

**Transitioning is the Hardest Part:
Preparing Middle and High School Students of Color to
Thrive in Private School**

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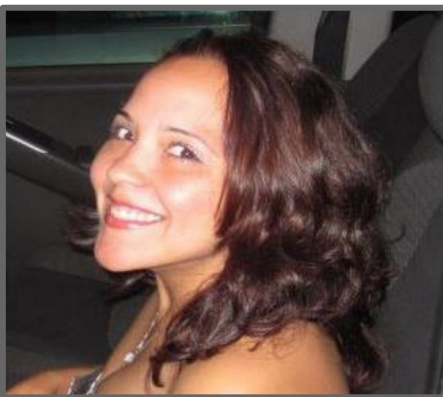
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Identity

Community

College

Academics

Identity

CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER:

- What does it mean to be _____ in this new environment?
 - Students who have not been the minority
 - What are the perceptions from a student's home community of this change
- What comments/ conversations are students likely to encounter?
 - Accomplishments diminished
 - Questioning of racial belonging
 - Stereotype threat
- What conversations and messages are the school presenting about different races and cultures?
- How are the adults on campus supporting or hindering inclusivity on campus?
- What is the climate around affinity groups?

SUGGESTIONS:

- Examine curriculum for different racial/diverse representation and add what is missing
- Recognize and make a part of the dialogue the fact that every school has a culture
- Provide opportunity for semi-structured dialogue and exploration regarding identity and race
- Introduce definitions and considerations of identity that are fluid
- Consider how the school is ensuring that the contributions are viewed as a two way street
- Frame race and cultural contributions as positives and adding to school environment

Community

CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER:

- Social and Cultural Experiences
 - Differing family values and expectations
 - Examples: Bar/Bat-Mitzvahs, Birthday Parties, Parent events, Sleepovers, etc.
- Beyond Tuition
 - Examples: Dances and school sponsored events, Transportation, Athletics, Academic costs: books, technology, AP exams, calculators, etc
- Leadership
 - What does your adult and student leadership look like? Are multiple perspectives brought to the table?
- Mental Health
 - What is it like being away from home in a place that feels like you don't belong?
 - Accessing resources/ discussing issues with professionals is a new concept for many.
 - Not having the agency to say "being here isn't so great".

SUGGESTIONS:

- Provide information on common cultural celebrations
 - Include background, dress, and how to navigate gifting
- Work (with students) to identify and address hidden costs
- Make sure there are opportunities for diverse voices and input in decision making roles.
- Make students aware of resources around them for mental wellness, but also provide informal opportunities for students to feel a sense of support.
- Most importantly, adults need to have the students' back. Do your best to **show up** for them.

Academics

CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER:

- Self-advocacy in academic challenges may be difficult as many of our students have never had to ask for help and do not necessarily know how.
- Unaware of resources that are available for everyone.
- Increased levels of expectations, varied pedagogy.
- Learning to balance multiple required aspects of private school life.
- The need to prove that they belong.
- Impostor syndrome

SUGGESTIONS:

- Familiarize students with environment and resources available to identify the pathways to achieve goals. Destigmatize asking for help.
- Consider proactive summer goals/plans - (classes/online orientations)
- Create Peer group meetings with specialist at specific times during the academic year. (exams/due dates/research based projects)
- Outline clear expectations on syllabus/assignments, with examples
- Inform parents of resources and how students can access them

College

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS



CONCEPTS TO CONSIDER:

- How can students be prepared to compete in an ever-increasing competitive college process?
- What have families sacrificed for their child(ren) to attend and what are their expectations?
- What expectations and stereotypes do students/teachers/other people at school have about a student/group of students? How are students prepared for rejection?
- What is the school's definition of success and how is this portrayed?

SUGGESTIONS:

- Consider what things your school can do to to remove barriers for students and help college be more accessible
- Educate parents and include them in dialogue from the beginning
- Create pathways for upward mobility to higher level courses
- Examine college matriculation data by race and SES
- Support interest in HBCUs & Hispanic Serving Institutions
- Provide information about the realities of the role that financial aid process plays in college admission

General Suggestions

- Students are the experts of their experience
- Utilize
 - Role Play
 - Group and individual discussion and activities
- Spread transition programming across multiple days
- Assume that students don't know
- Create meaningful opportunities for interaction through a robust mentor/buddy system.
- Encourage and facilitate networking with alumni
- Be ready to interrogate the culture of your school and find ways to promote cultural competency

Discussion

THANK YOU!!