Improving Baltimore Students' Access to College:
A Qualitative Study of Two College Bound Delivery Models

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Executive Summary

This report provides a qualitative account of the implementation of two college access support models in Baltimore City Schools. The initiative, launched in 2016-17, was developed by the College Bound Foundation and featured a 'roving' college access professional (CAP) that served students in three different high schools, as well as another CAP that served students in a single entrance criteria high school. The study sought to describe the work of the two CAPs in detail, and to highlight the factors that helped them succeed.

Prior research demonstrates that because admission to college requires the completion of many complex tasks with multiple deadlines, students with parents or other close adults who are familiar with the process, and who can help them at home, are already at an advantage. However, low-income or first-generation students benefit greatly from the guidance of knowledgeable adults in school. The initiative described in this report was developed to provide just this sort of guidance to students in City Schools.

The findings suggest that the CAPs' services were well-targeted and helped students complete the tasks necessary to successfully access college. The specific types of guidance CAPs offered, as well as how the guidance was provided, are described in detail. The findings also highlight ways that schools can usefully leverage such supports and organize schooling in a manner conducive to creating a college-going culture.

Access to Social Capital

The CAPs in this study were a social resource for students, offering their expertise about the college landscape and supporting students in developing skills that helped them access college and financial aid. For example, working one-on-one with students, CAPs helped them hone lists of potential colleges that fit well with their interests and goals. CAPs individually guided students with each application task, helping them meet different deadlines along the way. Throughout the process, CAPs developed trust with students and families, and helped them develop crucial self-advocacy skills.

These supports were particularly critical for City Schools students, as many were potentially first-generation college-goers. By helping students build confidence and gain a deep understanding of the process, CAPs helped ensure that students could be successful.

School Factors

Several school-level factors were related to how CAPs worked with students. In particular, schools' digital and technological capacity determined how easily students could complete college-going tasks electronically. In practical terms, access to working computers or laptops connected to the internet are absolutely essential for college and financial aid application completion. Many City Schools students may not have digital access at home; thus, providing this resource at school becomes even more critical.

There were also important differences between the schools CAPs served. The CAP working in the entrance criteria high school was enabled by the school's deliberate prioritization of college-going as a goal. This meant that the school's leadership had already coordinated resources and staff to support college access, and had clearly communicated the importance of working with the CAP collaboratively. In contrast, some of the schools served by the roving CAP were more heavily focused on helping students graduate from high school, and college-going efforts were less connected to the regular school day. This translated into the roving CAP experiencing a greater number of challenges in supporting students when collaboration with counseling and instructional staff was needed.

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Background

This report describes research conducted to examine how two specific types of college access professionals (CAPs) from the College Bound Foundation worked in Baltimore City Public Schools (City Schools) to assist high school students in accessing college. The study also explored how several school-level factors contributed to CAPs' efforts. The purpose of the research was to determine how these two, novel delivery models were implemented, and whether implementation was successful. The study is primarily descriptive of these particular CAPs' activities and contexts and does not compare them with other models or college access programs. However, the findings from this study also illuminate some of the more general challenges in City Schools around college access, as well as provide insights into how related supports might usefully be structured in City Schools.

Local Context

City Schools serves a population of students that is predominantly low-income, with about three-quarters of its students eligible for free and reduced-price meals in 2015-16 (MSDE, 2017). Given students' high levels of economic need and the relatively low educational attainment levels among families whose children attend City Schools (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), most City Schools graduates are likely first generation college-goers -- the first in their immediate family to attend college.

Over the past six years, nationally between 50% and 55% of low-income high school graduates enroll in college the next year (Snyder, de Brey, & Dillow, 2016). During the same time frame, about 43% of City Schools graduates have enrolled in college the fall after

high school. (Durham, Ruiz, & Connolly, 2017; Durham, Stein, & Connolly, 2015). The difference between national and local numbers suggests that there are potentially opportunities for City Schools to increase the share of its students who enroll in college by providing additional supports. Completing a college credential is widely considered essential for upward social and economic mobility, as well as life-long wellbeing (c.f., Pallas, 2000), so helping students overcome related barriers to enrolling in college is an important goal for City Schools.

The College Bound Foundation

Although all City Schools high schools are mandated to have at least one school counselor working in the building, counselors have many responsibilities to support all students, in addition to helping graduating seniors access college. To further support college access, some principals have budgeted to contract with Baltimore's College Bound Foundation to obtain a CAP for their high school.

Over the past 25+ years, the College Bound Foundation has made CAP services available for purchase by City Schools high schools. CAPs' primary roles are to work with students at the school who are academically eligible for admission at 4-year colleges, and then support them in completing the tasks required to complete a college application and obtain financial aid (primarily scholarships, and state and federal grants). Though annual goals are collaboratively developed between the CAPs and College Bound, and the Foundation provides indirect supervision and support, CAPs' work in schools is highly self-directed. Their supports are largely conducted on an individual basis with students; yet they may also work systemically in classrooms or with small student groups. Typically, College Bound Foundation's model features a single CAP dedicated to the students in a single high school throughout the school year.

Since 2010, in any year about half of the district's high schools have purchased College Bound's CAP services, with several consistently buying this resource. Other high schools' use of this service has been less consistent, which likely results from annual school-level changes in discretionary funding availability, or changes in school leaders' priorities regarding college access.[1]

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[1] Data on College Bound's services to schools over time was obtained from the College Bound Foundation.

College Bound's Pilot Initiative

This report specifically focuses on two new College Bound Foundation service delivery models that were implemented in 2016-17 and 2017-18. The first model featured a 'roving' CAP that served three high schools simultaneously. The other model involved adding a 'second CAP' to one high school with a comparatively high share of university-eligible seniors. Funding for the initiative was provided by a local foundation so that these two CAPs' services could be provided to schools free-of-charge.

To identify high schools to be served by the roving CAP, College Bound Foundation staff targeted three schools that had not purchased CAP services for several years and where student SAT and GPA data indicated that a sizeable share of seniors were eligible for admission at a 4-year college. Ultimately, three high schools were served by the roving CAP in spring 2016-17. In the fall of 2017-18, however, one of these schools chose to purchase their own dedicated College Bound CAP. As a result, that year the roving CAP served two of her original schools and another school newly enlisted into the initiative.

The other, 'second' CAP served students in a high school that historically has had a relatively high percentage of graduates eligible for university admission and competitive scholarships. Another CAP had been contracted to the school for several years, but a second CAP was seen by College Bound as needed to provide additional capacity to help boost the school's college-going rate. The second dedicated CAP served this high school for two full years, in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

The following sections detail how the research for the current study was conducted, as well as results about how College Bound's roving CAP and a second dedicated CAP worked to meet their goals around providing strategic support to help City Schools students access college.

Methods and Framework

This section includes the questions that guided data collection, a description of the data collection procedures, and a summary of the analytical methods used. Finally, this section provides a brief description of the theoretical framework helpful for understanding the findings.

Guiding Questions

Data collection was guided by the following questions:

- How do a roving CAP and an additional CAP at an entrance criteria high school provide strategic support for college access?
- What strategies are successful in supporting students to apply to appropriate colleges?
- How do the CAPs build relationships and develop trust with students and family members?
- What strategies are successful in supporting students to apply to targeted scholarships?
- What does collaboration between the CAPs and other school staff look like?
- Are there strategies that could generate more integration or greater awareness of this resource?

