

HORACE

College Admissions and the Essential School

When schools change curriculum and assessment practices, everyone worries that students will suffer in the college selection process. But most selective colleges say they're used to unusual transcripts, and big public universities are looking for new ways to work with schools in change.

GET ANY GROUP OF COLLEGE professors talking about what kind of first-year students they long for, and the discussion sounds like an advertisement for Essential School habits of mind. Give us students who can think through complex issues, they say, who read and write across the disciplines, initiate projects, work independently. Faced with entering students who increasingly need remedial work, university faculties often wring their hands and blame the schools.

But ask any Essential school person to name the biggest obstacle to reshaping curriculum and assessment practices at the secondary level, and the answer inevitably turns to college admissions. Integrated coursework in long blocks? Alternative assessments like exhibitions, projects, and portfolios? Heterogeneous grouping? Though these strategies may aim to develop the very intellectual habits colleges are asking for, they run into determined resistance from teachers, parents, and students who believe that getting into college depends on meeting a strict set of course requirements, accumulating a certain grade point average, rising to a certain rank in the class, and doing well on standardized measures like SAT and ACT tests.

Just how much difference does this issue actually make for students whose schools have moved most boldly along new paths? How do

they fare with the most selective colleges if their course transcripts and evaluations look different, their schools refuse to rank them in class, their courses don't carry prestigious Advanced Placement credit? In the sea of applications received by large state universities, do those less easily quantified sink, or rise to the top? Conversations with a dozen admissions officers and school people reveal surprising differences between the perception and the reality of this highly charged issue.

"Worrying about colleges may be important but it should not stand in the way of schools interested in change," says Sharon Lloyd Clark, director of Brown University's Institute for Secondary Education and head of the Coalition of Essential Schools' Admissions Project. "When you actually get high school people to sit down with college people and talk about teaching and learning, they're concerned about the same problems. Admissions can and should be a support and catalyst for change, not a barrier." At a recent meeting held at Harvard University, Clark says, admissions officers expressed disappointment at the lack of innovation by some of the top-figured suburban high schools attending. "The University of Chicago's director of admissions, Ted O'Neill, told the schools, 'Do whatever you find educationally and morally sound—we'll deal with it!'"

What Competency-Based Admission Can Achieve

- A good competency-based admission policy should encourage innovation at the secondary school level. It would allow a student to demonstrate knowledge of the required subject matter without completing a discrete course that would translate into a Carnegie unit.
- A good competency-based admission policy should make it possible for a student to be admitted to college by taking either college preparatory or "tech prep" classes. If a school district can document that students who have taken "applied" math or science courses, for instance, can meet university-defined competency standards, those students would meet admissions requirements.
- A good competency-based admission policy should be based on attainment of the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college, not on the completion of a discrete course.
- A good competency-based admission policy should leave responsibility for presentation of the students' case for college readiness with the secondary schools. Once the university has set admissions standards in terms of competencies and specified general requirements for presenting student records, secondary schools would develop valid and reliable assessment techniques and present them in a "user-friendly" format.

Excerpted and condensed from the report of the University of Wisconsin Task Force on Competency-Based Admission (June 1993)

The demographics of today's high school students and the wide supply of their available choices, in any case, have virtually insured that any paying student can attend some college these days. The scramble comes as they compete for places at the mere 75 schools that accept fewer than half of their applicants. *Peterson's Competitive Colleges 1993-94* labels as "selective" some 275 other post-secondary institutions, from private colleges to public universities, but those places (and 3,200 others) are in competition for a short supply of 18-year-olds. Many colleges stay financially viable only by recruiting adult students.

Ever since the presidents of ten of the most demanding of those institutions met in 1892 to determine what satisfied them in a high school graduate, the secondary curriculum of United States schools has flowed from their desires. The "Committee of Ten" called for specific courses, often in a sequence that owed no more to logic than to the alphabet ("biology, chemistry, physics," for example). In the 1920s, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of

Teaching required that college admissions offices measure those courses in year-length "Carnegie units" of instruction time, as a condition for the colleges' joining the foundation's pension system (now called TIAA-CREF).

In that agricultural and industrial age, when few students needed to go past grammar school to qualify for a job, the secondary curriculum applied chiefly to a small college-bound elite. A century later, a legion of future "knowledge workers" and "symbolic analysts" of the information age are still laboring under the same high-school sequence—rarely practicing the skills of synthesis and solution that will face them in college and on the job, but dutifully accumulating the course units that promise to get them into college.

