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PREFACE

In 2001, the 77th Legislature adopted *Closing the Gaps*, a proactive plan designed in part to increase Texans’ participation and success in higher education.

As a result, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board launched *College for Texans*, a marketing and outreach initiative in 2002 with the slogan “Education. GO Get It.” The goal of the campaign is to enroll 630,000 academically prepared students by 2015, 430,000 beyond the 200,000 expected to attend college at current rates.

Part of the campaign strategy is reaching these students by building strong partnerships in communities across Texas.

As part of this grassroots network, GO Centers are being implemented in communities across the state to help recruit students into higher education.

Initially, **GO Centers** are being located on high school campuses where they serve as a point of coordination between students, P-12 counselors, and institutions of higher education. At the **GO Center**, students will find a variety of resources to help them better prepare and plan for college. Middle/High school and Collegiate G-Forces assist students in finding information and exploring options.

This Handbook is designed to help:

- Learn how to establish **GO Centers** in the community.
- Recruit new G-Force members.
- Support the **GO Center** and G-Force network.
- Mentor G-Force members in their efforts to assist peers in developing the elements required to successfully transition from high school graduation to post-secondary education.

In 2007, the Outreach and Success Advisory Committee recommended a transition plan in which the oversight of GO Centers would be transferred to the institutions of higher education in each individual region in the State of Texas. Therefore, the following GO Center Handbook is being distributed as a training guide to institutions of higher education and their partners to ensure a successful transition. All resources provided (including this handbook) can be modified to fit the needs of individual partnerships between institutions of higher education (IHE) and independent school districts (ISD) or any other organization promoting the college-going message.
CHAPTER 1
GO CENTER DESIGN AND PHILOSOPHY

Definition
GO Centers are local centers of energy and effort that focus on creating a school-wide college-going culture and promoting college awareness in the surrounding community.

Types
Traditional GO Centers are located in educational settings. They generally are located on high school campuses, but can also be found on middle school and/or college/university campuses.

Satellite GO Centers are located in non-educational settings. These can be found in public libraries, local workforce centers, or community centers.

Mobile GO Centers are, as the name indicates, mobile units outfitted with computers, printers, and internet connectivity. They will travel to a variety of nontraditional settings (i.e., festivals, sporting events, supermarket or mall parking lots, and schools that do not have GO Centers).

Design Elements
While every GO Center is different, they all contain the following common design elements:

- A room or space (i.e., section of the library) located on site that is open and accessible.
- A GO Center Sponsor.
- Racks that contain college catalogs, pamphlets, and other college related printed materials.
- Shelving or drawers that contain stacks of printed forms for various scholarships, financial aid, school admissions or other programs that require the submission of an application.
- Posters or banners on the walls promoting various education related topics, programs or institutions.
- Display Area/Board (for display Calendar of Events, College Fairs, Important Test Dates).

Peer Education
Increasing college enrollment rates is a matter of changing cultural norms. Effective strategies designed to change cultural norms must include the development of a system that uses positive peer pressure. The body of research on peer education clearly shows that the messenger may be more influential than the message. For this reason, GO Centers rely heavily on the creation of peer educators, known as G-Force, to carry the college-going message to their peers.
Another reason for utilizing peer educators is the need to maximize limited resources at the local level. School counselors typically shoulder the majority of the workload of providing assistance to students interested in pursuing post-secondary education. These individuals are typically responsible for a variety of other functions in the school as well. The establishment of a network of peer educators allows the counselor to meet the specific needs of more students as the peer educators assist students with the more general aspects of the college awareness and enrollment process.

NOTE: G-Force members are NOT counselors, they are simply facilitators of the process who provide very general information, motivate students to act on that information, help them get started in the process and then refer them to the appropriate resource person for more difficult issues. When peer mentors are able to answer many of the more general questions, the counselor can focus on more difficult issues.
Starting a GO Center
There are only a few requirements for opening a Traditional GO Center on a middle/high school campus.
1. Obtain appropriate approval from the school district and principal.
2. Secure a school faculty or staff member to be the GO Center sponsor.
3. Designate a physical site on campus. This site does not have to be in its own room, but there must be a designated space for at least two computers and resource materials.
4. Provide at least two dedicated computers with Internet access with either a link on the home page or setting the home page to www.CollegeForTexans.com.
5. Recruit students to become G-Force members.
6. Set up training via IHE or designated trainer for G-Force members and sponsor.

Making a GO Center Official
A sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is attached and is provided in Chapter 8, pp. 34-36. The MOU can be modified to fit the needs of a particular partnership between an IHE and ISD. To be an officially recognized GO Center, the IHE and ISD are asked to formalize the partnership by signing the agreed upon MOU and retaining a copy for their record. The IHE will submit an annual Uniform and Recruitment Strategies report regarding the success of GO Centers to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Setting up your Go Center
Branding items are available for new GO Centers once they are officially recognized. These items are to be used to designate the primary GO Center on campus. It is up to you to decide how you will arrange your GO Center. A typical GO Center will contain the following:
- Desks/tables and chairs
- At least two computers (Desktop PC, Notebook or Laptop) connected to the Internet\(^1\) (three or more would be optimal)
- Telephone
- Printer
- Computer (Desktop PC/Laptop/Notebook) minimum requirements:
  - Pentium III (or better)
  - 512mb of RAM (or better)
  - 40GB hard drive (or better)
  - 48X CD-RW drive
  - Windows XP Professional Operating System
  - Word Processing Software
- Shelves with FAFSA forms, Apply Texas Application, and other items
- Sign in area.

\(^1\) Cable/Broadband Internet connection would be most advantageous
GO Center Resources
- University Brochures
- College catalogs
- Financial aid information
- FAFSA application
- Posters promoting higher education
- College posters and pennants
- Scholarship information
- Resources to help guide students in choosing the right college
- Resources to help students find their interests when choosing a major

GO Center Launch Process

Launch Check List
✓ GO Center location
✓ Active High School G-Force Members
✓ Mission Statement
✓ Invitation List
✓ Launch Plan
✓ Invitation and Promotional Materials

Mission Statement
G-Force members should get together and create a Mission Statement for the GO Center.

Definition
A mission statement should be a short, clear, concise statement that describes the purpose of the GO Center.

