



Kids to College[®]

Sponsored by The Sallie Mae Fund

Kids to College[®] (K2CSM) began in 1992-3 as a pilot program in and around the greater metropolitan area of Boston, Massachusetts. The program and curriculum development over the past 10 years has been a collaborative effort of The Sallie Mae Fund, the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities Massachusetts (AICUM) and the Higher Education Information Center (HEIC). Since its inception, Kids to College Massachusetts has served over 20,000 students and currently operates in all but one of the principal urban areas of the state. Fifty colleges and universities are partners.

From its Massachusetts beginnings, Kids to College has expanded to nine total sites and has served over 40,000 students. The program is designed to bring early awareness to the importance of higher education by introducing 6th graders to college life. Middle school classes are paired with a local college or university to participate in a unique six-session curriculum that combines hands-on activities with information on careers, college life, and how to choose courses that give them the greatest range of options for education beyond high school. The program culminates in the late spring with a visit to the partner college for both students and their parents/guardians.

Why Sixth Graders?

While many colleges and universities already have educational awareness programs in place, “Kids to College” is unique in its outreach to sixth graders. The sooner students and their families learn about all of their educational options, the sooner they can begin to prepare for them. Sixth grade is a particularly critical point for decisions that affect a child’s future education, a time when many students begin to question the value of a high school diploma. In addition, sixth graders are young enough to consider a campus visit a “big deal” and are more willing than older students to have their parents accompany them on campus.

Program Expansion

The Sallie Mae Fund now funds or supports Kids to College programs in Massachusetts; California; Miami, FL; Washington, DC; Charlotte, NC; Middletown, CT; Burlington VT; Cortland, NY; and Houston, TX. In 2007, the program will serve 15,000 students.

Curriculum Overview

The Kids to College curriculum emphasizes interactive, hands-on activities that reinforce the program’s premise: higher education is something you can achieve if you plan ahead. A staff member and current student from the partner college visit the sixth graders at the beginning and end of the program to talk about what college life is like, explain the campus visit, and answer students’ questions. In between, students learn about different careers, create business cards and engage in creative role playing.

At the outset of the curriculum, students are given Kids to College notebooks to use whenever a K2C activity takes place and keep as a reminder of the possibilities that college offers. The curriculum is divided equally between teacher and campus liaison generated activities.

The Kids to College partnerships are formed in the fall. Before the program begins for students, college representatives and classroom teachers meet for an in-service training. At that time, the K2C curriculum is thoroughly reviewed and participants are able to ask questions about the program.

Campus liaisons are encouraged to form a steering committee consisting of members from admissions, financial aid, student affairs, continuing education, faculty, student organizations, and other interested parties that can make the day on campus a success. They also need to stay in contact with the classroom teacher of their partner class throughout the program’s duration.



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Curriculum Outline

Session I: Introduction to College Life

This is the first visit by the College Liaison to the classroom. The liaison presents an overview of the program while the college student talks about life at college.

The objectives are to let students know that college is a possibility, to introduce the 6th graders to college students with a background similar to theirs and to introduce college-related vocabulary.

Session II: Career Speaker/Career Activity

The campus liaison arranges for a career speaker to talk with students about his/her occupation and the role higher education has played in his/her life. Students then interview the speaker.

The objectives are to introduce the students to a professional with a similar background, to impress upon the students the importance of education in reaching one's career goals, and to motivate students to work harder in school to achieve their own goals.

Session III: Business Cards

Students design over-sized business cards for their chosen career on card stock. The cards state the degree required for the career and require the students to use their creativity in depicting that career. The objectives are to get students thinking about career possibilities, encourage students to research education requirements for different careers, and to express creativity.

Session IV: Career Day

Students have a "Career Day" during which they engage in creative role playing by imagining themselves at the age of 25. Students, who are encouraged to dress up to represent a career of their choice, complete a "Future Fantasy" worksheet and make presentations to the entire classroom on their "future selves." Parents are invited to observe.

The objectives are to encourage students to take a further step in understanding what their working environment may be like, to sharpen their research and presentation skills, and to involve parents in planning for their child's future.

Session V: Planning for College Starts Now

The classroom teacher presents on the importance of college and how to prepare, e.g. by taking college preparatory courses.

The objectives are to help students make the connection between their college, career goals, and academic preparation and to help students and parents understand the course they need to gain admission in college. Students also make a list of at least ten things that will help improve their academic success.

Session VI: Preparing for the College Visit

The campus liaison and college student return to talk about the day on campus, answer students' questions and, if possible, show slides of the campus to pique students' interest.

The objectives are to reacquaint students with the college liaison and students and to give the students an opportunity to share their K2C experiences with the liaison.

The Day on Campus

The Day on Campus lasts approximately four hours and is quite different from a traditional college tour. Because most sixth graders have never been on a campus before, their concepts of college life vary greatly. The visit focuses on hands-on activities that demonstrate how college can be challenging yet fun. An hour long activity, such as a basic science experiment, an art studio project or a student radio broadcast can pique students' interest while drawing attention to some unique



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aspects of the partner college. Students are given an opportunity to interact with real college students and hear from college students with similar backgrounds (perhaps, Kids to College alumni themselves).

Reaching Parents

Parents can be involved in a number of ways. They may be invited to all K2C activities including the campus visit. Liaisons and teachers may send special invitations to parents for “Career Day” to see their child’s presentation of his/her “dream career.” Teachers may provide early awareness packages during parent open house programs and give early awareness programs at other school-sponsored activities. Liaisons may also wish to hold a special program for parents on a college campus on a Saturday morning or an evening.

Responsibilities

Program responsibilities are shared by the administrative agent, sixth grade school partners and the college university partners. The following is a sample responsibilities breakdown:

Administrative Agent*:

- Recruit colleges and sixth grade partners
- Provide training and training materials
- Act as a resource for parents
- Collect data from school

Sixth grade Teachers/School Partners:

- Teach a six session curriculum with assistance from campus liaison
- Administer data collection
- Provide transportation to partner college

University Partners:

- Provide campus liaison to help plan the session and provide expertise at two session minimum
- Organize and host the day o campus, providing a meal and a customized experience for the students

*A school or university partner may also act as the administrative agent

Program Expansion

The Sallie Mae Fund welcomes the expansion of this program to other locations. To bring K2C to your area, the Fund may provide initial training and a K2C manual to walk you through the steps necessary to implement the program. The Fund requires a signed K2C trademark and license agreement as well as the commitment to provide The Fund with program updates and pre and post survey evaluation date. To learn more, contact:

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