Ironically, the elite selective colleges have stopped caring as much about all that as everybody thinks. "We can be very adaptable," says Pamela Roth Appleton, an admissions officer at Wellesley College, which selected its 1998 class of around 600 from around 3,400 applicants this year. "Every folder is read

completely, in committee fashion. We have students who were home schooled—we don't even require a high school diploma, although we do ask for SAT scores."

What's the Difference?

Though Wellesley says its most successful students come prepared with four years of English, social sciences, mathematics, and lab science, it has a long history of supporting high schools that break from the conventional mold. In the 1930s, it was one of 40 leading colleges that agreed to admit students from 30 progressive high schools despite an untraditional preparation—and to track their progress through their college years. The Eight-Year Study, as it was called, showed that by all standards—the colleges', the students' peers, and the students themselves—students from the experimental schools did a somewhat better job than their counterparts; and the more radically the school had restructured its curriculum, the



HORACE is published five times yearly at Brown University by the Coalition of Essential Schools, Box 1969, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912. Beginning with Volume 10, individual subscriptions are \$20 a year (payable to Brown University); back copies are \$1.50 each. Publication of HORACE is supported in part by a grant from the Geraldine R Dodge Foundation.

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better they did. On conventional tests the experimental group did as well as their peers from traditional schools; but they out-performed their counterparts on measures of problem-solving skills, creativity, and the like. And they were more likely to be leaders on campus.

Other traditional selecting factors prove equally empty when students are followed through their college years, research shows. A study conducted for the American College Testing (ACT) Program showed that neither test scores, high school grades, nor even college grades correlated with later accomplishments as early as two years after college. The only predictive factor emerged as high school extracurricular activities—interesting evidence for those who argue that students learn most through performance-based activities they initiate themselves.

More four-year colleges than ever now choose, on the basis of studies like this, to make submitting standardized test scores optional. A forthcoming study by the FairTest center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, shows that 188 colleges (including Bowdoin, Bates, Wheaton, the University of Oregon, and California State University) take this approach. "We know none that has ever gone back to a test-score-driven admissions process," says FairTest spokesman Bob Schaeffer. "They all find they get more diverse students—by race, gender, geographical distribution, income, and intellectual skills." A five-year study by Bates College, which made SATs optional in 1984, found that "while submitters of SATs did just about what one would predict from their SATs, non-submitters consistently did much better, about two-tenths of a grade point above their predicted GPA," wrote Bates dean of admissions William Hiss in *The Journal of College Admission*. "The students seemed to be right when they told us, 'I am simply a better student than these tests would suggest.'"

In anecdotal form, these results

WHAT HARVARD WANTS: HABITS OF MIND

What do the most selective colleges believe incoming students should know and be able to do so as to make the most of their post-secondary learning opportunities? A Harvard University booklet, "Choosing Courses to Prepare for College," draws largely from a study of how Harvard students' high-school preparation affected performance in the college's Core program of study. For Essential Schools, several recommendations stand out particularly:

- Though the booklet lists areas of study primarily by discipline (English literature, foreign language, history, mathematics, and science), it emphasizes "important knowledge, skills, or habits of thought, rather than naming specific courses." Research and writing stands as a separate category equal in importance to any subject area. The principal message: Depth matters more than coverage, since high school programs vary. Use your school's strongest teachers and resources to take the most demanding courses you can find.
- In English literature, Harvard emphasizes critical and analytical reading. Make reading as deep as possible in a particular area, the college says, rather than superficially covering unrelated readings. "Besides reading novels for what they can tell you about life in [other] times and places," the booklet reads, "you will notice how authors treat different problems or how they treat the same problems in different ways." (Essential questions, anyone?)
- In foreign languages, Harvard advises studying one foreign language and its literature in depth rather than a smattering of several languages.
- In history, Harvard urges students to take much more than their required American history course, arguing that the rigorous study of history provides a more basic preparation for college work than other social sciences courses. By taking additional courses that focus on time periods or other areas, the college says, students learn to understand "the assumptions underlying our political, social, and economic institutions." Studying ideas and institutions in a historical context, it writes, teaches students "to think about these matters analytically; to understand not only what happened but how and why."
- Four years of high school mathematics alone won't do the trick, Harvard says; students need to "acquire the habit of puzzling over mathematical relationships." Do not just memorize formulas and definitions but question and understand them, Harvard urges, asking students to solve hard problems containing applications. "The ability to wrestle with difficult problems is far more important than the knowledge of many formulae or relationships," the booklet says. "It is not what courses you have taken, but how much you have thought about mathematics, that counts. More important than the knowledge of a specific mathematical topic is the willingness to tackle new problems."
- "The study of science begins with the habit of asking questions," Harvard advises, asking students to study the basic sciences of chemistry, physics, and biology for four years if possible. The booklet urges practice in the scientific processes of performing experiments, making measurements, and developing theories to explain and predict phenomena.
- Research and writing about texts is key to preparing for college, Harvard says: "If you read with curiosity and purpose, you will be able to take notes more easily, to weigh one author's view against another, to categorize your research under leading questions, and to form your own observations and opinions." Write regularly in coursework and journals "to find out what you think," it says, asking students also to reflect critically on their own writing. Following its advice will not ensure admission, the booklet admonishes. Harvard selects students not only by their academic preparation, it says, but by many other criteria. "Most of all we look for students who make the most of their opportunities and the resources available to them, and who are likely to continue to do so throughout their lives," the authors conclude.

This is the second page of a student's transcript from the Crefeld School, a small Coalition member school in Philadelphia serving grades 7 through 12. The first page contains basic student data, then lists course topics (under such headings as "Social Studies Topics," "Science Topics," and "Electives"), year of completion, and grade.

YEAR | | | | | | |

INQUIRY & EXPRESSION

Analytical Reading Skills						
Mechanics of Writing						
Essay Writing Skills						
Classroom Discussion Skills						
Research Skills						
Computation						
Experimental Procedures						
Analysis of Arts						
Inquiry and Questioning						
Critical Thinking						
Prompt Homework Completion						

MATH/SCIENCE

Mathematics Concepts						
Applying Math Concepts (Tests & Homework)						
Science Content (Tests & Homework)						
Application of Science Concepts						

HUMANITIES

Social Studies Content (Tests & Homework)						
Application of Social Studies Concepts						
English Content (Tests & Homework)						
Literary Analysis						

SENIOR EXHIBITIONS TOPICS

Date Completed

Community Service Project	
Instructional Activity	
Study/Proposal Topic	
Cultural Appreciation Topic	
Creative Exhibition	
Post-Graduation Plan	

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS ON TRANSCRIPT

AP = Advanced Placement test taken or planned NA = Not Applicable INC = Incomplete

A = Excellent B = Good C = Average D = Below Average F = Failure

The Crefeld School does NOT use G.P.A.'s, class ranks, percentiles, weighted courses, honors course designations, or credits accumulated. Students are graded on the basis of their own personal growth, effort, and ability and not in comparison to other students.

Inquiry & Expression grades are determined by the faculty in conference.

CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students are required to follow a Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum includes Humanities (social studies, literature, language arts, and fine arts) and Math/Science (mathematics, chemistry, physics, and biology). In addition, all students are required to participate in physical education, community service, and two electives each semester. Only courses designated "Elective" permit student choice. Humanities and Math/Science each meet 7 hours/week. Electives and Physical Ed. each meet 2.5 hours/week. All students are required to perform 2 hours of community service/week. Students graduate when they have completed a 3 semester residency, satisfied all curriculum requirements, passed all 5 senior exams with a grade of 90%, and completed a portfolio of 6 exhibitions of mastery.

are duplicated as the first Essential schools watch their graduates' progress through college. "Every year Syracuse University accepts about eight of our students," says admissions counselor and teacher Shirley Hawkinson at Central Park East Secondary School in New York City, which sends virtually all of its graduates on to college and follows their progress there. "The first batch are doing so very well there that admissions people come back every year to interview and recruit here." CPESS students stand out, Syracuse tells Hawkinson, "because they know how to ask questions--they're never shy about using the habits of mind." She has heard the same thing from Wesleyan, Hampshire, and Bard Colleges, where CPESS students perform "remarkably well."