Data Collection

This study was focused on two CAP service delivery models, and only two CAPs were directly involved in the initiative: the first model featured one CAP 'roving' across three schools per year. The other model featured a 'second dedicated' CAP serving the same school during both school years, but was one of two College Bound-supported CAPs assigned to that school. The author played no role in choosing study sites or subjects; rather, both CAPs and their schools were chosen by the College Bound Foundation prior to

the start of the study. Further information about the two delivery models and their schools are provided in the results section.

Data for this study included notes from 27 shadowing sessions spread equally across the five school sites served by the two CAPs. Shadowing sessions took place in the spring of 2016-17 and the fall of 2017-18. Data also included transcripts of five interviews with CAPs. This research thus constitutes case studies of the pilot initiative of the CAPs service delivery models (Merriam, 2009).

Each of the 27 shadowing sessions lasted approximately two hours, during which the author followed the CAP as s/he worked. Sessions provided opportunities to learn about the services they provided to students, and to observe how CAPs interfaced with other staff at the school. During these visits, the supports that CAPs provided were inscripted in real time, capturing the topic and substance of each interaction (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). (The protocol for shadowing sessions is available in Appendix A.)

Separate semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the roving and second dedicated CAPs occurred at the beginning of the study in spring 2016-17 (Seidman, 2006). A follow-up interview was held with each of the two CAPs at the end of the spring cycle to gain further insights regarding data captured during shadowing sessions (Mathison, 1988). In the fall of 2017-18, an interview was additionally conducted with the original dedicated CAP at the high school with whom the second dedicated CAP worked, to gather perceptions about how her work was affected by the addition of the second dedicated CAP. (See Appendix B for the interview protocols).

Analytical Methods

Both interview transcripts and notes from shadowing sessions were analyzed using qualitative analytical methods. Specifically, thematic coding was performed to index consistent topics and issues noted in both interviews and shadowing sessions. Next, iterative cycles of coding further refined the primary themes that were captured in the data (Saldana, 2009). These themes correspond to the structure of the results section.

Theoretical Framework

Admission to college requires the completion of many complex tasks with multiple deadlines. Students with parents or other close adults who are familiar with the process, and who can help them at home, are already at an advantage (Ellwood & Kane, 2000). However, for low-income or first-generation students, gaining admission may be particularly challenging. Without knowledgeable guides, such students may be deterred from applying to college or fail to be successful in their efforts (Klasic, 2012; Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016; Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011).

Schools can improve the likelihood that their graduates will enroll in college by boosting students' social capital (McDonough, 1997; Plank & Jordan, 2001). Social capital is the set of resources, or the knowledge, skills, relationships, that are available within one's social network (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). In fact, research from urban school contexts suggests that compared to their wealthier counterparts, first-generation college-going students rely more on the adults in their school -- teachers and counselors -- to help them complete necessary steps to gain both admission and financial aid for college (Perna & Titus, 2005; Woods & Domina, 2014). As a result, schools improve the likelihood of college admission when they provide students with access to a network of knowledgeable adults who can help them navigate the process of accessing college.

Schools also enable college-going by structuring the school experience in ways that intentionally support that goal (Lee & Burkham, 2003; Roderick, Coca & Nagaoka, 2011). Specifically, high school staff can systematically incorporate relevant knowledge into school day activities, for example by teaching about possible career paths, college choices, how a GPA is derived and explaining why it matters for college admissions. Deliberate and targeted preparation activities can help ensure that students finish high school ready and able to access college. Such practices also help create an environment where going to college is normative, creating a potentially powerful peer-effect among students (Engberg & Wolniak, 2009).

Results

I explain how these theoretical constructs became manifest in CAPs' work with students in the results presented below. I first describe how the supports CAPs provided expanded students' social capital, by virtue of CAPs sharing their specialized knowledge about college-going and developing skills they needed to successfully access that opportunity. I also discuss ways that schools were structured that aided in promoting college-going. Specifically, the following research questions are addressed:

- What were the roles of the two CAPs?
- What were the characteristics of the schools the two CAPs served?
- What types of specialized knowledge and skills did CAPs share with students?
    - How did CAPs support students with college 'fit'?
    - How did CAPs support students with academic 'match'?
    - How did CAPs support students with college applications?
    - How did CAPs provide support for financial aid?
    - How did CAPs provide lessons in self-advocacy?
    - How did CAPs advocate for students?
    - How did CAPs expand students' and families' social network?
- How was support provided systemically?
- How were the supports CAPs provided moderated by school organizational factors?
    - How was CAPs' work related to schools' digital capacity?
    - How was CAPs' work related to schools' technological capacity?
    - How was CAPs' work related to scheduling practices?
    - How was CAPs' work related to school leadership practices?

What were the roles of the two CAPs?

Roving CAP

The roving CAP, Ms. Erichs,* worked at each of her schools approximately one day per week, typically always on the same weekday, though her schedule varied occasionally. In

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* Pseudonyms are used instead of participant names to protect confidentiality.

the fall of 2017-18, one of her three schools left the pilot roving CAP program, and as a result, that fall Ms. Erichs served two of her original schools and one school newly enlisted into the initiative. All four of the schools Ms. Erichs served had contracted a College Bound CAP previously, but for most, at least four years had passed since the schools had purchased a College Bound CAP.

Staff at College Bound Foundation provided Ms. Erichs a "target list" of students at each school who met academic criteria established by the Foundation, which was a cumulative 11th grade GPA of 2.50 or higher. Although Ms. Erichs' stated goals were centered on serving students on the target list, services were not limited to them. In many cases, Ms. Erichs was observed to be a general school-wide resource available to support any college-going activities. For example, as explained in an interview, target students often brought along friends seeking support as well.

Second Dedicated CAP

The second dedicated CAP, Mr. Rowan* worked in a high school with academic admission criteria. Another dedicated CAP had already been working in this school for five years. The second dedicated CAP was provided by College Bound to offer additional capacity at the school, which historically has had a relatively high share of graduates with university-eligible characteristics.

Mr. Rowan did not limit service provision to a target list of students but was available to all students seeking college access assistance. This accessibility was characteristic of the school's original CAP, as well. Both dedicated CAPs were observed to be integrated parts of the school's counseling team.

What were the characteristics of the schools served by the CAPs?

For context about each school served by CAPs in this study, student demographic and academic information is provided in Table 1. Schools A, B, C and D were served by the roving CAP, while School E was served by the second dedicated CAP.

School E was a large high school with comparatively few students eligible for social services in 2016-17, such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, and Medicaid. About two-thirds of its students identified as African-American and very few received English language learner services. The average combined verbal and math SAT score among School E's seniors the prior year was 1025, which was higher than the national average of 1006 that year (College Board, 2015). Further, around three-quarters of the class of 2015 had enrolled in college the fall after high school.

Table 1

Characteristics of Students in the Schools Served by the Study's College Access Professionals

	School Student Body in 2016-17*				Class of 2015	
	Percent eligible for social services	Percent African-American	Percent English language learner	Number of 12th graders	Verbal+Math SAT score for tested seniors*	Percent enrolled in college the fall after graduation[†]
School A	46	51	39	240	649	44
School B	69	99	≤5	150	663	27
School C	67	98	≤5	110	617	24
School D	41	88	≤5	100	719	53
School E	29	70	≤5	360	1025	76

Note. The roving CAP served Schools A, B, C, and D. The second dedicated CAP served School E.
* Data retrieved from mdreportcard.org. Student body includes all students served at the school (all grade levels). The number of 12th graders was rounded to the nearest 10.
[†] Durham, Ruiz & Connolly, 2017; numbers were rounded to protect confidentiality.