Example of a mission statement
"The mission of the GO Center is to significantly increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education."
– McAllen Memorial High School

Process of Writing a Mission Statement
1. Who
2. What
3. Why

Mission Statement:
LAUNCH PLAN

- Set a launch date and time
  - Start with campus calendar
  - Speak to principal
  - Keep in mind work schedules, after school activities, testing dates
  - Schedule speakers

- Invitations
  - Guest speakers
  - School officials
  - Parents
  - Community leaders
  - Community-based organizations

- Promotions
  Begin promoting as soon as possible: call/e-mail/fax information weeks in advance of the launch.
  - Distribute promotional material (fliers, postcards, pamphlets) on campus and in the community
  - Contact the school paper (if applicable)
  - Make an announcement to the entire school
  - Contact local newspapers, T.V., and/or radio stations to cover the launch
  - Work closely with Collegiate G-Force Members and/or local higher education institutions

Note: It is helpful to try to get donations for gifts or gift certificates for door prizes—this attracts more people (parents, students, and others) to attend the launch. Also, try to get donations for refreshments to be served on the day of the launch. Remember it's your GO CENTER and your LAUNCH!!!
CHAPTER 2
GO CENTER SPONSOR

Definition
A GO Center Sponsor provides direct support and assistance to G-Force Members and promotes the college-going message to other professional staff.

Role of GO Center Sponsor
Based on initial evaluations of GO Centers, the GO Center Sponsor is the most critical piece in creating a successful Center. Because of this, the Sponsor must believe in the GO Center and its purpose. If the Sponsor shows little or no interest, the students may also show little or no interest.

The responsibilities of the Sponsor include the following:
• Promote higher education to every student!
• Assist students with researching career, financial aid, and higher education options.
• Fulfill administrative duties that G-Force members, as students, may not be allowed to do (i.e., matters involving confidentiality, academic or guidance counseling, etc.).
• Recruit and organize G-Force members.
• Motivate your G-Force members.
• Assist G-Force members with preparing, launching and running the GO Center.
• Plan or coordinate activities related to creating a college going culture (often done in collaboration with P-16 Field Specialist).

NOTE: Planning and carrying out the GO Center activities should not be the sole responsibility of the Sponsor. This is where recruitment of an active G-Force is essential.

Set Schedules
• Have a schedule indicating hours of operation
• Have a schedule indicating the hours High School G-Force members will be volunteering at the GO Centers
• Have goals to be accomplished throughout the academic school year

Conduct Presentations
• Present information on higher education topics at the GO Center, in classrooms, cafetorium, or community center
• Remember to use Middle School, High School and/or Collegiate G-Force Members to help with presentations
**Update Resources**
- Research free resources
- Order resources for GO Center

**Document your Success**
- Sign-in sheets for students—always have a sign-in sheet at the GO Center and have all students sign in
- Keep a log of G-Force volunteer work
- Document every event held with sign-in sheets
- Take pictures of events, G-Force members in action, etc.

**Keep Connected**
- Keep in touch with other G-Force chapters, both at the local and statewide levels
CHAPTER 3
G-FORCE

Definition
G-Force is a network of students/volunteers committed to achieving a college-going culture by supporting GO Center efforts.

Role of G-Force Members
Students often need help to maintain the momentum required by the college preparation process to complete their quest to enter college. G-Force members help create the drive in other students to go to college. G-Force members raise awareness among students and their families on the value of a higher education, show them how to prepare for college both academically and financially, and motivate students to successfully pursue higher education.

The G-Force is a key element of the GO Center. The most successful GO Centers will place the students in a leadership role. The commitment level of the members to the GO Center will be directly proportional to the level of ownership they feel.

Middle School and High School G-Force Requirements
1. Pursue Recommended High School Curriculum (High School only)
2. Maintain an 80% grade average*
3. Maintain a 95% attendance rate
4. Commit to the creation of a college-going culture
* The 80% average pertains to the student’s grade average once he/she has entered the G-Force. Many of the targeted students will not have 80% averages initially. However, these students can have the greatest impact on their peers. The 80% requirement begins with the grades subsequent to the student joining the G-force.

Collegiate G-Force Requirements
Currently there are over 60 Texas post-secondary education institutions that have established Collegiate G-Force chapters on their campuses. The purpose of these chapters is to serve as a point of coordination and deployment of campus resources that can serve Go Centers in surrounding communities. Each institution has established a student organization on their campus known as G-Force which includes officers.

Requirements for being a member of a Collegiate G-Force vary per institution. To determine the requirements of collegiate G-Force member at any specific institution, contact the G-Force sponsor for that institution.
Developing a G-Force
When initiating a GO Center, it is suggested that the school recruit 10 students to serve as the charter members of the G-Force. The students must meet the general requirements for G-Force members. It is also recommended that the school consider the following additional suggestions:

1. Choose students from all grade levels. The older students will provide maturity while the younger students will provide continuity. This also helps sustain the group without the need for constant training. The recommendation is to have at least 2 G-Force Members from each grade level.

2. Choose students from a variety of backgrounds and/or peer groups. By diversifying your initial group you will be able to reach a larger portion of the student body.

3. Choose several students who will be first-generation college students. These students can provide significant insight into the barriers that many first-generation students are facing. These students typically have the most barriers to overcome and likely have few personal role models regarding the pursuit of a college education.

The actual process of selecting G-Force members is left to the discretion of the GO Center Sponsor. A variety of methods have been used. Some schools simply appoint G-force members based on the recommendations of the counselor and/or principal. Some schools have announced the program to the entire student body or to a select group of students inviting them to go through an application and interview process. Each of these methods has been successful.

Growth and Sustainability
After your initial G-Force is trained and the GO Center is operational, you may discover that the needs of your school are greater than the 10 students you have trained can meet. You will need to develop strategies that will allow you to recruit new students to expand the size of your membership and to replace your existing G-Force members once they graduate.

1. Look for opportunities to increase the visibility of G-Force members. Create T-shirts for G-Force members and wear them on certain days. Place a group picture of G-Force in the school annually. Many schools place cut-outs of footballs, volleyballs, and other symbols on school lockers to identify students who are participating in those activities. Develop something similar for G-Force members.

2. Look for opportunities to develop benefits for G-Force members. G-Force members put a great deal of volunteer effort into making their school academically stronger. Find ways for the school and community to show their
appreciation. For example, every GO Center has G-Force membership cards. Find merchants in town that will give discounts to students with G-Force membership cards.