Dealing with Numbers

While smaller colleges and universities can provide individual attention to every applicant, large campuses that may enroll up to 10,000 students in an entering class face a stickier problem. To manage the selection process efficiently, they devise numerical formulas using the standardized admission criteria—a core of required courses, grade point average, rank in class, and SAT or ACT scores. Using "objective" criteria, they argue, protects them against charges of bias and provides accountability to constituencies both public and private.

At the same time, realizing that too many high school graduates were ill prepared for college work, at least 20 state universities have tightened and raised their admission requirements since 1986. But few moved to align their standards with the growing movement among state legislatures and policymakers toward reforms at the school level such as performance-based competency requirements. Schools were caught in a tug of war between competing demands for old- and new-style improvement.

A few state systems recognized

this dilemma and acted to resolve it:

- On the advice of university and school people and the state education department, the University of Wisconsin recently decided to pilot a competency-based admissions policy as a supplement to its standard entrance policy. (See sidebar, page 2.)
- Nebraska has pledged to define new ways students from outcomes-based schools could meet the core entrance requirements for the state university system.
- Applicants to Wyoming's state university system must have completed either a specified number of course units in various subjects "or their equivalents in competency-based outcomes."

• Oregon may soon link its statewide emphasis on K-12 portfolio assessment to state university admission policies by arranging for portfolio review procedures instead of Carnegie-unit requirements.

• Tennessee's state university and community college system has developed an assessment and placement program that provides information about high school students' skills so as to appropriately place them in post-secondary institutions.

• In response to New York's New Compact for Learning, a State University of New York (SUNY) task force has specified the skills and knowledge its entrants need to succeed in their first year and endorsed performance-based assessments to

Pennsylvania Colleges Ask for 'Habits of Mind'

We are as concerned with how students learn as with what they learn. What we learn—knowledge of facts, processes, and concepts—is critical to success in college. How we learn is equally critical. We attach the highest value to the cultivation of such habits of mind as curiosity; independence, clarity, and incisiveness of thought; tolerance for ambiguity; and an ability to solve problems, coupled with a willingness to work hard and an ability to manage time. Students will be poorly prepared for college-level learning if their success in secondary school is largely a result of memorization.

To help students develop and strengthen these habits and abilities, courses in secondary school need to be challenging and intellectually demanding. Because we believe that effective writing promotes clear thinking, we expect courses to include frequent writing assignments. Clear, persuasive writing is grounded in the mastery of such skills as analytic thinking, problem solving, the interpretation of texts, informed speculation, and the ability to communicate information and ideas to others. Teachers should assign work which requires students to assess and integrate what they have learned, thereby developing their ability to read and think critically. Those courses and assignments challenging enough to require students to manage their time well help prepare students for similar demands in college. Serious independent projects reward students' curiosity and allow them to demonstrate their knowledge by defining issues carefully and presenting their own analyses and conclusions. Collaborative assignments develop students' ability to think and learn from others as well as on their own. When students question, interpret, and respond to ideas in conversation with others and draw conclusions through group discussion as well as solitary speculation, they are better prepared for the complex variety of tasks that they will face in college.

-- From "What We Expect: A Statement on Preparing for College," by the Academic Deans of the (Pennsylvania) Commonwealth Partnership: Allegheny College, Bryn Mawr College, Bucknell University, Carnegie Mellon University, Chatham College, Dickinson College, Franklin & Marshall College, Gettysburg College, Haverford College, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, and Swarthmore College.

guide both admissions and placement decisions. (See sidebar below.)

- In California, the Transitions project of the state school restructuring office is working with the state university system to accommodate integrated courses and alternative assessments in the state's requirements for university admissions.

What characterizes these projects is a new sense of collaboration between universities and school renewal efforts at the K-12 level. There's something in it for each of them; better-prepared entrants would cut down on post-secondary remedial courses, and eliminate redundancies between high school and college courses. And if colleges

could clearly convey to high school students what skills and knowledge will equip them for progress toward their later goals, schools could organize their curricula in ways that would reflect real meaning, not mere credit accumulation.

"Why can't kids check in with the university by computer from ninth grade on, to record and analyze their growing skills and competencies in relation to what their hopes are?" says educational consultant Glenn Singleton, a former admissions officer at the University of Pennsylvania who now heads California's Transitions project.