The student characteristics of School E contrasted with those of the other four schools that were served by the roving CAP. The students in Schools B, C, and D were 88% to 99% African-American, while at School A, just half the student body was African-American, but 39% of students received English language learner services. The roving CAP's schools also varied in size, with just 100 seniors at School D, but over twice as many at School A. Student eligibility for social services also varied widely at these four schools, with between 41% and 69% qualifying. Average combined SAT scores among seniors at Schools A, B, C, and D ranged between 617 and 719. Similarly, previous fall college enrollment rates varied between 24% and 53% across the four roving CAP's schools.

The figures in Table 1 suggest that although both CAPs aimed to help eligible students gain acceptances and financial aid packages for college the following fall, they were supporting students with disparate levels of preparation for college, and they were working across very different school environments. Such differences have the potential to impact CAPs' capacity to support students, during individualized and more systematic support sessions. These differences will be discussed further below.

What types of specialized knowledge and skills did CAPs share with students?

Helping students choose a college, or generate a list of target colleges, requires more input than simply knowing academic qualifications, such as grades or SAT scores. Many personal-level factors also go into selecting a destination and program of study. To appropriately advise a student, an assisting adult needs to understand a number of complex personal motivations, and both Ms. Erichs and Mr. Rowan were observed to gain this understanding by having conversations with each student, one at a time. They inquired about students' families, interests, goals, comfort levels, financial concerns, or personal life histories. They then helped them think strategically about colleges fitting the multiplicity of factors the students stated were important to them.

Generally, CAPs' conversations with students were inquisitive, e.g., 'What colleges are you interested in?' '*Why* did you decide on that one?' In response to student answers, CAPs leveraged their stores of specialized knowledge about the college landscape to discuss relevant options. In Table 2, a summary of the topics with which the roving and second dedicated CAPs customized support for students using their specialized knowledge is provided. This list is not exhaustive of all the topics CAPs addressed, but it offers examples of the ways that CAPs expanded students' own capital by explaining different aspects of going to college and illuminating why particular factors mattered for their goals.

Table 2

Specialized Knowledge Shared with Students by College Access Professionals

College Applications

- Appropriate application or application regimes used by different colleges
- How to write an essay for an applications
- Prioritization of application steps to meet deadlines
- NCAA or NAIA admissions and play requirements
- Early versus regular admissions decisions
- Early versus regular action
- Scholar/honors programs at particular colleges
- How to determine if school is a 'match', 'reach', or 'safety' school
- Leveraging extracurricular experiences for a college application
- Special application requirements for specific majors, e.g., fine art or nursing

Financial Topics

- Fee waivers (SAT, applications, college visits)
- Tuition costs (in addition to fees, deposits and other varying expenses)
- Which schools are needs-blind or match 100% of student need
- Grant or scholarship availability and funding use requirements
- Student loans and how to calculate compound interest and debt over time
- Financial aid use allowances at colleges in-state and out-of-state
- Institutional scholarship opportunities

College Knowledge

- How to plan a college visit and what to expect
- What majors are available at different colleges
- Career options for different majors and interests
- Athletic programs and divisions at different colleges
- Articulation agreements between 2-year and 4-year colleges, by program of study
- College-specific vocabulary, e.g., undergraduate, full-time study, income, etc.
- What to expect at college, e.g., class scheduling, faculty office hour use, etc.
- How to dress and what to look for during a college visit
- How to compose self-advocacy emails/prepare for phone calls with college officials

Technical Know-How

- Computer skills, e.g., how to save documents, send emails, navigate websites
- SAT preparation options
- Registration for the SAT online and making score requests
- How to complete an online application and save progress
- How to request transcripts or recommendation letters through Naviance

How did CAPs support students with College 'Fit'?

A great number of the one-on-one discussions that both Ms. Erichs and Mr. Rowan had with students pertained to college fit. In general, college fit refers to how well a college's characteristics – programmatic and socio-demographic – coincide with a student's needs and preferences. To ascertain fit factors, they engaged students in conversations and iteratively asked further questions to help identify possible target colleges that corresponded to students' inclinations and goals.

For example, students may have already been introduced to the concept of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), but were observed requesting more information before electing to apply. CAPs were asked, 'what *is* an HBCU?' 'Which nearby colleges are HBCUs,' and 'why do students choose HBCUs?' Such questions gave CAPs the opportunity to discuss students' preferences about the racial diversity of a college campus, or the type of social environment in which they hoped to learn. CAPs typically asked students further questions to determine college fit, such as what students' career goals were, and what school subjects they liked or disliked, and what out-of-school activities they enjoyed most. With answers to these questions, CAPs helped students further narrow the possibilities.

Through the questioning process, CAPs were sometimes able to help students realize that their initial plans might not correspond with what they hoped to achieve. For instance, Ms. Erichs reported that in the course of a conversation about wanting to be a nurse, a student revealed a distaste for her chemistry and biology classes. Helping the student understand the disconnect between her chosen career and its prerequisites led to a further insight: the student had aimed to be a nurse simply because she ultimately wanted a career helping others. This provided the opportunity for Ms. Erichs to share information about many other potential career paths of which the student was unaware, that while involved directly helping others, did not hinge on specializing in biological sciences.

Beyond potential college majors, additional fit information CAPs elicited concerned whether a student hoped to commute from home or live on a college campus, and in what sort of city a student hoped to live in terms of an urban or rural environment, or proximity to home. In what size college would a student feel comfortable? What special needs does a student have that relate to a well-fitting college environment, e.g., special learning needs for a disability or desire for a hands-on, applied learning experience? What music or sports do students hope to play in college, and for what sports division? Do they wish to participate in Greek

life? Balancing these many different considerations and pressing the student about what aspects were most important allowed CAPs to help students define a reasonable list of target colleges to which they could apply.

How did CAPs support students with Academic 'Match'?

Without concrete experiences on college campuses, students may rely on informal or pop-culture sources of information about potential college destinations. For instance, students' knowledge about specific colleges reportedly reflected awareness of sports teams, colleges featured in movies or TV shows, or familiarity due to a family member's enrollment at a school. As a consequence, students expressed interest in particular colleges, yet lacked information about how well their own academic qualifications 'matched' those of the schools.

Ms. Erichs and Mr. Rowan worked to help students diversify their target college choices across different levels of college competitiveness. They advised students to complete *at least* one application each for a 'match' school, a 'reach' school (i.e., one for which the student is slightly under-qualified), and a 'safety' school (i.e., one for which a student is marginally over-qualified). This strategy has been shown in national research to improve the likelihood that a student will be accepted to college, and it helps ensure that students come out of the admissions decision process with options.

Both CAPs guided students to apply to schools at which their qualifications offered a reasonable likelihood of admittance, and at the same time, they encouraged students to apply to schools that were as selective as possible. CAPs reported that some students initially aimed to attend a community college even while their GPA and SAT scores qualified them for a 4-year college. Similarly, some students reportedly lacked hope that their qualifications made them eligible for any college, though appropriate options certainly existed. On some occasions, CAPs helped students access online resources detailing the qualifications of those admitted to a particular college to help students figure out how their own qualifications aligned or indicated that the college was a 'reach' or 'safety' school. In all cases, the CAPs displayed a striking array of knowledge about current admissions practices at local institutions, and this allowed them to guide students to a balanced set of options, or to colleges they otherwise might not have considered.