3. *Look for and facilitate opportunities to identify and validate leadership traits in potential G-Force members.* Look for opportunities for students to help other students. After they help the other person, follow up with the student you asked to help. Make sure they understand the role they just played in helping the other student move closer to college. Talk about how good it felt to help someone else and that they have the ability to feel that way all the time as a G-Force member. Tell them about the need to get more students into college and that you need more students to help out. Encourage them to consider becoming a G-Force member.

**G-Force Training**

Prior to opening a GO Center, the IHE or designated trainer provides training for G-Force members and Sponsors. The training is designed to provide G-Force members with the basic skills and knowledge needed to facilitate others in the college motivation and enrollment process. The training is also designed to motivate and inspire the students to be highly committed to the creation of a college-going culture. The trainings are free and coordinated by the IHE.

These continuing education options will be based on discussions with G-Force members and their Sponsors.

**G-Force Guidelines**

A few do’s and don’ts that G-Force members must adhere to include:

**G-Force Members DO:**
- Refer students to the GO Center.
- Encourage students to consider college.
- Develop and disseminate messages to student peers regarding college, including important dates and deadlines.
- Respect other students' decisions and choices regarding post-secondary education.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding academic issues.
- Remind students of GO Center appointments.

**G-Force Members DO NOT:**
- Advise or make specific recommendations about colleges or universities or discourage students from exploring a variety of options.
- Debate or argue with other students about post-secondary education options.
- Divulge information about other students.
- Fill out any application on behalf of another student i.e. college, financial aid, scholarship.
- Write essays or do any other academic work on behalf of another student.

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Basic Guidelines
While each GO Center establishes its own operational process, many schools have asked for some basic guidelines on how the mentoring process should take place. The following outline is a general guide based on discussions with several GO Centers.

Typical Process for a G-Force Member when meeting with a Student

Step 1: Arrive at the GO Center
  • Sign the G-Force registration form
  • Ensure student signs in
  • Organize any needed materials for session

Step 2: Meet with the Student
  • Assess needs (ask student if they need help and in what area)
  • Explain general process, if applicable

Step 3: Provide the Student with Basic Information
  • Hard copy
  • Online version from CollegeforTexans.com

Step 4: Introduce College Checklist
  • Indicate appropriate tasks
  • Support the student and make it fun

Step 5: Determine Actions and Appropriate Tools
  • Develop next steps
  • Identify tools that will facilitate tasks

Step 6: Facilitate the Process
  • Follow up with the student on agreed assignments
  • Provide additional assistance as needed
  • Provide appropriate referrals to more qualified individuals as needed

Step 7: Document
  • Complete required documentation of activity

NOTE: G-Force members are NOT counselors, they are simply facilitators of the process who provide very general information, motivate students to act on that information, help them get started in the process and then refer them to the appropriate resource person for more difficult issues. When peer mentors are able to answer many of the more general questions, the counselor can focus on more difficult issues.
Collegiate G-Force Calendar
IHE work on an abbreviated academic year when compared to that of the public school system. With this in mind, it is important that both partners understand the varying time constraints under which the other must operate.

Public Schools: Academic year begins during first part of August, with mid-year falling just after the middle of December. Schools begin again at the first part of January and run through May or early June.

Colleges and Universities: Students usually do not begin their fall semester until the very end of August/first of September, with most students finishing the semester during the first part of December (students spend December studying for finals, which are usually completed by mid December). The spring semester does not begin until the end of January and runs until early May (students spend early May studying for finals). Some students spend their summer in summer school, which usually consists of two main sessions during the summer months; other students spend this time working and earning money for the year ahead or gaining professional experience through summer internships.

Collegiate G-Force members are therefore only available for active participation during the following timeframes (unless otherwise noted):

- **Fall:** September-November
- **Spring:** February-April

The higher education/public education partnership exists to serve as a formal connection point or bridge between middle/high schools and area colleges and universities. The college students connected to a particular GO Center, provide high school students with a physical representation of the often distant notion of a college education. These Collegiate G-Force members also bring life and energy onto a high school campus, and often develop a mentoring relationship with many of the high school students. Even with this energy, the higher education partner is not the driving force behind the GO Center, nor do they desire to be so - institutions of higher education wish to support the hard work that high school counselors and administrators already do to support local youth by focusing on GO Center and G-Force team development. They look to the adult leadership and students at the high school for information regarding how they can best serve that school through the G-Force partnership. The higher education partner is one resource and source of support in a network of programs, organizations, and individuals that are pulled together in a community to support GO Center efforts.
GO Center General Timeline
The following information is intended as a general guide or framework for GO Center activity. For specific details on working with students at each grade level, be sure to use the appropriate GO Center Checklist:

August
- Prepare the GO Center for upcoming year; make sure center is stocked with appropriate materials (especially PSAT, SAT and ACT registration forms) and the computers are functioning well
- Develop marketing plan for the GO Center – How will you get the word out to freshmen and new students? What events do you have planned for the fall semester?

September
- Post SAT and ACT test dates and registration deadlines; make sure GO Center is well stocked with registration packets and practice booklets
- Guide students through the career exploration process
- Assist students in exploring college options – visit college websites, look through college catalogs and guidebooks, organize college visits
- Post information about local college fairs
- Post early admission deadlines for local colleges
- Use ‘College Application Checklist’ with seniors to guide them through the college application process; keep this checklist in student file and review with each Go Center visit

October
- Assist students in researching scholarships and financial aid on the Web
- Continue guiding seniors with ‘College Application Checklist’ (use in every visit with seniors)
- Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation with 11th - 12th graders
- Continue college exploration
- Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders

November
- Assist individual students requesting college catalogs, admissions requirements, and financial aid for colleges of interest
- Continue researching and applying for scholarships
- Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation
- Continue college exploration
- Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders
- Go apply College Application Awareness Month

December/January
- Collect information for mid-year report to P-16 Field Specialist (see appendix)
- Continue assisting students with scholarship/financial aid research
• Continue assisting students with the college application process
• Continue SAT/ACT registration and preparation
• Continue college exploration
• Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders
• Prepare GO Center for spring semester; make sure center is stocked with appropriate materials i.e. FAFSA forms and Apply Texas Applications in both English and Spanish
• Develop marketing plan and activities for Financial Aid Month in February