One Essential school has proposed to its state education depart-

ment and its university regents that the state run a pilot program using performance assessments as the basis for both high school graduation and university admissions. Under the proposal, a half dozen high schools would move to competency- and performance-based graduation assessments. With those diplomas, students would be admitted to the state's university system. A longitudinal study would track students through the six years following high school graduation, providing useful data about whether performance assessments can reliably predict college success.

Defining Readiness for College: SUNY's Expectations

A State University of New York (SUNY) task force recommends that, beginning as early as ninth or tenth grade, students "engage in a continuous authentic assessment experience that is maintained throughout their high school years; and create an assessment product [portfolios, narrative teacher assessments, self-evaluations, checklists of proficiencies, etc.] that could be taken with them to college and used there for academic planning and advisement." (Single standardized test scores, the group notes, "cannot capture the range of knowledge and skills necessary for success in the freshman year.") Though it outlines the skills and areas of knowledge students need to succeed at SUNY, it emphasizes they are "reference points," not admissions standards, useful in the dialogue with secondary schools about reform and intended to "change students' behaviors and enrich their learning." It defined those entry-level requirements broadly as follows:

Entry-Level Skills

- *Academic and personal support skills*, such as understanding learning styles; planning, organizing, and setting priorities; using educational resources and services; and accepting failure and success and learning from both.
- *Information management skills*, such as familiarity with library organization, knowledge of the categories into which information falls; ability to discriminate among sources of information, and computer literacy.
- *Communication skills*: reading; writing; listening and taking notes; speaking.
- *Analytical skills*: intellectual activities; problem solving.

Entry-Level Knowledge

- *Humanities, arts, and foreign languages*: Language arts; visual and performing arts; foreign languages and cultures
- *Natural sciences, mathematics, and technical studies*: basic dimensions of scientific, mathematical, and technological understanding; cultural and personal awareness of disciplines; crucial knowledge areas; the context of science; mathematical literacy.
- *Social sciences and history*: interrelationships; global issues; major issues of social science study of the U.S.; social science methods; history methods.

—SUNY Task Force Report on College Entry-Level Knowledge and Skills

Comparing Student Work

The answer will interest admissions officers at any large institution, who must reduce school judgments to numbers they can fairly compare. A typical dilemma shows up in the University of California system, which by law considers only the top 12.5 percent of the state's students, and which in fact can accommodate only 7 percent on its hard-pressed campuses. Its rigid formula for admission includes adherence to the "A-F requirements," an array of approved "academically rigorous" courses that fall under six content areas. For a school to deviate from that recipe with, say, an integrated math and science offering, it must submit each course syllabus for state approval. As a result, many progressive schools contend, the A-F requirements exert a stranglehold on curriculum for all students and encourage a strictly tracked system.

"It's extremely frustrating," says Joel Kammer, who teaches at Coalition member Piner High School in Santa Rosa, California. "Even with fewer than ten percent of our students going on to UC campuses, what UC chooses to recognize and exclude has total control. We've got to run this stuff through them in order to make any changes." Kammer wants to see integrated courses listed alongside A-F courses in the standard UC

admission student profile, not treated as special cases or exemptions.

Many Essential schools choose to avoid the issue by simply recording unusual or integrated studies in traditional separate course categories on transcripts. Similarly, they may use old-fashioned letter grades to indicate student mastery, rather than developing new designations (like "satisfactory" or "distinguished") that refer to various proficiency levels. What grades and course titles represent, after all, has always varied from school to school, and admissions officers recognize and often compensate for this.

"It only takes schools an extra step or two to convert quality performance assessments to the kind of numbers colleges feel comfortable with," says Rick Lear, principal of Arizona's new Sedona Red Rock High School. "Most state admissions officers are candid about wanting numbers; they'll take a narrative evaluation and assign it a number."

A better solution, Singleton

asserts, lies in developing a mutual understanding between schools and universities as to the goals of each, and a mutual trust that they are speaking the same language when they evaluate students. "The key is

co-design and also co-assessment," he says. "We want the university to know Piner well enough that it accepts the school's assessments as truthful and accountable to both the students' and the university's needs." Such a dialogue could create, he suggests, "a seamless web, where the exit outcomes of high schools match precisely the entrance requirements of the university."

