcript data provided from The BERC Group to determine which courses account for the majority of gatekeeper courses on student transcripts.

What partners can do Offer professional development for advisors on the relationship between gatekeeper enrollment and student educational and career attainment. Develop supplemental student lessons that reinforce the linkages between student gatekeeper courses and college and career choices. Share learnings from the College Spark Washington [College Readiness Rigor Grants](#), which awarded ten districts funding to focus on increasing access to and success in rigorous high school courses.

Student planning portfolios

Why they are important

Paper or electronic, portfolios contain post-high school plans, exemplary school work, records of academic progress and community service. Schools differ in collection, storage, and access to portfolios from year to year. These planning portfolios provide students the opportunity to more authentically engage in their education through their individualized planning.

What's going well

Some students are creating portfolios of exemplary work during middle and high school. Students are collecting and organizing their work and using it as a student-centered story-telling tool about their learning.

Challenges to implementation

Advisors and students reported the expectations for portfolio usage is inconsistent from year to year and advisory to advisory. Some teachers and students complain that the transition plan for portfolio use from middle school to high school is insufficient.

How to get better

What schools can do Create school-wide portfolio content guidelines and expectations for usage, that provide individual student flexibility and creativity, but with clear student and teacher expectations for collection, storage, and use. Middle and high schools can develop portfolio transition plans that allow students to build portfolios and college and career plans consistently throughout their secondary school career; districts can support or lead this work.

What partners can do Adopt the State Board of Education's [nine recommendations for creating a robust High School and Beyond Plan](#) within advisory lessons. Offer professional development for teachers and advisors about how to create and use student planning portfolios, including web-based portfolios that many students find

more meaningful and useful than paper-based portfolios. Provide guidance on how to integrate and/or streamline on-line and paper-based portfolios. Prepare and distribute a summary of innovative planning portfolios from current grantees.

Professional development

Why it is important

Professional development for all staff is critical for the successful implementation of Navigation 101. Teachers are being asked to support students in new ways and provide new information and guidance to them. In order for teachers to have the required skills and knowledge, they must have on-going professional development opportunities.

What's going well

Envictus offered fall and spring NavAcademies to school and district coordinators and many staff who attended reported having positive experiences. Participants appreciated the diversity of strands and the opportunity to hear from others schools about best practices and challenges. Change management consultants were also provided to some schools and they assist with program implementation and sustainability.

Challenges to implementation

Many teachers received some curricular training in Navigation 101. Some reported the training insufficiently prepared them to support students in guidance and counseling principles. Some staff indicated that the NavAcademies were not applicable to their context (middle schools, small schools, etc.). In addition, some schools receiving support from the change management consultants indicated a limited understanding of the full array of support available from Envictus. The amount of contact between each school and Envictus also varied considerably.

How to get better

What schools can do

Schedule regular professional development or training events within the school (e.g. Offer a 10 minute lesson preview following a staff meeting), include Navigation 101 professional development during in-service days, and engage more staff members directly in Navigation 101 training or professional development events. Seek assistance from your change management consultants, or contact Mike Hubert and Danise Ackelson at OSPI.

What partners can do

Help schools “tell the story” about Navigation 101 by developing professional development modules for each of the five program elements, as well as some of the sub-elements. Provide opportunities for more staff to engage in professional development in a cost-effective manner. For example, this spring, over 30 percent of all schools participating in NavAcademy workshops chose to access the professional development online, and many of them attended with a team.

Student accountability

Why it is important

In order to benefit from Navigation 101, students must participate and engage in the program. They must be accountable for their behavior, attendance, and preparation in advisory, student-led conferences, portfolio development and maintenance.

What's going well

Some schools offer credit for advisory, increasing student engagement and accountability. Student completion of online lessons and demonstration of mastery is tracked automatically through Navigation101.com.