February
• FINANCIAL AID MONTH – Coordinate activities to have seniors complete and submit their FAFSA (encourage students to submit applications online, but allow them to take a hard copy home to complete beforehand)
• Check in with senior students to make sure they have taken the SAT/ACT, have completed and submitted the FAFSA form online, and have identified 3 colleges to which they will apply
• Continue using the ‘College Application Checklist’ to guide seniors

March/April
• Support seniors as they complete college admission applications and FAFSA forms; encourage them to submit copies of their college acceptance letters for file and possible display in GO Center if desired
• Support seniors as they choose the college that is best for them
• Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders
• Continue college exploration

May
• Continue supporting seniors as they make choices about life after high school
• Continue career exploration with 9-11th graders

June/July
• Encourage students to:
  o Visit colleges and universities of interest
  o Volunteer in the community
  o Find a summer job or internship in field of interest
CHAPTER 4
OUTREACH

Outreach Strategies
One of the primary roles of a GO Center is to organize and conduct various outreach projects designed to educate and motivate students and their families to pursue a college education. The GO Center contains several resources that enable parents, educators, and members of the local community to take ownership informing students about the opportunities in pursuing higher education credentials. An effective outreach program will be the primary driver of students into the GO Center.

General Outreach
- Play college videos over the campus television system between classes.
- Hang college posters around your school building.
- Promote college night on your campus. Coordinate school bus transportation to the fair if it is off campus. Provide students with a list of questions to ask college recruiters.
- Organize college field trips to area colleges and universities. Have students complete application or interest forms for that particular college to continue their connection with the campus.
- Hold financial aid nights in February in which students and parents can get assistance with their FAFSA forms.

Connecting Back to the GO Center
- Meet with campus department heads (math, English, science, etc.) to come up with creative ways to connect with the GO Centers. English teachers can require students to write a college essay and include a visit to the GO Center as part of an assignment. Math teachers can have students go to the GO Center and research the various expenses associated with attending college i.e. tuition, fees, room and board, etc. and do a comparative analysis between universities. Computer and keyboarding teachers can have a computer-based, virtual "scavenger hunt" for college and financial aid information. They can also have students complete online career interest surveys (on Career Cruising, if available) and report back on a career of interest. Approaching individual departments may be more effective than sending a general message to the entire faculty.
- Consider creating a job posting board in the GO Center with information on part-time positions that are open to students after school or on the weekend.
- Make use of curriculum based activities developed by the Coordinating Board.

Marketing to Select Audiences
- Continually market the GO Center to school faculty. Make presentations at faculty meetings and bring in students to talk about the work they are doing in the GO Center. Have handouts for the faculty (add a sample as an appendix).
• Find creative ways to get parents on campus. One school decided to spice up their financial aid night by having a "Hip Hop Into College" night – students participated in a talent show...with college and financial aid info sessions thrown in for parents and students in the audience! Local businesses donated prizes for the winning act.

• Connect with parent "booster clubs" to spread the message about college. Ask to send a representative to one of their meetings to talk briefly about the GO Center and the need to encourage their kids to attend college.

• FOOD is always a good marketing tool to increase attendance.

GO Center Support

• Make sure your GEAR UP, Talent Search, Upward Bound, Communities in Schools, Project Stay, Project Grad, and/or AVID advisors are working through the GO Center or are somehow connected to it. Offer the space to them as a meeting or office space when working with students on campus.

• Have college admission counselors/recruiters sign up for specific time slots in the GO Center and allow seniors to sign up for individual admission/advising meetings or interviews.

Local Outreach Projects

Local outreach projects can vary widely ranging from very simple to very involved. The most commonly used outreach project is the delivery of the Go Kit models with classroom presentations. GO Kit presentations are easy to conduct, effective and should be a part of the strategic plan of every GO Center. However, the creativity of several G-Force teams has led to a number of other innovative outreach projects. Here are a few examples:

Education Go Get It! Flag – Corpus Christi Moody High School made a large flag with the Go logo and tagline printed on it. When the football team scores, G-Force members run across the field with the flag.

TAKS Day Camp – Mineola High School G-force conducts a TAKS day camp. The high school G-force members conduct a day long camp for middle school students. The G-Force members spend the day with the students conducting various activities that are designed to be fun and educational. The goal of the camp is to convince the students that college is a place they want to go and they need to do well on the TAKS tests to help them get there, and allow the teachers to have TAKS preparation day assessment each student and develop strategies for helping them pass the TAKS test.

Reality Store – Several schools have created the Reality Store at their schools. The reality store gives students insight into finances associated with living in the real world, and informs them about the level of education and income needed to live the type of lifestyle they desire. Some schools have developed their own version of the program while others have arranged for Student Team Ministry to bring the Reality Store to their school.
**G-Force Assembly** – Quitman High School conducted a school assembly to promote their Go Center. They used presentations from the GO Kit as well as performed sketches they wrote themselves. One character they developed called “G-Force Man” was a big hit.

**Career Fair** – Several schools with GO Centers in the Lubbock area combined forces to add a GO Center to the regional Career Fair. They set up a GO Center with 20 computers at the fair and conducted career explorations using Careercruising.com for students attending the event. The computers were donated to them by their local workforce center. Each hour they held a drawing from the names of students that had conducted explorations and gave away a computer.

**GO Corners** – Nine high schools in the Brownsville area created GO Corners in every classroom in their school. A display was erected in the corner of every classroom that contained information on college, FAFSA forms, ACT/SAT Exams, etc.

**GO Hallways** – Rio Hondo Middle School turned their hallway into an extension of the GO Center. Huge flags of different colleges were hung from the ceiling in the hallway. Students were literally being hit in the head with the college message as they walked down the hall. In one high traffic area the school placed a television that ran continuous loops of college recruiting videos. Every time the students walked by they saw images of college life.
CHAPTER 5
GO KIT

Messages
The *College for Texans* Training Kit, or GO Kit, is a dynamic resource manual that
contains critical messages that G-force members will want to share with their peers. The
manual contains the basic information on: 1) the benefits of college, 2) college
admissions and 3) financial aid. The underlying message of the kit is that college is
desirable and obtainable to any student.

The GO Kit is free and downloadable on the College for Texans website at:
https://www1.thecb.state.tx.us/Apps/PubOrders/ToolKit.cfm

NOTE: Check the website often for additions to the GO Kit.

