

Student focus group protocol

[Interviewer: introduce yourself, who you are, your role]

The purpose of this interview is to learn more about the kinds of conversations you have at [school name] about college. This information will be used to help [school name] improve your educational opportunities.

Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. You're the expert on how you feel and what you think.

This interview is confidential. This means that no teachers, your principal, or any of the staff will see your survey. Only a team of outside researchers will look at the individual responses and will summarize the responses. No one will be able to find out what you answered, so please be completely honest.

I would like to tape record this discussion. Tape recording allows me to concentrate on talking with you and not on taking notes, although I will sometimes write things down. Is it OK with you if I tape this conversation?

Any questions before I start?

After starting tape recorder, announce grade level and gender of your focus group.

Why did you decide to come to [school name]?

Prompt: Did anyone come here because you thought this school would help you prepare for college?

When you think about college, what do you think about/what comes to mind?

Prompt: What do you think college is like?

What do you need to do to get into college?

What do you need to do to make sure you will do well in college?

What motivates you to work hard in school?

Does the thought of going to college excite you?

If so, what is the thing that gets you excited?

If not, what would get you excited about life after high school?

If you plan or want to go to college, what do you see as the biggest challenges to *getting into college*? What do you see as the biggest challenges to *being successful in college*?

What do you think would help to overcome these challenges?

Do you talk with anyone about planning for college?

Who, what do they talk about? Academics, social scene, athletics, etc.

If you wanted information on a college or going to college, how would you get it?

Do you think [school name] will help you prepare for college?

Have you changed since you started going to [school name]? If so, how?

What are the best things about [school name]? What do you enjoy the most?

What are the worst?