How did CAPs support students with college applications?

A completed college application not only includes the typical fill-in-the-blank documents, but also includes high school transcripts, SAT or ACT scores, and often personal essays and letters of recommendation. Letters may variably be required from specific subject teachers, school counselors, community members, or other professional references. The application may also require a video, interview, portfolio, or other demonstrations of creativity. At the same time, attempts to streamline applications have been undertaken by some colleges, by way of coalitions; for example, there is a Common Application, a Common Black Application, and a Coalition Application that different colleges request. Unsurprisingly, both CAPs reported that the students in their schools were often overwhelmed by the disparities across colleges in their requirements for completing an application. As a result, CAPs worked to help students strategically meet these basic, yet potentially daunting bureaucratic requirements.

Deadlines

Beyond knowing which application components or coalition applications were relevant for specific colleges, CAPs guided students around how to use their time efficiently. Application deadlines vary across schools, and CAPs helped students prioritize application packages according to when decisions would be known, or are traditionally made. CAPs shared information about which colleges had early (i.e., Nov. 1) or traditional deadlines (i.e., end of Jan. or Mar. 1), and those with "rolling" admissions, or where colleges continue to consider applications until they reach capacity. Students' lists of colleges to which they intended to apply simultaneously spanned all these options, so prioritizing application steps for each deadline was essential to helping students manage their workloads.

Testing Support

The CAPs often helped students determine if or when to sit for the SAT or ACT, if they had not already. CAPs shared knowledge about which colleges require the SAT for an application, how heavily scores were weighed in admissions decisions, and the relative strength of students' existing scores. They also helped students strategize around colleges' specific application deadlines, potential SAT testing occasions, and when those new scores would be available to send with an application. Particularly for Ms. Erichs, helping students set up accounts with College Board, register for the SAT, as well as providing technical help with accessing or submitting scores online, occupied a non-negligible share of the time she spent with students.

Fees and Waivers

Neither college applications nor sitting for the SAT or ACT are free. At the time of writing, a single SAT testing fee is $52.50. College applications fees in Maryland range between $25 and $75. For low-income students, such fees present potential obstacles to completing the necessary tasks to access college. The CAPs often worked with school officials to determine which students were eligible for fee waivers, and then helped students apply those waivers to the costs they would have incurred otherwise. Further, figuring out where to get a waiver – from a college itself, College Board, local philanthropies, or through the high school or district – was an another procedure that CAPs helped students navigate.

Essay Writing Support

The essay portion of students' college applications was an additional area in which both the roving and second dedicated CAPs often applied individualized support. For instance, CAPs helped students manage their time efficiently, by offering students guidance about which essays could be submitted to multiple colleges or application coalitions, which imparted an advantage.

Further, both Ms. Erichs and Mr. Rowan reported that students frequently struggled with their essays, in terms of topics, the essay's purpose, and writing mechanics. One noted that the essay was the aspect of college access that many students most dreaded. Both CAPs emphasized to students the importance of demonstrating an ability to properly translate thoughts into writing, and explained that an essay was a way to offer college admissions representatives more nuanced information about themselves than what the numbers could tell.

Ms. Erichs often helped students find ways to turn their thoughts and feelings into a structured essay and was observed working with students to iteratively refine their essay drafts, beginning with a conversation about potential topics, all the way to helping them finalize their essays' grammar, punctuation and spelling. At his school, Mr. Rowan frequently offered to review student essays and provided feedback to improve the quality of the writing, or the clarity of their ideas. In all cases, CAPs' support with essay-writing helped students complete a more competitive application.

How did CAPs provide support for financial aid?

Without the ability to fund the costs associated with going to college, an acceptance would be irrelevant for many City Schools graduates. As a result, virtually all planning and guidance offered by the CAPs in this study was done with an end goal of ensuring that admission to a college was accompanied by sufficient financial aid. Questions about how much going to college cost, as well as how to identify and win sources of financial aid, were frequently topics for which CAPs' support was sought.

Costs of College

Many conversations between CAPs and students were focused on helping them understand the specific costs associated with college and the many potential ways to meet them. Especially for the roving CAP, Ms. Erichs, issues discussed with students involved college-specific costs for tuition, room and board, books, student activity fees, and different kinds of required deposits. She also helped students understand what additional living expenses they might have, separate from the regularly-advertised costs. CAPs offered both students and their families valuable information regarding the various types of aid available, including grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. And within each of these four types of aid, they clarified each available option and its requirements.

FAFSA Completion Support

Both the roving and dedicated CAPs usually opened financial aid conversations with the question, "Have you or your parents completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)?" Completing the FAFSA is a task for which students are often ill-equipped but is the first, most essential part of acquiring financial aid of any sort. Completing the FAFSA requires access to tax forms that are two years old, and knowledge of household income, expenses, dependents, and work histories. CAPs reported they sometimes worked with parents in completing the FAFSA, or helped students and their families navigate particularly challenging parts of the application. CAPs also regularly needed to triangulate what information was entered in order to help students determine whether a result was accurate, or based on erroneous information. Even after a FAFSA is submitted, *completing* the FAFSA application required the CAPs to perform further checks to certify against differences between federally-held data and data that families entered onto the FAFSA.

Completing the FAFSA introduced many opportunities for challenges to arise. CAPs worked to help students through each and every potential kind of FAFSA challenge, and

alerted students to how they would receive their Student Aid Report (SAR) from FAFSA, either in the family mail, their own or their parents' email, depending upon what was initially entered on the form.

FAFSA Results

The SAR defines the level of financial aid for which a student is eligible, their families' expected contribution, and also determines the level of need that a college will recognize and potentially mediate. Thus, this information is critical for CAPs to gather from students in order to guide them to colleges that can best match their financial needs. CAPs helped students understand their results and identified whether gaps existed between awarded funds and remaining college costs. CAPs helped students calculate these gaps across their set of options, and advised students about particular scholarship or grant opportunities to remedy those gaps. They then helped them perform the steps necessary to complete applications for specific scholarships. Often, scholarship applications required completing components similar to those for a college application, e.g., essays, or personal goal statements. Once again, CAPs helped students balance all the different scholarship and college decision deadlines simultaneously.

Disambiguating Award Letters

On more than one occasion, students received letters from colleges with information suggesting that they would incur loan debt for non-covered expenses. Such award letters itemize various grant or scholarship awarded, but also itemize assumed loan amounts for remaining expenses. CAPs reported that students were often unaware that the college was assuming gaps would be covered by loans, let alone whether such a loan was subsidized or unsubsidized. In fact, questions commonly posed to the roving CAP concerned the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans, whether the responsible party was their parents or themselves once loan payments became due, and *when* loan repayment would begin. Ms. Erichs walked students through the exercise of determining what amounts they or their families would be responsible for and when, as well as the implications of compounding interest for either a subsidized or unsubsidized loan amount. In all instances observed, CAPs worked to minimize the amount of debt for which a student or their family would later be responsible.