Benefits of College
The GO Kit provides G-force members with basic content needed to lead a discussion
or give a presentation to students and parents to help them understand the benefits of a
college education, including job opportunities and the financial benefits that come with a
college education.

- Job Opportunities. The kit provides information that discusses the changing
  needs of today's workplace. It presents the fact that we are now a part of a
global market and competition for jobs will come from all over the world. A
discussion of how jobs today require a higher education level than in previous
years and how a college education will provide students with greater
employment opportunities is also presented.

- Financial Benefits. The kit also provides a detailed discussion on the financial
  benefits of a college education. Exercises that illustrate the actual cost of
  living in today's society are available in the kit. This is followed by a
  comparison between a minimum wage salary and a typical salary a college
  graduate could expect. This is then related to the standard of living a person
  could expect with and without a college education.

College Admissions
The GO Kit provides G-Force members with basic content needed to lead a discussion
or give a presentation to students and parents to help them understand the various
college options that are available in Texas, what factors should be considered when
selecting a college, and what requirements must be met to be accepted into the college
of their choice.

- Types of Institutions. The kit provides information on the various types of colleges
  that are available such as community colleges, universities, technical schools and
  health related institutions.
• Selecting a College. The kit provides information on what factors to consider when selecting a college. Location, size, degree offerings, graduation rates, and other topics are discussed as factors that students should consider when selecting a college.

• Getting into College. The kit provides information on what factors to consider when preparing for college as well as general steps that must be taken to get into most colleges. This section discusses the importance of early preparation while in K-12th grades. Information is provided on what colleges look for when selecting students for admission. Grades, extra-curricular activities, standardized test scores, references, essays, and other variables are discussed. The kit also provides information that stresses the importance of completing all necessary paperwork in a timely manner. College applications, financial aid applications, and housing applications are discussed as well.

Financial Aid
The GO Kit provides G-force members with basic content needed to lead a discussion or give a presentation to students and parents to help them understand the cost of college, how to reduce the cost of college, and options that are available in Texas to help pay for college.

• Cost of College. The kit provides information on the actual expected financial costs of a college education. Information is provided on the expected expenses of college such as tuition, fees, books, housing, food, transportation and other living expenses.

• Cutting Costs. The kit provides suggestions on ways to reduce the cost of college such as taking Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate courses or dual credit courses while in high school, preparing academically while in high school to avoid the need for remedial courses, or enrolling in a local community college to take advantage of lower tuition costs and reduce living expenses.

• Financial Aid. The kit also provides a detailed discussion is provided on the types of financial aid that are available to students such as grants, loans, scholarships and work study programs. The kit discusses the difference between need and merit based financial aid. Instruction is provided on how to access need based financial aid by submitting the appropriate paperwork such as the FAFSA and scholarship applications. Information is also provided concerning the factors that most merit based financial aid programs evaluate when selecting recipients. The importance of meeting deadlines and where to go for help is also stressed.
CHAPTER 6
EVALUATION

Purpose
While documentation is often a tedious task, it is critical to the ability of the GO Center to make the strongest possible impact. It is important to constantly evaluate the final result of GO Center activities to be able to determine if the plans implemented are reaching local and state campaign goals. If results of the evaluation process indicated that you are not reaching the desired outcomes, then changes can be made to improve the process. Be mindful of those practices that are successful. If your center is successful but you do not have the proper documentation, you cannot communicate to your supporters the impact of your GO Center and the need for continued support.

Reporting Requirements
The evaluation of each GO Center is essential. Some of the indicators to consider are listed below. The instrument used to collect the data is identified by the number of asterisks (*) to the right of each indicator.

* This information is collected by the local GO Center and entered monthly into the GO Center Evaluation Report form.
** This information is self-reported by the student, so they need your encouragement.
*** This information is collected from the colleges and universities by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.
**** This information is collected from TEA from the AEIS report.

Indicators
There are several key indicators that have been used in the past to measure the impact of GO Centers. You should be interested in both “output” and “outcome” indicators. Output indicators are measures of the activities that take place through GO Centers. Outcome indicators are measures of changes in student behavior and performance on factors that are directly related to going to college.

Output Indicators
# G-Force members *
# Hours contributed by G-Force members *
# Students directly mentored by G-Force members *
# First Generation College Students being served *
# Students visiting the GO Center *
# Outreach activities conducted by G-Force members *
# Participants at each activity *
# Completed aptitude assessments **
# Students with identified college(s) of choice **
# Students who have completed checklists
# Students with a campus visit **
# Students with a FAFSA pin # **
# Students with a completed college application **
# Students with an essay **

**Outcome Indicators**
# Students enrolling in college ***
# Students completing and submitting college applications **
# Students completing and submitting FAFSA applications **
# Students taking SAT/ACT tests ****
# Students taking AP courses ****
# Students taking Dual or Concurrent Credit courses ****
# Students taking Concurrent Credit courses ****
# Students taking Recommended Curriculum. ****
# Students taking Distinguished Achievement Program ****
# Students passing all TAKS tests ****
# Students taking pre-algebra & other advanced courses in middle school. ****

**Baseline Survey**
Before initiating GO Center activities, it is very helpful to conduct a baseline survey to determine the current status of the students in your school. This is a one-page, 25-question survey that can give you a starting point from which to compare the impact of your GO Center.
GO Center Evaluation
Please complete this evaluation form and return it to one of the G-Force members today before leaving. Your input will assist the staff in its plans for future training.

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Items</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am informed about registering for the ACT/SAT.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I am informed about preparing academically for the ACT/SAT.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I know the college I plan to attend offers the major in which I am interested.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I know what my major will be in college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I know how to complete a college application.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I know how community service is important when applying for admission to college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I know how to access online information about college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I know about college application fees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I know how to find out about college scholarships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I have a back up plan in case I do not get into my first choice of college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I know what type of degree is required for the job I hope to get.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I know what college I plan to attend.</td>
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<td>13. I know about obtaining letters of reference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. I know how to apply for a college scholarship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I know how much college costs on average.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. I know about college application deadlines.</td>
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<td>17. I know about college credit hours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. I know about the other fees associated with going to college.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. I know how much books for college cost.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. I know about writing college application essays.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21. I know how to find out about college orientation sessions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22. I know the purpose of FAFSA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. I know about AP/Dual Credit courses.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24. I know how to explore college housing options.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. I know what job an advisor has on a college campus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. I know how to complete a FAFSA.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27. I know how to complete a college housing application.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>28. I know how to get college application fees eliminated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29. I know about college housing deadlines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. I know how to prepare academically to the THEA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31. I know how to register for THEA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. I know how to access online information about college.</td>
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</table>
RECOMMENDED DOCUMENTATION

GO Center Sign-in Sheet (Chapter 8, pp. 31)
- This form is to be kept in the Go Center at all times.
- This form must be filled out when students visit the Go Center.