Some educators worry that student assessment is thus defined primarily as a high-stakes function that determines students' futures, not a way to affect and enrich teaching and learning in the present. "I'm willing to describe, not to sort and select," says Michael Patron, who heads the Crefeld School, a small private Coalition member school in Philadelphia. "If colleges will define exactly what qualities they're looking for, I'll be as specific as they want about actual skills and personal qualities." Crefeld's transcripts show no class rank; its grades show growth, effort, and ability, not comparison with other students; it will not accumulate credit units, weight honors courses, or calculate grade point averages. On its two-page transcript appear not only course topics and grades but also a

Admissions Strategies for Essential Schools

- Be passionate and articulate about your school and its work.
- Begin early. Don't wait until the crunch of folder-reading time to speak with admissions people.
- Involve college faculty and admissions people in your school's work: student exhibitions, curriculum, committees, and admissions visits.
- Be an advocate. Be willing to distinguish between students, to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Even without grades, you can convey to colleges the information they need to make an appropriate match.
- Present summaries of portfolios, not the portfolio itself.
- Provide information in a clear, concise manner. If necessary, list concepts covered in interdisciplinary courses (especially math and science), books, and primary documents.
- Avoid jargon. Many admissions officers are recent graduates who do not have an extensive background in educational theory and practice.
- Revise transcripts and student profile forms. If they look the same, colleges will assume you are doing business as usual.
- Help students discuss their educational experience in both written and oral forms.

Giving Essential Schools the Seal of Approval

Through the efforts of the Coalition's Admissions Project, the presidents and chief admissions officers of the colleges below—chosen because most participated in the Eight-Year Study in the 1930s (see page 2)—have signed a statement supporting and affirming the work of educational reform under way in schools across America. "Ours is a time which calls for the ambitious redesign of schools," the statement reads, "and we recognize that institutions of higher education must be partners in bringing forth the changes so urgently needed. We applaud those schools involved in endeavors which emphasize rigorous independent thinking and the direct engagement of students in serious work, and we commend their efforts to find effective means to restructure and improve education at all levels. We welcome applications from students at such schools."

Amherst College
Bard College
Bennington College
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
Columbia University
Connecticut College
Dartmouth College
Fashion Institute of Technology
Hampshire College
Hobart and William Smith
Colleges

Lafayette College
Lehigh College
Mills College
Simmons College
Smith College
SUNY at Binghamton
University of Chicago
University of Denver
University of Wisconsin
Wesleyan College
Williams College
Wellesley College

breakdown of how well students have mastered essential skills. (See sidebar, page 4.) Extensive written comments get sent to the college as recommendations or in the form of "most recent report card."

Presenting Student Work

"We've never had a school reject what we do," Patron says. "They find it interesting, and they'll call to talk it over." Such one-to-one conversations do help colleges translate unusual records, admissions people note; they also appreciate succinct and understandable transcripts.

Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, which substitutes written evaluations for letter grades, has developed a concise narrative transcript for graduate school admissions purposes. "We evaluate the student's cumulative portfolio, summarizing and synthesizing in two to three typewritten pages the students' work, including a list of courses and related learning activities," says professor Merle Bruno.

Early and frequent communication between schools and colleges, stresses Brown's Sharon Lloyd Clark, goes farther than any other factor in smoothing a student's path toward college admission. Heathwood Hall, a South Carolina private Essential School, routinely invites 200 college admissions people from far and wide to attend its graduation exhibitions. "Our job is to let them know our unique qualities in every way we can," says upper school principal Lark Palma. "Along with our transcript we send a school profile explaining our exhibitions and portfolios and describing what we consider distinguished and honors work; we also list the colleges that have accepted them in recent years."

"When admissions people visit your school, make sure they understand just how you're changing and why," advises Clark. "Take them into classrooms; let them see kids working in new ways." If teachers are working more closely with fewer students, she says, point that out;

their recommendations will hold more insight and carry more weight.

"It's a two-way street," Clark says. "We have this idea that you can only say the most glowing things in recommendations. But the best college placements are good matches, and an honest evaluation of a student's strengths and weaknesses can help make that match."

Partnerships with area colleges can go a long way toward establishing trust on their part that Essential schools are providing a demanding academic preparation. "If university people routinely witness student work and provide critical feedback, the school is developing long-term credibility," Clark says. "Involve them in setting high standards."

Untangling the business of college admissions opens the way for an unprecedented national discourse on K-16 reform. If they will move boldly to align their practices with the substance of what colleges are looking for, Essential schools could well lead the way. □



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