Understanding Sources of Aid

In addition, students needed insights about important differences in how and where certain types of financial aid could, and could not, be used. For instance, common Maryland grants

(Guaranteed Access Grant, Educational Assistance Grant) cannot be applied to expenses at out-of-state colleges; however, federal PELL grants or Federal Supplement Educational Opportunity Grants can follow students out of state. Particular scholarships awarded to students may be used for tuition and other fixed costs, but perhaps not for other varying costs such as books or transportation. Certain awards are renewable every year a student is enrolled while others are not renewable, and some institutional awards require students to maintain a particular GPA or for their household income to remain at a certain level. Some colleges will match a granted amount to fulfill 100% of a students' needs, while others do not. Clarifying these many differences and helping students plan accordingly was the topic of many one-on-one conversations between CAPs and students.

In sum, all these different considerations come into play depending on each individual student's award, household financial situation, colleges choices, and goals. CAPs clarified the use requirements for each type of aid, where the ultimate goal was helping students determine at which colleges they could best leverage all types of available and awarded funding.

How did CAPs provide lessons in self-advocacy?

Even before students knew their destination, both the roving and second dedicated CAPs discussed with students what to expect once they arrived at college. Specifically, they reported that talking about how the college experience would differ from that of high school seemed to be helpful in alleviating many students' concerns. For instance, CAPs discussed the need to proactively communicate with professors, expectations for attendance in class, and how to choose and schedule courses, among other topics. CAPs reported that students often expressed uncertainty about whether and how much they should work while enrolled in college, and especially for Ms. Erichs, conversations about how to manage their time between studying and working took place often.

Another important way in which CAPs expanded students' stores of capital was guiding them in how to advocate for themselves. Both the roving and second dedicated CAPs reported that many students expressed uncertainty about their interactions with college representatives. CAPs offered students specific guidance about how to call or email officials in financial aid offices or staff who managed the allocation of specific scholarships.

For example, one of the most popular local sources of scholarships are the legislative scholarships offered by Maryland's senators and delegates. To apply, students must often initiate an application with a phone call or email to the legislator's office; yet many students reportedly lacked confidence regarding appropriate language or tone to use in these sorts of communications. CAPs supported students in drafting appropriate language and listing questions they should ask to indicate their interest in these scholarships. On several occasions, both the CAP and student were observed on the phone together.

Related, CAPs helped students understand ways they themselves could advocate for additional funding with representatives in colleges' financial aid offices. For instance, on several occasions Mr. Rowan explained to students that representatives have the flexibility and authority to offer additional funding if an initial offer does not meet all of a student's financial need. The CAP advised, 'Tell them [college name] is your first choice, but that you're concerned about being able to meet all the costs.' Mr. Rowan also reported that this approach is something parents or others family members are often unaware is appropriate and a way to garner additional aid.

How did CAPs advocate for students?

CAPs reported that over time, they have formed working relationships with officials in admissions and financial aid offices, and for scholarship or college-specific honors programs. These relationships were beneficial during both the college search and decision seasons when a personal connection could make all the difference. CAPs benefited students by leveraging these relationships to perform advocacy on their behalf.

For example, during a college representative's visit to the high school, Mr. Rowan recommended specific students who were well-fitting candidates for a novel science teacher program. Such recommendations are possible given CAPs' personal knowledge about the students' interests and goals, as well as the relational trust developed across CAPs' professional networks. Similarly, Mr. Rowan contacted colleges to learn which students were on final consideration lists for honors programs at local colleges, and then advocated for admission on students' behalf.

CAPs also maintained relationships with colleges' financial aid representatives to gather up-to-date information about programs for students with special needs, particularly

undocumented students, or students with unusual household financial situations. CAPs' specialized and timely knowledge from representatives about available programs also helped them advise students who wished to study within new or innovative industries but struggled to identify a college offering that major. Their personal relationships with college representatives also allowed them to lobby for additional spaces on space-limited group college visits, and to work with them to customize such visits for their students' particular interests.

How did CAPs expand students' and families' social networks?

CAPs leveraged their own networks to expand students' social capital by directly connecting them to representatives of colleges and special programs, as well. Their relationships with representatives allowed them to schedule visits to college campuses for individual students, whereby students gained a personal connection and someone to whom they could address specific clarifying questions. CAPs also provided students with contact information for individual financial aid representatives so that they could make targeted inquiries or self-advocate for adequate funding or other special accommodations. Both Ms. Erichs and Mr. Rowan reported that they sought out and nurtured relationships with representatives of colleges that offered programming that was best for their schools' particular student populations.

CAPs leveraged their social capital for parents, as well. Upon request, they initiated communications with parents to 'close the loop' around students' questions on FAFSA completion, admissions requirements, acceptance decisions, student aid reports and financial aid award letters from colleges. CAPs also made personal introductions between parents and representatives when parents wished to intervene on behalf of their students. In such instances, they offered parents valuable guidance about how best to advocate given each college's or program's priorities. In some cases, CAPs already knew and had trusting relationships with students' families due to older siblings' experiences with college access. This allowed them to further customize the support they provided to family members, for example, with respect to knowledge about families' financial situations, or concerns about students attending college far away from home.

How was support provided systemically?

One-on-one support is critical for CAPs to gain insights about individual students' interests, and goals, and needs; however, some college access assistance is amenable to more systemically-conducted activities and is essential given the number of students CAPs are expected to support in a limited period of time each year. Specifically, CAPs were observed holding small group sessions with 2-to-5 students at a time, providing lessons in classrooms, and giving presentations to full student cohorts, i.e., all the seniors or juniors. In general, when such systemic support took place, CAPs were providing guidance on a single or limited set of college-access topics.

Several times during the fall and spring semesters, the two dedicated CAPs in School E used students' regularly scheduled English class to deliver lessons on application essay-writing, the calculation of a cumulative GPA, and understanding the SAR and financial aid award letters from colleges, among other topics. These lessons served a dual purpose, where in addition to providing instruction on specific topics, they were reportedly an opportunity to get to know students and inform them about the potential ways CAPs could help them in the future.

An identical approach was used in School D where Ms. Erichs was observed co-teaching lessons for juniors alongside the regular, school-based counselor during English classes, for example, about career exploration, choosing target colleges, preparing for the PSAT, and how admissions representatives consider and weigh components of students' applications. Also in School D, Ms. Erichs and the counselor together planned a career day and invited local professionals to give talks about their work and how they prepared for their careers.

In School C, Ms. Erichs was given several opportunities to speak to the senior class. On one occasion, she addressed all seniors to share information about different types of financial aid, and how and when to apply. On a second occasion, she offered the class guidance about upcoming college application and FAFSA deadlines, and how she could support them in meeting those deadlines. She also led classroom sessions with students in School C during their regularly-scheduled college readiness class. There, she provided strategic support around building a list of potential colleges and completing college applications.

At Schools A and B, however, Ms. Erichs was not observed providing classroom lessons or cohort-wide support, and most often worked with students one-on-one or in small group

settings. Small groups were gathered as a result of her needing to help several students on the target student list complete different tasks, such as completing applications, registering for the SAT, or writing college or scholarship application essays. Small groups also sometimes occurred spontaneously when several students arrived in the guidance suite seeking support with disparate issues. In such cases, students worked with the roving CAP either because they had been specifically contacted by her about a task, or because the regular school counselor requested her general assistance with students during a period of flurried activity (e.g., completing registrations for an upcoming SAT test date).

In all the systemic support activities, both CAPs were used by their schools as resources to increase existing capacity. Yet, CAPs' ability to assist students was impacted by how each school was organized, and some of these factors reflected each school's existing college-going culture.

How were the supports CAPs provided moderated by school organizational factors?