G-Force Information (Chapter 8, pp. 32)
- Indicate all current G-Force members
- Indicate grade level, office position, if any, and email address
- Turn in a new form for each new G-force member as you add them

Presentation/Event Sign-in Sheet
- Fill out each time you conduct a presentation
- Everyone attending your presentation needs to sign in
- Be sure to put the title of the presentation or event
- Include names of High School G-force members that conducted the presentation

Presentation Evaluation
- With each presentation given, an evaluation needs to be distributed
- Attach all evaluations to your sign-in sheet

Monthly Reports (Chapter 8, pp. 33)
- Compile all the information from the previous items and complete this form
Presentation/Event Sign-In Sheet

School: ________________________________
Event: ________________________________
Date: ________________________________
Time: ________________________________
G Force Members: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Classification</th>
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Presentation Evaluation Form

Title: ___________________________  School: ___________________________

Presenters: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________

PLEASE MARK AN "X" BY THE NUMBER THAT BEST EXPRESSES YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE PRESENTATION

Excellent: 4  Good: 3  Satisfactory: 2  Unsatisfactory: 1

Do you feel the material was presented in a clear and concise manner?

☐ 4--Excellent  ☐ 3-- Good  ☐ 2-- Satisfactory  ☐ 1-- Unsatisfactory

Rate the relevance of information:

☐ 4--Excellent  ☐ 3-- Good  ☐ 2-- Satisfactory  ☐ 1-- Unsatisfactory

Rate the opportunity to participate/ask questions:

☐ 4--Excellent  ☐ 3-- Good  ☐ 2-- Satisfactory  ☐ 1-- Unsatisfactory

Rate of overall presentation:

☐ 4--Excellent  ☐ 3-- Good  ☐ 2-- Satisfactory  ☐ 1-- Unsatisfactory

Things I liked:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Things I disliked:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How can we improve the presentation?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
CHAPTER 7
STRATEGIC PLANNING

Develop Strategic Plan
The strength of the GO Center concept is its flexibility. While some structure is provided to direct the content of the message to be delivered, the key to the project is that the students will design local outreach strategies for dissemination of the materials and recruiting students. The strategic plan will consist of the following:

- Development of a strategic plan document to outline goals, objectives, activities and timelines for the project
- Development of an evaluation plan for the effort

Implementation of Strategy
Below are two example implementation strategies that may be employed on your campus, the “122 & 125 Project”:

For the pilot, the G-Force members will focus on high school juniors and seniors initially. The Goal will be to increase the number of junior and senior students pursuing college. In doing this, the G-Force will pilot the “122” project. The 122 project is a peer-to-peer mentoring effort in which each member of the G-Force works to get at least one more student to enroll in college. Hence one (1) college-bound student turns to (2) two (2) college bound students. This is the basis for the name of the marketing concept, 122.

The second effort of the G-Force in the pilot will be to implement strategies targeting 6th grade students. The Goal of this effort is to get current 6th grade students to enroll in the proper courses in 7th grade that will lead to the college-bound course track in high school. One of the strategies that will be employed will be called “125”. Similar to 122 in design, each (1) G-Force member will work to get five (5) sixth graders to enroll in the proper courses. This is the basis for the program name - “125” (or one-to-five).
CHAPTER 8
RESOURCES

A wealth of resources is available for your GO Center. The following information is a compilation of some of the more useful resources.

Web Resources
A variety of web resources have proven to be of value to GO Centers. A few of the more utilized resources are listed below:


www.tgslc.org – TG (Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation). To access this website you need the sponsor’s name, e-mail address, phone number, and your school name and address. You also need this information to order publications.

www.collegeboard.com – for information regarding the SAT

Telephone Resource
Professionals at the Texas Financial Aid Information Center, 1-888-311-8881, can answer financial aid and general college admissions questions Monday through Thursday, 7 am – 7 pm and on Friday 7am – 5pm. Bilingual representatives are also available through this number.

Printed Resources
College for Texans offers a variety of print materials that are useful to GO Centers. Each of the documents listed below are available free of charge at www.CollegeForTexans.com.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Time In</th>
<th>Time Out</th>
<th>Research a college or colleges</th>
<th>Work on a college application</th>
<th>Research a scholarship or scholarship application</th>
<th>Complete a FAFSA form</th>
<th>Research a career or careers</th>
<th>Register for a test online</th>
<th>Test Prep online</th>
<th>Reference Material</th>
<th>Assistance from G-Force Member</th>
<th>Attend a presentation</th>
<th>Others Not Listed (Please Describe)</th>
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</table>
G-Force Member Information Sheet

Name of School: ___________________________  Today's Date: ______________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G-Force Member's Name</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Officer/Title/Position</th>
<th>E-Mail</th>
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Go center

Monthly Report

School ___________________________ Reporting Period ______

Sponsor ___________________________

Go Center Traffic
Number of students who visited the Center _________ (Individual) _________ (Total Visits)

Estimation of number who visited for:
  College applications/research
  Scholarships
  Financial Aid/FAFSA
  Career Exploration
  SAT/ACT
  Received G-Force help
  Attended presentation

Primary Activities/Events
Please list and describe some of your events for this reporting period.

Comments:
GO Center Memorandum of Understanding Sample

Contracting Parties
This Proposed Memorandum of Understanding is between the _______________ (IHE) and ______________ school under the _______________ ISD or (non-profit organization). The GO Center project is designed to bring college access and financial aid information to K-12 students and parents in the region with the aim of establishing and maintaining permanent GO Centers within the school district. This initiative is in line with the Goals of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s (THECB) College for Texans (CFT) campaign, which has as its aim the enrollment of 630,000 more students by 2015 in higher education in the State of Texas.

