

USER GUIDE

COURSE SELECTION



Purpose:

The purpose of support with course selection is to ensure that students are aware of the academically rigorous, college preparatory courses required during high school that will make them both competitive and prepared for a competitive 4-year college. Students should be able to:

- Describe the importance of taking rigorous college prep courses
- Advocate placement in college prep courses
- Know how to intentionally plan ahead for course selection to ensure that they are taking advantage of challenging course offerings by considering the options available to them, their past performance in similar classes, and the amount of time they have to devote to advanced classes.

Considerations:

- What does course selection support look like at the schools that your students attend?
 - What does partnership with Breakthrough look like at these schools? This will impact what advocacy efforts look like.
- What is your staffing model, and how will it impact which options you choose below?
- What is the timeline for course selection at schools where you have sizable cohorts? This will impact your timeline; depending on school calendars, this could also allow you to spread out course selection counseling throughout the year.
- Consider having students backwards plan as 9th graders (i.e. sketch out their ideal course schedule for all years in high school). To do this, students will ideally have access to the school's course catalog; they should also consider their transcripts and test scores to ensure they are pushing themselves in a realistic way. This plan can be saved and referred back to/updated each year. By requiring students to consider how they want to end high school, students may better understand the importance of planning ahead and have increased awareness about prerequisites that they are required to fulfill in order to access certain advanced upper-level courses.

- Allocate appropriate time to review schedules with students to answer questions, support them in finding appropriate balance, etc.

Options:

Course selection support can happen in individual and group settings. Options include:

- 1) Incorporating into existing programming for rising 9th-12th grade students
- 2) Individual counseling (with BT staff, BT teachers, and/or trained volunteers)
**if using volunteers, staff will want to budget in time for training and review of drafts/final products*
- 3) Group workshops (after school, evening, weekend)
- 4) A combination of the above options

Parental Involvement:

When possible, it is recommended that Breakthrough include parents/guardians in education about the importance of taking rigorous courses. Parents/guardians can be powerful advocates for their children when interacting with school administrators and counselors. They also may be able to more consistently support students in balancing their time and making sure that students are prioritizing the work needed to take on increasingly challenging courses. Supporting parents to understand the critical nature of course rigor in the college process will help ensure that the message around the importance of challenging courses is the same at home as at Breakthrough. The power of supporting families in this work also means that the message has the power to impact larger communities.

Resources:

Within the accompanying folders, you will find the following documents. **It is important to note that documents can and should be revised to match specific scheduling priorities and state-mandated college entrance requirements (e.g. California A-G requirements, academic programs where students all take physics in freshman year instead of biology, etc.).**

Folder	Documents
--------	-----------

Course Selection Handouts + Guides	Course Selection FAQ
	Director Troubleshooting Guide: Course Selection
	HS Course Planner
	Self-Advocacy Script
	Steps for Picking Your Own Classes
Course Selection Lesson + Materials	Lesson Plan, Powerpoint, Do Now, and Example

Proving Behaviors:

Throughout high school, students will enroll in a course schedule that takes into account their academic readiness in certain subjects and their time commitments, resulting in an academic program that appropriately challenges them while remaining balanced enough for students to be successful in increasingly rigorous courses. By graduation all Breakthrough students should have taken the right classes to make them college ready and college eligible.