

College Readiness Consortium

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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ramp-up to **READINESSTM**

Increasing the number and diversity of
Minnesota students who graduate from
high school with the knowledge, skills,
and habits for success in higher education

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

“The Ramp-Up program has given us a framework around academic readiness, personal-social readiness, financial readiness—areas that are critical to helping kids to... make that transition from high school to admission to a college, being able to pay for that, and having the personal-social capacity to do well. The University of Minnesota and Ramp-Up bring a wealth of resources and ideas and people together to help schools make big gains in creating college-ready students.”

Steve Massey, principal, Forest Lake Senior High School, Forest Lake



Rigor Access
Motivation Persistence

WHAT IS RAMP-UP TO READINESS™

Ramp-Up to Readiness™ is a school-wide guidance program that helps students in grades 6 through 12 reach the following goals by the end of high school:

Academic Readiness: The ability to succeed in first-year, credit-bearing courses at a technical college, a community college or a four-year college or university

Admissions Readiness: The ability to meet admissions requirements at a range of postsecondary institutions

Career Readiness: The ability to identify careers that match personal, financial, and other goals and an understanding of the skills, credentials, and experiences required to succeed in those careers

Financial Readiness: The ability to cover the cost of the first term of study at a postsecondary institution through savings, loans, and financial aid

Personal and Social Readiness: The ability to set educational goals, make and monitor progress toward them, and create relationships with peers and adults that support academic success

Ramp-Up helps students achieve these goals by engaging students in a flexible, dynamic curriculum that can be taught in two ways:

- Through **advisories** that meet for at least one class period each week
- or
- Through a **Ramp-Up course** that students take for one term each year

The advisory-based version of the Ramp-Up curriculum requires students to complete 28 lessons per year. Those lessons are designed to be taught in a single course period, but each lesson can be extended if additional advisory time is available. Schools that adopt the course-based version of Ramp-Up can take advantage of a broad range of supplemental lessons that enhance and extend student learning.

Whichever option a school chooses, a suggested scope and sequence helps the school organize the Ramp-Up curriculum in ways that meet the needs of its students and that reflect the realities of its schedule and calendar.

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BECOMING PART OF RAMP-UP

Ramp-Up to Readiness™ was designed over four years with the assistance of 18 design schools supported by more than \$2 million in grant funding. There are currently 44 schools across the state of Minnesota implementing Ramp-Up to Readiness™.

Any Minnesota public secondary school may apply to become a Ramp-Up to Readiness™ school. Selected schools will need to demonstrate an ability to meet the eligibility criteria and provide data for ongoing evaluation of the program.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Evidence of Ramp-Up to Readiness™ in the school's strategic plan or site improvement plan.
- Convene a leadership team that includes a minimum of a principal, counselor and teacher. The leadership team will participate in regional Ramp-Up workshops and participate in site visits by University of Minnesota staff.
- Designate a Ramp-Up Coordinator to serve as the liaison to the University and facilitate the implementation of the program at the school.
- Identify specific time each week to deliver the Ramp-Up lessons to all students.
- Utilize the Ramp-Up progress monitoring and planning tools.

Selection Criteria:

- Applications will be evaluated based on the demonstration that the school will be able to implement Ramp-Up to Readiness™ fully and with fidelity given the eligibility criteria.
- Evidence of district support.
- High schools with grades 9-12 must agree to be part of the REL-Midwest evaluation of Ramp-Up to Readiness™ funded through the Institute of Educational Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education. Schools will be randomly assigned to either implement the program beginning in 2013-14 (program schools) or to delay implementation until 2015-16 (control schools). Please see more information regarding the evaluation study at www.rampuptoreadiness.org/application-process.

Timeline:

- January 2, 2013 - Applications available online at www.rampuptoreadiness.org
- February 15, 2013 - Applications due by 3 p.m.
- March 1, 2013 - Schools notified of acceptance
- April 18, 2013 - Ramp-Up 2013-14 New School Workshop and Planning Session, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Additional information and details regarding the application process can be found at www.rampuptoreadiness.org/application-process.

WHY SHOULD A SCHOOL CONSIDER ADOPTING RAMP-UP?

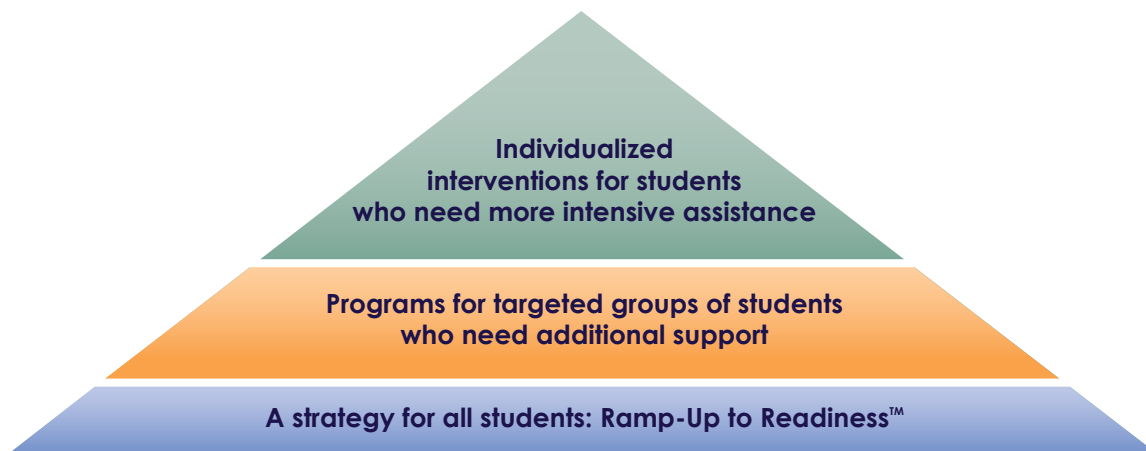
So why should schools consider adopting a school-wide guidance program such as Ramp-Up to Readiness™? One answer can be framed in terms borrowed from the economic concept of supply and demand.