Mutual Understanding—both parties will:
The _______________ University and the _______________ ISD agree to work together and to work with the THECB to support the following common Goals:

- To encourage students to pursue post-secondary education.
- To provide students and parents with the college access and financial aid information they need to plan and prepare for college.
- To provide information and data needed by both parties to best serve students and parents, and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the GO Center project.
- To provide an annual Uniform Recruitment and Retention Strategies Report (URRS) of outcomes to the THECB and CFAT Board of Trustees.
- To promote and collaborate on the use of HB1 and HB2237 dedicated funds of the high school’s allotment for college readiness.
- To stay informed of current and previously passed legislative bills that support higher education.
- To maintain a shared calendar of events/activities which promote college readiness.
- To collaborate to the extent possible with faith-based and community based organizations, business leaders, elected officials, federal and state agencies and all other vested stakeholders in order to promote college readiness and successful outcomes for the GO Center.

The _______________ University will:
- Assist the school’s designated GO Center sponsor for program years _______________ in academic engagement activities to promote college awareness and participation among students and parents.
- Assist in training of GO Center sponsors and school personnel on how to utilize student (both high school G-Force and college G-force) and other community volunteers to provide the college-going message among students and parents that college is affordable, possible and desirable;
- Where applicable, will work with the ISD to schedule a GO Center launch at the High School’s GO Center.
- Obtain and provide GO Center resources from THECB, including marketing materials, new materials/supplies, brochures, banners, etc. that will engender the understanding and acceptance among students and parents to complete all the necessary steps, including course selection, test preparation and completion, and financial aid and admission applications for college acceptance;
- At least once per academic year will provide college admissions and college application materials for GO Centers as well as admissions and financial aid personnel for student workshops and parent sessions.
• Conduct conference calls, meetings, and training with _________school's GO Center sponsor and others upon request but at least once a quarter;
• Monitor the activities of the project through monthly reports from school GO Center sponsors and report to CFAT;
• In collaboration with the schools designate an external cross-site evaluator and develop an evaluation plan. The evaluator will conduct the evaluation, analyze data collected, and report evaluation findings to the IHE, school district, the THECB; and
• Assist in the development and/or coordination of a GO Center Advisory Council.

The school will:
• Designate an adult GO Center sponsor to oversee the operation and supervision of the GO Center. This sponsor must be a school employee in either a guidance counseling position or a College Readiness Specialist authorized by the school to have access to students and facilities of the school;
• Establish and maintain a student-led center with high school and/or Collegiate G-Force or other volunteers to maximize a college-going culture;
• Establish a physical location for the _________ school's GO Center following the Ideal GO Center model as defined in Attachment 1. School staff, volunteers and students must have accessibility to computer and Internet access in the GO Center and it must be clearly identified using marketing materials available through the THECB; appropriate offices desks, phone, and other necessary materials and equipment for operations must be provided. The GO Center must be in a prominent, well-trafficked area of the school that is easily accessible by all students including those with disabilities.
• Recruit, screen, and monitor High School and/or Collegiate G-Force members to mentor and assist students at the GO Center.
• Work collaboratively with the current THECB P-16 Field Specialists and Vista volunteers as funding allows. They will serve as a resource to the IHE's and school districts for sufficient materials, information and possible volunteers. It is understood that this collaboration with Field Specialist is subject to continued funding.
• Assure that volunteers, Collegiate G-Force and other GO Center staff will complete a criminal background investigation.
• Align with the "Education. GO Get it" slogan, GO, and marketing efforts.
• Operate the _________school's GO Center as part of the statewide GO Center initiative.
• Display college readiness materials including FAFSA forms, Texas Common Application, community college applications and other items; be able to provide technical assistance
• Utilize a tracking system provided and maintained by CFAT; and
• Teachers, guidance counselors, and school staff will infuse curriculum with activities fostering an expectation of college attendance reinforcing the knowledge that a postsecondary education is affordable and possible and the belief that it is desirable. This will assist guidance counselors in the work that they are already involved in as mandated by HB 1, SB 158, HB 400, HB 2237, HB 3826, SB 282, etc (Attachment 2). These activities will actually serve to make guidance counselors jobs easier in fulfilling their roles of promoting college readiness for all students.
• Encourage students, parents, and the school community to use the _________ school's GO Center.
The GO Center Sponsor will:

- Provide daily supervision of the _________ school's GO Center and volunteers, mentors, other staff.
- Provide reports to IHE and the school principal on a monthly basis documenting the extent to which the High School GO Center is used by students, teachers, and parents.
- Provide reports to IHE and the school principal on a monthly basis documenting the number of hours which the High School and/or Collegiate G-force members and others volunteered in the GO Center.
- Complete and follow the requirements of a GO Center by filling out an Agreement Form provided by the Coordinating Board.
- Communicate regularly with all stakeholders to provide feedback on the progress of the _________ school's GO Center program, maybe through an e-newsletter or other easy electronic format.
- Meet regularly with all GO Center volunteers, HS and Collegiate G-Force volunteers and others associated with the _________ school's GO Center to plan and coordinate GO Center activities.
- Provide monthly and/or quarterly reports on use of the GO Center as requested by IHE and school.

PERIOD OF AGREEMENT
The participating parties agree to the terms outlined above for the _________ academic years, with plans to review these terms at the conclusion of noted academic year.

Termination
This agreement may be terminated by either of the parties upon giving of thirty (30) days' notice of termination to the other party at the addresses noted below:

I have read and agree to the terms and conditions outlined above.

PERFORMING AGENT APPROVAL

Superintendent/District Representative/Nonprofit Executive Date

________________________________________
HS Principal Date

________________________________________
GO Center Sponsor Date

________________________________________
Institution of Higher Education Date
Ideal GO Center Model

**Definition:** GO Centers are grassroots network of community-managed prospective college student centers located in communities across the state of Texas. GO Centers will serve as one of the points of coordination between the College for Texans efforts and local communities.

**GO Center Personnel**

GO Center Sponsor: A full-time staffer (counselor or paraprofessional) would serve as the GO Center Sponsor. This ensures that the students have someone that they can follow-up with regarding any issues that they may have. Currently, Project Advance, Communities in Schools, College Readiness Coordinators, and Career and Technology Education employees serve in this capacity at several High School GO Centers.

G-Force: The G-Force is the peer education component of the GO Center that utilizes students or volunteers to help facilitate the Campaign’s college-going message. The G-Force works under the guidance of a G-Force Sponsor.