Several school-based organizational factors appeared to be related to CAPs' ability to provide students with both individual and systemic support. Specifically, differences were noted between schools in digital and technological capacity, scheduling, and school leadership practices, especially communication.

How was CAPs' work related to schools' digital capacity?

According to interviews with the two study CAPs, schools with strong digital cultures can be characterized by students having a school-issued email account and/or knowing their login information to access school computers and programs. It also means regularly using online tools to complete schoolwork, submit assignments, and communicate with teachers. In addition, parents of students in these schools have regular access to online portals or use of school staff members' email addresses for correspondence.

Today, virtually all college-going application activity happens electronically. Thus, student familiarity with digital environments, and having access to a computer connected to the

internet, are absolutely critical for making college choices, inquiries, completing requirements, or applying for financial aid. Schools A, D, and E were described by the two CAPs as having effective existing digital cultures that better enabled them to support students in completing tasks. However, Schools B and C had reportedly fewer or less consistently-used digital resources, and Ms. Erich's ability to support students was accordingly affected.

First, students in the schools with strong digital cultures were reportedly more familiar with online college access tools, particularly Naviance, which is a resource that City Schools has made available to all high schools. Naviance modules guide students in choosing career pathways, well-fitting colleges, and can provide aggregated information about the qualifications of students from their own high school who were accepted to different colleges in prior years. Naviance also helps students coordinate with school staff on application components, e.g., to request transcripts from counselors or letters of recommendation from teachers.

Low facility with digital resources was evident at School B, for instance, when students frequently requested Ms. Erich's help with accessing Naviance, the mechanics of sending an email, or how to save progress in an online application. She also reported difficulties at School B in communicating with students via email due to non-responsiveness or lack of valid email addresses in school records.

There appeared to be similar issues at School C, for example when a student receiving help with an essay sought instructions for how to save a document in Microsoft Word. Ms. Erichs also stated that the regular counselor at School C could not report any instances when students had ever independently completed online applications to college.

In contrast, at Schools A and D, the roving CAP reported greater success in contacting students through email, more student responsiveness to requests for information, and fewer issues resulting from students' lack of facility with digital tools. The CAP also reported that students' awareness of the CAP's role often determined whether they acknowledged this communication and/or arrived for a requested meeting. The roving CAP reported that at School A, if students were non-responsive, it was typically due to their lack of awareness of the CAP's role in the school or English language barriers, rather than the modality of communication.

At School D, where the regular counselor and Ms. Erichs worked together as a team, students were systematically introduced to online resources such as Naviance in classroom sessions. Students also reportedly used online systems regularly for school work, such as Google Docs and Google Drive. Also at School D, the counselor's close working relationships with students and the CAP served as a facilitating mechanism for all Ms. Erich's electronic communications with students.

The same facility was evident at School E, which was described by Mr. Rowan as having a strong digital culture. It was also demonstrated by students' and CAPs' regular use of Naviance, as well as other online resources such as the Department of Education's College Navigator, which offers useful institutional information like graduation rates or tuition costs. In addition, Mr. Rowan frequently used email to communicate with students and parents about different requests for information, or any number of application and financial aid tasks.

How was CAPs' work related to schools' technological capacity?

Along with regular use of such online resources, schools with a strong digital culture have effectively organized their existing computer resources to provide even access across staff and students, i.e., the school has a systematic and reliable scheduling system for computer labs or mobile laptop carts. Moreover, such resources are well-maintained, functional when needed, and internet connectivity is reliable.

In several schools, Ms. Erichs' ability to support students was negatively impacted by a shortage of usable computers. Whereas in School D, the school-based counselor helped manage scheduling of technology for Ms. Erichs (typically laptop carts), in Schools A, B and C a lack of working laptops or the availability of a computer lab slowed student support considerably. For instance, in Schools A and B, students were frequently observed struggling to login to a working computer due to slow connections, out-of-date software, or drained batteries. Ms. Erichs also reported difficulties in School A accessing mobile laptop carts or scheduling use of the computer lab, particularly during testing season, which ran from early April through May – a critical time for finalizing college decisions as well as financial aid packages.

In School C, on one occasion Ms. Erichs was unable to provide laptops for all students simultaneously, which led to an inefficient use of student time on a financial aid-related activity that all seniors were expected to complete in a single session. The lack of laptop availability seemed to result from a failure to proactively recharge all laptops on one of the mobile carts. On a different occasion at School C, a significant share of desktop computers in a lab designated for a class session were not attached to monitors or were unable to be turned on by students, reportedly due to software incompatibility (i.e., the computers had not been recently updated). In both instances, this hampered Ms. Erichs' ability to efficiently provide the planned instruction, as a great deal of time was spent troubleshooting computer problems instead.

In Schools D and E, no such technological problems were observed to impact the roving and dedicated CAPs' provision of services. Such difficulties are especially salient for City Schools students who do not have regular access to computers or the internet outside of school. Further, the possibility of completing college-going tasks alongside an adult at school is already critical, since they may lack support from knowledgeable adults at home.

How was CAPs' work related to scheduling practices?

Successful work for both the roving and second dedicated CAPs depended upon accurate contact information for students on the target lists, but perhaps even more important was being able to physically connect with each one. For Ms. Erichs, who spent about one day per week at a school, this required access to up-to-date school day block schedules, individual student schedules, or class rosters. This information indicated during which times students were potentially free to come to the guidance office, or meet with the CAP in another available location (e.g., the media center). Such information was also essential to avoid pulling students away from critical instructional time.

At Schools A, B, and C, Ms. Erichs was reportedly able to gather relevant student locating information from a counselor, assistant principal, or other administration staff. Ms. Erichs reported that she usually first contacted students on the target list via email or text message to schedule an individual meeting. After this, the onus was reportedly on the student as to whether to comply with a request to meet. Failing initial e-introductions, Ms. Erichs used scheduling information to track down students during the school day.

At School D, Ms. Erichs was observed working closely with the school-based counselor, who assisted with virtually all student introductions and scheduling. For Mr. Rowan, who had a regular office at School E, physical access to students was systematic and aided by students' apparent awareness of him as a regularly accessible resource.

Ms. Erichs reported particular difficulties with scheduling individual sessions at School A, where students were frequently non-responsive, reportedly because they were not aware of her role, or due to English language barriers. She also reported challenges meeting with students at School A during testing season when student schedules changed to accommodate assessments and make-up tests, and school staff failed to communicate such changes with the roving CAP.

Scheduling was a concern at School B, as well; however, there, Ms. Erichs reportedly had difficulties reaching students due to a liberal early release policy. Specifically, students in School B often left campus before noon, for instance, to go to work, internships, or to attend dual enrollment programs. Thus, instructional time was front-loaded in the mornings, after which target students often left, leaving fewer opportunities to support them around college-going without interrupting regular class time. Many times at School B, students were observed to have secured a pass to leave class to work with Ms. Erichs in the guidance office.

At School C, Ms. Erichs was most often observed stationed in the guidance suite, sitting outside the two school-based counselors' offices. There, she served as additional capacity for the counselors who referred students for assistance with specific tasks. In addition, at School C Ms. Erichs provided classroom lessons to students during their 'college readiness' class period, providing a whole-class lesson on a topic but leaving time for individualized support after the lesson. Ms. Erichs stated that students on the target list largely overlapped with those in the college readiness class, which helped assuage typical scheduling challenges.