Challenges to implementation

Some teachers reported students do not place a high priority on portfolio work until they reach their senior year. At some schools advisory attendance is another area of concern. According to one student, "a lot [of students] skip school on Navigation 101 day, because they are bored, don't think they need it, don't get graded for it – it's another free day." (BERC, 15)

How to get better

What schools can do

Create and communicate expectations for student participation in Navigation 101. Consider offering credit for advisory and completing Navigation 101 milestones. Help students understand why they are participating in Navigation 101 and discover hooks that engage them based on their interests. In addition, examine adult behavior and perceptions. Said a student, "Some [students] take it [advisory] seriously, some don't. [It] depends on the advisor in the class. If the advisor takes it seriously, so will students." (BERC 17)

What partners can do

Reinforce portfolio purposes as both planning and summative. Develop professional development for staff that reinforces the purposes and benefits of a student planning portfolio and the tools (tracking and remediation) that it provides students. Prepare and distribute a summary of innovative strategies for increasing student engagement. Share student planning portfolios from current grantees.

Student-informed scheduling

Why it is important

Through advisory, students understand what courses they need to graduate college and work-ready. During student-led conferences, they talk with their teacher and parents about the academic progress and future plans. Based on those plans, students make scheduling requests.

What's going well

Some schools have integrated the course registration process into student-led conferences, making a natural link between students' college and career goals and the courses they take in high school.

Challenges to implementation During interviews and focus groups, most teachers expressed a vague understanding and were also unable to provide specific information about the scheduling process. Many students reported having little control/input over their schedule which was supported by only 30 percent of teachers reporting that students select courses using data from conferences and portfolios. Teacher availability, adequate classroom space, and building resources were additional challenges.

How to get better

What schools can do Couple student-led conferences and scheduling so that students, with guidance from teachers and parents, can make informed, timely college and work-ready choices about their future course selection. Use student scheduling requests to develop the master schedule. Track how many students are taking gatekeeper courses – both enrollment and completion/pass data. Find out how many students graduating with a college-eligible transcript or a transcript that prepares them for their post-secondary path of choice and make it a priority to move the needle on these indicators of college and career readiness.

What partners can do Develop professional development and resources that outline the master schedule process, from the student perspective (an interest in taking particular courses based on interests and goals), as well as from the system perspective (offering the correct type and number of courses based on student requests and ensuring that all students graduate with a college- and career-ready diploma). Develop registration protocols that reinforce the student High School and Beyond Plan, Washington Minimum College Admission Standards, and course compatibility. (See the [State Board of Education](#) for useful resources.)

Student-led conferences

Why they are important

Student-led conferences provide students an opportunity to discuss their college & career goals and academic achievements and challenges with their families and teachers.

What's going well

Most students, teachers, and parents express a positive perspective on student-led conferences. This element of Navigation 101 is seen as effective because it promotes student accountability and is an opportunity for families and schools to engage in a meaningful and productive way. The majority of schools reported implementing student-led conferences, but the process is different school to school based on grades participating, frequency, and scheduling. Parents reported feeling supported by the school and informed about their children's progress. Reported a parent, "It makes us all one team, committed to working together."

Challenges to implementation Parents also reported that while their child shared their academic achievements and plans for the future, there were limited discussions about future course registration. Parents also raised concerns about only hearing their child’s perspective of their performance and progress during the conferences.

How to get better

What schools can do Work with district leaders to ensure proper time is allocated for student-led conferences. Leverage student-led conferences as an opportunity to educate and engage parents, students, and community stakeholders about Navigation 101. Include student-led conferences as part of the pre-published school and district calendars. Publish snapshots that describe the successes and challenges of student-led conferences. Develop a plan that ensures all students conduct a student led conference even if their family member can’t attend at the scheduled time: have an alternative adult sit in on the conference or offer alternative dates and times for make-up student led conferences.

What partners can do Continue to provide professional development related to student-led conferences for school leaders, teachers, and staff. Develop examples of student-led conferences for staff, students, and parents. Develop and distribute a student-led conferences “best practices” crosswalk for school use in planning student-led conferences. Ensure that the curriculum naturally feeds into student led conferences.

Technology

Why it is important

Implementing the on-line lessons available to Navigation 101 schools requires adequate computer access, which is key to making sure students have access to the myriad of college and career readiness resources available to them. Technology access varies by school. Some schools use technology to deliver advisory curriculum, others may use it to create and store student portfolios. Still others are not using technology in any aspect of their college and career readiness or advisory programs or strategies.