- **Middle/High School:** Students serve as peer educators to encourage their fellow students to go to college.
- **Collegiate:** College students bring the experiential component to the entire college-going process.
- **Community:** Volunteers encourage members of their community to reap the benefits of a college education.

**Training**

G-Force and Sponsor receive 3-4 hour GO Center training (Toolkit presentation, Operations, Resources, and Peer Education) provided by the IHE staff. Ideally, training would occur on-site so there would not be a need for travel expense. Local institutions also can assist or host trainings, but there may be a fee involved.

**Location**

GO Centers can be located in middle schools, high schools, community colleges, universities, and other community locations (i.e. public libraries, community centers, housing projects, malls, etc.). The GO Center itself is a room or a section of a room designated specifically for college-going activities. The GO Center should be accessible to all students and preferably located in a high traffic area. Some high schools and community centers have deemed their entire computer labs as the GO Center which improves accessibility and exposure while others designate a single computer in their library as the GO Center.
Resources

Computer: The key to the GO Center is having at least two existing computers with internet access. Other necessities include:
- Computer (Desktop PC/Laptop/Notebook) minimum requirements:
  - Pentium III (or better)
  - 512 mb of RAM (or better)
  - 40GB hard drive (or better)
  - 48X CD-RW drive
  - Windows XP Professional Operating System
  - Word Processing Software
- Desk/tables and chairs
- Printer

Phone: A phone is critical to allow students/sponsors to call the toll-free Texas Financial Aid Information Center (1.888.311.8881) if they have questions. A phone also allows students to call an admission counselor to check on the status of an application or a financial aid office to check the process of a submitted FAFSA.

Office Supplies: Several schools have commented on how they do not have the funds to maintain the supplies at a GO Center. The materials include the following:
- Paper
- Ink Cartridges for printer
- Miscellaneous (staplers, staples, paperclips, pencils, etc.)

Branding Items/Marketing

This includes all the branding items for the GO Center which comes with the Launch Kit:
- Room-topper banners
- Computer monitor toppers
- Mouse pads
- GO Center pens/pencils

Shipping and supplying the GO Center with other literature and resources (i.e., videos, DVDs, etc.) would also fall under this category.

Documentation

GO Centers are required to turn in monthly reports of activities, volunteer hours, student visits, and presentations conducted as well as evaluations and surveys.
Higher Education Legislation Fact Sheet

HB 2237 (80th Legislature)

- Establishes the High School Completion and Success Initiative (initiative) in order to improve secondary school instruction in Texas.
- Provides support to schools and districts in implementing curriculum and instruction improvements that align with state standards and expectations for post-secondary success.
- Includes technical assistance to assist schools and school districts in the implementation of successful secondary education programs that maximize the impact of all available funds, including high school allotment funds.
- Establishes the High School Completion and Success Initiative Board to develop and manage the implementation of a strategic plan that coordinates public and private high school improvement initiatives. The bill establishes a number of pilot programs intended to aid in reducing the state's high school dropout rate.

HB 3826 (80th Legislature)

- Requires the recommended high school program for admissions to any general admissions academic institution, including those with open enrollment policies.
- Amends automatic admission requirements under various sections of the Education Code.
- Clarifies the eligibility of students for automatic admission.
- Create a uniform admissions code for all institutions of higher education.
- The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has adopted emergency rules to permit general academic institutions to continue admitting students who would not qualify for admissions under the new requirement until August 31, 2009.

SB 282 (80th Legislature)

- Requires school districts to notify parents, whose children are in high school, about the availability of programs under which a student may earn college credit.
- Information to include advanced placement programs, dual credit programs, joint high school and college credit programs, and international baccalaureate programs.
- Authorizes a school district to provide the required notification on the district's Internet website.

HB 1 (79th Legislature)

Provides $275 per high school student to districts to prepare students to go on to higher education. Section 39.114 High School Allotment states that school districts and campuses must use funds under 42.2516 (b) (3) to:

- Implement college readiness programs to prepare underachieving students for college
- Implant programs that encourage students toward advanced academic opportunities, such as dual credit and AP
- Implement programs that give students opportunities to take academically rigorous course work, including four years of math and science
- Implement programs that align the curriculum for grades 6 through 12 with postsecondary curriculum
- Implement other high school completion and success initiatives in grades 6 through 12 as approved by the commissioner
SB 1528 (79th Legislature), formerly HB 1403 (77th Legislature)

- Establishes criteria by which individuals not yet American citizens can be classified as a Texas resident for Tuition Purposes.
- Continues the eligibility of undocumented students to qualify as residents if they have lived in Texas for the 36 months prior to high school graduation or the receipt of the GED.
- Expands this option for establishing residency to other students, too (not just international students).
- A student born and raised in Texas whose parents move out of state while he/she was in high school will not lose his/her claim to residency if the student remains in Texas for the required 36 months and graduates or acquires the GED.
- Removes the requirement of having lived with a parent or guardian while attending high school, and the requirement of having taken no hours prior to fall 2001. The affidavit is still required.

HB 400 (77th Legislature)

- Requires certain school districts to develop partnerships with nearby colleges and universities for the purposes of increasing the number of graduating seniors who enroll in higher education.
- Provisions of this bill apply to school districts that, for any two consecutive years during the preceding five years, have been among the lowest 10 percent of high schools in this state in the percentage of students graduating from the high school and enrolling for the following academic year in an institution of higher education (Texas Education Code 29.904).

SB 158 (77th Legislature)

Requires schools and open-enrollment charter schools to provide counseling regarding:
- the importance of higher education
- The advantages of completing the Recommended or DAP graduation plan
- Financial aid eligibility
- Instruction on how to apply for federal financial aid
- Acquiring access to the center for financial aid information
- The automatic admission of students who graduate in the top 10 percent of their class
- Conditions for receiving a Texas Grant.

HB 713 (76th Legislature)

Creates the Toward Excellence, Access, and Success (TEXAS), and the Teach for Texas Grant which are: intended to streamline and simplify the award process and to focus grant money directly toward those Texas students attending or planning to attend the state's institutions of higher education that show the greatest amount of financial need.
- Requires school districts and institutions of higher education, as well as counselors and experts in the field of financial aid, to cooperate in the compilation, publication, and distribution of relevant information
- Provides for the creation of a center and an advisory committee to assist in the coordination of the programs

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