Ms. Erichs did not report difficulties reaching students at School D, as the school-based counselor worked with teachers to schedule individual student sessions with the CAP. Further, the counselor was observed to be an integral member of the school community, with deep knowledge about the students and their families. There, the counselor and Ms. Erichs frequently planned and provided regular classroom sessions together. School D also

maintained a daily advisory period, which reportedly served as an opportunity to complete college-going tasks with support from the counselor, Ms. Erichs, or both.

By virtue of Mr. Rowan solely serving School E, students were able to seek out his support in the same location at all times. Students were frequently observed doing so, to the extent that short lines formed outside Mr. Rowan's office on several occasions. His office was located within the guidance suite, which was also staffed by a special guidance secretary and a school-based counselor for each grade level. Students reportedly most often came to the suite before or after school, or during their lunch period, or they were excused from class for a limited amount of time. (However, both CAPs in School E were observed to discourage students' missing class time.)

The two dedicated CAPs at School E were systematically introduced to juniors through regular lessons during their English class. As a result, students appeared to be familiar with them and aware of the supports they offered, especially by the time they were seniors and actively focused on college access tasks. Further, Mr. Rowan reported that students often specifically sought out either of the two CAPs for support, given their virtually exclusive focus on college access, and because the regular counselors were often occupied with other responsibilities. Mr. Rowan also reported in the spring of 2017 that the two CAPs together were implementing a schedule to systematically meet with all rising seniors for at least an initial half-hour meeting to discuss college choices and plans for the following year. Overall, no challenges in scheduling time with students were reported by Mr. Rowan at School E, and both CAPs were observed to be well-integrated members of the school community.

How was CAPs' work related to school leadership practices?

Each of the issues discussed above (digital capacity, technological capacity, and scheduling) were reflective of school leadership practices, particularly communication. Perhaps not coincidentally, the schools observed to have stronger college-going culture were the same schools in which the roving and second dedicated CAPs experienced fewer difficulties working with students.

Student and staff awareness of Ms. Erichs' authorization and availability to provide individualized services to students was dependent upon school leaders' communicating that

the resource was a valued asset. Absent that communication, Ms. Erichs sometimes struggled to obtain timely scheduling information, and thus access to students needing support. It was also incumbent upon school leaders to communicate with staff that college access work was a priority and to allow students leeway during the school day to meet with Ms. Erichs. Communication, both between the leader and counselors as well as across teachers, was also implicated when Ms. Erichs needed to collaborate with those responsible for scheduling students, or the physical space and technology that made service provision possible.

CAPs were able to provide greater levels of systemic school support when there was evidence of a college-going culture, as well. For instance, in Schools D and E, English classes were leveraged to provide lessons on relevant topics, or drafting essays that could later serve as components of students' applications. Since virtually all students take an English course each year, using that time was a way to serve all students simultaneously, rather than piecemeal. Further, lessons served a dual purpose of meeting both writing practice and college-access objectives. At Schools C and D, sanctioned use of the college readiness and advisory periods, respectively, for college-access tasks also represented an efficiency that Ms. Erichs' other schools lacked.

As reported by Mr. Rowan, School E routinely registered all its students for at least two SAT testing occasions – once at the end of students' junior year and again in the fall of their senior year. School staff collectively managed registration steps, e.g., coordinating instructional time to help set up each student's College Board account, completing online registrations, distributing fee waivers, and communicating school-wide about upcoming test dates.

School leaders can support a college-going culture through expectations that teachers will specifically support college-going, for instance: by priming teachers to proactively prepare letters of recommendation; frame student attendance as something that will be visible on their high school transcripts and potentially considered by college admissions officers; incorporate SAT vocabulary practice into the school day; use publicly available data about local colleges in lessons on analysis and comparison; use a history class as an opportunity to talk about the important role of HBCUs. These are just examples; yet similar practices were reported or observed in the schools with evident college-going cultures. However, implementing such practices was impossible when the school leader had not deliberately

communicated these activities as a priority or failed to support instructional staff with the long-term planning and scheduling that such opportunities may require.

Summary and Recommendations

The two CAPs featured in this study were able to provide strategic support around college access by building personal relationships with students and by working within their schools' existing infrastructure to support college-going activities generally. The strategies they used entailed an inquiry-based style of communication with students, building relational trust, and increasing students' social capital by leveraging their own knowledge, skills, and relationships to help them meet their goals.

Both CAPs went beyond typical accessibility to students, offering them their cellphone numbers and reassurance that they were available at any time. They worked to gain students' trust by engaging them with warmth and using positive affirmations that their larger goals could be met by addressing each necessary step in time. The CAPs adjusted their support in accord with each student's own level of awareness, familiarity and comfort with the tasks at hand. Trust between CAPs and students then grew over time as steps were successfully completed, and trust with families grew over time, too, as CAPs connected them to individuals in their networks who could further support them.

The CAPs were able to encourage students to apply to a range of appropriate colleges by describing schools' characteristics, presenting students with relevant data points, and sometimes by sharing their own personal stories of struggle and success. The same was true for scholarship applications, particularly by helping students calculate costs of college and clarifying the options available to meet those costs.

Second Dedicated CAP

At School E, in addition to a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and an historically strong college-going tradition, a relatively large team of school-based counselors along with additional CAP capacity allowed for more individual, specialized support than in years past. This was evident from student reports to Mr. Rowan, who said that "now, students say they feel like they can get individual help." This is important because students may share critical facts that allow an assisting adult to individually tailor guidance only in the context of one-on-one conversations. Mr. Rowan stated he believed that as a result, "fewer students will fall through the cracks."

Roving CAP

At the schools served by Ms. Erichs, it was evident that students needed a great deal of support to complete the tasks required for college-going. Student awareness of expectations, requirements and timelines also appeared to be quite uneven across her schools. While School D had an existing college-going culture, as evidenced by the school-based counselor's strong integration there, Schools A, B, and C were operating at more developmental stages in this respect. Moreover, the schools' resources (i.e., technology, counseling staff) did not appear to be deliberately coordinated around college-going, which made Ms. Erichs' work more challenging than it might have been with greater levels of awareness of the resource, and organization of staff to support it.

Recommendations

Even in the age of digitally available resources and information about college-going, actually applying that information successfully requires another set of instructions. It necessitates a familiarity or confidence within the college cultural *milieu*, with which first-generation students may lack experience. School-based counselors ostensibly help students navigate those issues; however, in large high schools, other administrative duties may take precedence over individualized help with a goal that is not met until *after* high school. Therefore, having an adult dedicated to guiding students through the process of accessing college is especially critical in City Schools.

Equally important for first-generation students is a school-wide culture that places an emphasis on what comes after high school, whether that is college or other workforce training. Many City Schools students may not be having conversations at home that serve to orient their wealthier counterparts about postsecondary options, timelines, necessary steps, academic requirements for admission, or what it is like to attend college. Indeed, CAPs were often approached by students with the most basic of questions about college-going, for instance asking how they could find out if they were eligible for college.

Further, the services for which CAPs were needed highlighted ways that students could potentially be better prepared for college, especially regarding writing and interacting with technology. CAPs reported that some students were dissuaded from applying for certain scholarships or colleges when writing an essay was a component of the application.