What’s going well

According to survey results, during the 2009-2010 school year, the online curriculum is used by almost half of 9th grade advisory teachers.

Challenges to implementation

Some grantees reported that lack of computers and computer time are the biggest barriers to using the online advisory lessons developed by Envictus. Teachers also reported technical difficulties with the computers and the lack of skills necessary for technology management, use, and implementation.

How to get better

What schools can do Leverage existing classroom labs, mobile labs, and other resources for lessons. Schedule online lessons during core classes that have in-class computers or can more easily access labs.

What partners can do Survey schools to find out about creative ways to use technology. Adapt curriculum so that it can be flexible and used in either an electronic or classroom format.

Using data to improve

Why it is important

Model schools are committed to using data as an on-going improvement strategy. They collect it, disaggregate it, study it, analyze it, discuss it, and use it to guide their teaching and learning decisions.

What's going well

Schools participating in the BERC evaluation of Navigation 101 receive survey and student outcome data for their school; sessions on analyzing and using this data were very popular at the Nav Academies.

Challenges to implementation

Some grantees stated that the data they receive is in a format that can't be effectively managed or used. "For us to have our stuff in binders and not be able to access it is ineffective." (BERC, 20) They also voiced concern over interpreting, analyzing, and applying the data to inform their classroom instruction and future planning.

How to get better

What schools can do Keep it simple! Identify a few data points that are important to the school community and measure those. Identify one or two teachers who are part of the implementation team who can work with the principal and teachers to use data to build understanding about the need to prepare all students for college and career. By examining and understanding aggregate, school-level data, schools will build community-wide understanding of how Navigation 101 can benefit all students. Examining data can also be a strategy for building urgency among staff reluctant to support the program.

What partners can do Develop and disseminate examples of Navigation 101 grantee schools that are using data to inform program development. Prepare and disseminate a professional development module that addresses how to initiate and implement a data-informed program development process. Consider how the BERC reports might be simplified for grantees to use with stakeholders to build understanding and support.

Implementing Navigation 101 to improve college & career readiness and increase student engagement.

Schools having the most success with Navigation 101 have the following characteristics:

Strong Leadership

- Navigation 101 is an element of the School's Improvement Plan and aligned with district goals
- Navigation 101 is implemented by a team including teachers from each grade level, counselors and principal or vice-principal. Schools relying on one go-getter teacher to lead the program ultimately struggle with sustainability.
- The Navigation 101 team uses a variety of communication tools to keep students, teachers, parents, and the community informed and up-to-date on Navigation 101 and other college and career ready programs.

Excellent Advisors

- Regular professional development is provided to *all* advisors so that they have the skills, knowledge, and confidence to be advisors. Advisors understand why the program is important and are able to develop meaningful relationships with the students in their advisory.
- Advisors believe Navigation 101 helps students see a connection between their future goals and what they are doing in school, and this understanding increases student engagement.

Effective Program Implementation

- Students take **advisory** seriously because their advisor takes it seriously; offering credit for advisory can increase student accountability; advisories are consistently and regularly scheduled or all students, and schedule and take place at least two times/month.
- **Portfolios** are organized consistently across schools and transition with students from middle to high schools; schools are transitioning to electronic portfolio, which allows students to organize their portfolio in especially compelling ways.
- All students participate in **student-led conferences**, and there is a plan in place to schedule conferences with families who didn't attend on the regularly scheduled conference day.
- **Student-driven scheduling** is achieved by coupling registration with **student-led conferences**: Students register for courses for the following year at student-led conferences, where they select courses based not only on high school graduation requirements, but also with an understanding of what course they need to prepare to enter their post-secondary education option of choice; the master schedule is developed based on student course requests.
- The Navigation implementation team regularly collects and reviews **program feedback** to help them know where colleagues want and need to spend professional development time. This team also reviews **student transcript data** regularly to assess whether Navigation 101 is having a positive outcome on college and career readiness and strategize accordingly.