

Office manager interview protocol

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

The purpose of this interview is to learn more about the college-going culture that [school name] aims to provide for its students. This information will be used to help the school better understand what's going on, what's going well, and what needs improvement.

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, the principal, or any other 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. I will hold on to the audio files; not only will everything I report be anonymous, I will be especially careful to ensure that never will enough information be known for someone to deduce who said what. Is it OK with you if I tape this conversation?

Any questions?

Easing in

Tell us about your job as Office Manager.

Have you worked in a similar position at another (more traditional) middle school? If so, how would you compare [school name] to a traditional middle school?

Being at the front lines, how well do you think the school communicates its overall expectations of students? How about college expectations?

Probe: How are these expectations communicated?

What do you think students know about what they need to do to prepare for college?

Probe: What kinds of information and resources do they get from [school name] about college prep?

Probe: Do you think their families are involved in helping them prepare for college?

What do you think people at [school name] have done to develop a college-going culture?

Probe: Who has done what?

Tell us about your role in this.

College talk

(How) do you talk about college with students? Where? How often? With whom?

Probe: (How) does this conversation differ for different students?

(How) do you talk about college with teachers? Where? How often? With whom?
Probe: (How) does this conversation differ for different teachers?

(How) do you talk to students' families about college? How often? With whom?
Probe: Is this conversation different for different families?

Clear expectations

What are your expectations for students?

What do you see are the school's general expectations for students?
Probe: How about families' expectations?

What do you feel are the expectations for you as Office Manager?

Do you feel expectations are similar across school staff? Students' families? Students?

Information and resources

(How) do you provide students the information they need to be ready for college?

(How) do you provide information to their families?

If a student asked you a question about college, how would you answer it?

Family involvement

Have students' families been involved in the college-preparation process? If so, how?