Similarly, lack of familiarity with computer technology was evident among some students, even while youth today are awash in smartphone technology. Preparing City Schools students to be competitive in the 21ˢᵗ century economy requires that schools are technologically up-to-date, and that students are proficient with the tools that their more socioeconomically advantaged peers take for granted. They must also be ready for the academic expectations of college, which in many cases, will be appreciably higher than what was encountered in high school.

With respect to College Bound Foundation CAPs in City Schools, the data emphatically suggest that many district high school students can greatly benefit from regular access to a knowledgeable adult dedicated to supporting college-going. (See Appendix C for information about CAPs' target students' FAFSA completions, college application submissions, and fall enrollment after year 1 of implementation.) In addition, several factors may be usefully addressed in the Foundation's agreements with high schools. In particular, agreements ideally should specify that the school will provide CAPs a quiet space with wireless internet availability, as well as reliable student access to computers connected to the internet. Finally, school leaders should commit to facilitating interactions between their staff and CAPs, as they work collaboratively for the benefit of students who wish to enroll in college.

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Appendix A
CAP Shadowing Protocol

Date/time:		Location/site:
Element of Practice	Opportunity to observe element (Y/N)	Topical notes
1. Office hours were held		
2. Students visited office to talk with CAPS		
3. Topic of visit included: a. College choice(s)		
b. Financial assistance for college		
c. Parental input about college		
d. Academic requirements		
e. SAT/ACT testing/scheduling		
f. Target colleges		
g. Application assistance		
h. Recommendation letters		
i. Rooming/board/fees assistance		
j. Other college-related topic		
k. Topic was non-college-access related		These conversations will not be recorded or included in observation data

Appendix B
CAP Interview Protocol

1. Can you describe a typical day of your work in a school? Prompts:
   a. How often do you find yourself pulled into regular school-based roles instead of CAPS?
   b. How many students do you serve in a single day?
   c. What sorts of tasks do you perform on behalf of students?

2. Can you describe your relationship with the principal of the school? Prompts:
   a. How well do they understand your work and goals?
   b. How do they organize college access opportunities at this school?
   c. What specific college knowledge activities does s/he promote at this school?

3. Can you describe your relationship with other counselor(s) at this school (if applicable)?
   a. How closely do you work with him/her?
   b. How well do they understand what you do here at the school?
   c. Have you noticed any differences between how you and they work with students?
   d. Are you able to distribute the work between you?
   e. What specific college knowledge activities does s/he promote at this school?

4. Can you describe the students you serve at this school with respect to college-going?
   Prompts:
   a. Are their families involved in their decision to pursue college, and if so how does this help or hinder your efforts?
   b. Do you request information from students about their parents' college-going status? If yes, what percent would be first-generation?
   c. What do you perceive as the greatest barrier to college-going among your students?
   d. How well do students understand the connection between their career goals and requisite credentials/coursework?

5. Do you set concrete goals for the year and if so, please describe them? Prompts:
   a. How do you set these goals? (prompt: Does principal set goals? Do you have an opportunity for input?)
   b. Do you establish, e.g., a particular percent who submit applications?
   c. A certain number of applications per student?
   d. A particular percent who are accepted to college?
   e. A particular percent who completed FAFSA?
   f. Is ensuring students enroll next fall part of your goals?

6. What, in your opinion, are the biggest obstacles to meeting Goal X (refer to goals from question 5) Prompts:
    a. Financing?
    b. Parent/family buy-in?
    c. Academics?
    d. Aspirations/identity?
    e. Student comfort (intimidation by the process)?

7. How do you track progress with Goal X (refer to goals from question 5)? Prompts:
    a. Can you show me what that looks like?
    b. How do you use this info?
    c. Do you/how do you prioritize next-steps for Goal X (refer to goals from question 4)

8. Can you please describe your process for identifying students for CollegeBound? Prompts:
    a. Do you get assistance from the Foundation when identifying students?
    b. What data do you most often use?
    c. Do you use any exclusionary criteria?

9. Can you please tell me what you believe is the most important aspect of your work? Prompts:
    a. Student trust/relationships?
    b. School leadership?
    c. Other aspect? (please explain)

10. In supporting students going to college, what systematic efforts/practices have you ever tried and abandoned (if any), and what did you learn from them?

11. Would you describe your current practice as flourishing? Prompts:
    a. If not, why not and what will you be trying next?
    b. Are there any resources that would help you improve your work?

Appendix C
CAPs' Target Student Outcomes in Year 1

The tables in Appendix C provide summary outcome information concerning the students served by the "second CAP" (Table C.1) and the "roving CAP" (Table C.2). Outcomes include FAFSA completion, college application completion, and college enrollment in the fall after high school graduation. In both tables we present data after year 1 of the intervention (2016-17). Year 2 is 2017-18; thus, at the time of writing those outcomes are not yet known.

At School E, all students are targeted for CAP services. In Table C.1, we compare outcomes after year 1 with a second CAP to those for the previous year's graduating class who had access to services from a single CAP.

Table C.1
School E: FAFSA and College Application Completions, and Fall Enrollment Outcomes after the First Year of CAP Services, Compared to the Prior Graduating Class*

	Outcomes after year one - with second CAP (N=342)	Outcomes for previous class – with one CAP (N=336)
FAFSAs	87.4	81.9
College Applications		
to 4-year	90.4	81.8
to 2-year	36.5	37.5
Fall Enrollments		
in 4-year	66.1	59.8
in 2-year	12.0	15.8

Source: Application and enrollment data are from Naviance and National Student Clearinghouse files from Baltimore City Schools' Office of Achievement and Accountability; FAFSA completions are from Federal Student Aid, Dept. of Education, Completion by High School and Public District (Retrieved March 2018)
*At School E, all graduating students were eligible for CAP services.

The data in Appendix Table C.2 pertain to the target students served by the roving CAP in year 1 of the intervention. Students served by the roving CAP are not comparable to other same-school peers, as target students have different academic profiles (i.e., higher GPAs or SAT scores). Further, students targeted for services by the roving CAP were sometimes identified using other criteria (such as principal recommendations or student self-nomination). Thus, it was not feasible to compare to them to students not served within the same school, or to generate a comparison group of similar students from the prior school year. Instead, we present outcomes for the graduates who received CAP services in the first year of the intervention and compare them to district-wide outcomes, as one goal of College Bound is to augment the existing capacity of college guidance services in the city as a whole.

As reported by the roving CAP, service provision did not begin in Schools A, B and D until the spring semester of year one. Specifically, at School A, services began in February, and in Schools B and D, in January. This factor reduced the amount of support that was available to graduating students, as a great deal of college preparation activity typically takes place earlier, during the fall of graduating students' 12th grade year.

Table C.2

FAFSA and College Application Completions, and Fall Enrollment Outcomes for Roving CAP's Target Students after the First Year of Services, Compared to the District (2016-17)

	School A (N=69)	School B (N=26)	School D (N=41)	District-wide (N=3,996*)
FAFSAs	47.8	73.1	63.4	61.1
College Applications				
to 4-year	49.3	30.8	73.2	43.9
to 2-year	47.8	30.8	61.0	39.1
Fall Enrollments				
in 4-year	39.1	30.8	43.9	26.8
in 2-year	14.5	15.4	24.4	14.9

Sources: Application and enrollment data are from Naviance and National Student Clearinghouse files from Baltimore City Schools' Office of Achievement and Accountability; FAFSA results are from Maryland Higher Education Commission MDCAPS system obtained from College Bound.
*Number of graduates is based on the count of graduates in the High School Completion file for 2016-17.