Efforts to increase the supply of academic rigor available to students will only succeed if they are met by increased student demand for that rigor. Without that demand, far too many students will not elect to take or to work hard in the types of courses that will best prepare them for postsecondary success.

All across Minnesota, secondary schools are working to increase the “supply” of academic rigor they make available to students. For example, they are greatly increasing the number of dual credit courses they offer—from Advanced Placement to International Baccalaureate, Postsecondary Enrollment Options and College-in-the-School programs.

Ramp-Up has been designed to raise students’ demand for academic rigor by ensuring that all students understand how and why what they do in school today will impact their quality of life tomorrow.

Because Ramp-Up is intended to help *all* students in a school embrace rigor, gain access, maintain motivation, and practice persistence, it is envisioned as the base of a pyramid of interventions that together constitute a school-wide approach to college and career readiness. Above that base are interventions for targeted groups of students who need additional support, such as AVID and College Possible. At the top of the pyramid are personalized interventions for individual students who are highly at risk of not becoming college ready and career ready by the end of high school.



“Creating, promoting, and sustaining a college-going culture needs to begin early. It’s irrational to think this can start in the 11th grade. We need to begin that instruction as early as the 6th grade.”

Katie Berglund, principal, Ellis Middle School, Austin



RAMP-UP TO READINESS™ STANDARDS

Academic Readiness

The student has the knowledge and skills to do first-year, credit-bearing, college-level work.

A student who has reached this goal can:

1. Demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills required for college-level work in English, mathematics, reading, science, and writing as outlined in the ACT readiness standards, available at <http://www.act.org/standard/>
2. Score at or above the ACT college readiness benchmarks on the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT tests, available at <http://www.act.org/education/benchmarks.html>
3. Think critically, demonstrated through the ability to **G**ather, **A**nalyze, **S**ynthesize, and **P**resent information
4. Use effective study strategies
5. Evaluate and revise academic work to ensure accuracy and achieve precision

Admissions Readiness

The student has completed all requirements for admission to the type of postsecondary education that is a match for their goals, interests, and abilities.

A student who has reached this goal can:

1. Describe the purpose of and opportunities offered by postsecondary education in the United States today
2. Explain the main types of postsecondary institutions in the U.S. and the differences among them
3. Identify the type of postsecondary institution that could be a good match for the student's academic, career, and personal goals
4. Outline the admissions requirements for the type of postsecondary institution that the student plans to attend
5. Plan for and successfully complete the process of applying to at least three postsecondary institutions that are a good match for the student's academic, career, and personal goals

Career Readiness

The student understands how education increasingly determines income and opportunity in the global knowledge economy and knows which types of jobs in the future will need skilled workers, will pay enough to support a family, and might be a good match for their interests and abilities.

A student who has reached this goal can:

1. Describe the ways that globalization and technology-driven change are reshaping the workplace and society today and predict ways that those forces will affect his or her professional future
2. Understand and illustrate the great and growing connection between the highest level of education a person completes and his or her later income and quality of life
3. Identify careers and jobs that pay enough to support a family with at least a “middle-class” lifestyle, provide opportunities for advancement within the field, and are likely to be in demand over the next two decades
4. Identify the knowledge, skills, and habits and the credentials and/or degrees required to enter and succeed in a range of careers
5. Identify one or more careers that could be a good match for the student’s talents, interests, and abilities

Financial Readiness

Students will be able to cover the cost of one term of study at a postsecondary institution through savings, loans, work-study, and financial aid.

A student who has reached this goal can:

1. Create a personal budget and make decisions based upon it
2. Identify the current and projected cost of study at each of the main types of postsecondary institutions in Minnesota
3. Explain the major ways that families cover the costs of postsecondary education
4. Produce a realistic plan to cover the cost of at least the first term of study at the postsecondary institution of the student’s choice through savings, employment, loans, grants, scholarships, and other means
5. Complete the process of applying for needed financial aid

Personal/Social Readiness

The student knows how to set educational goals, make progress toward those goals, and create relationships with peers and adults that support the achievement of those goals.

A student who has reached this goal can:

1. Set personal goals and continually monitor progress toward reaching them
2. Operate from a growth mindset, believing that his/her basic abilities can be developed through hard work and persistence
3. Seek help from adults and peers and use other strategies to overcome obstacles on the road to achieving important goals
4. Create and maintain positive relationships with teachers, professors and other adults in positions of responsibility and authority
5. Understand college culture and the practices and habits needed to succeed in higher education, such as skills in time management, studying, working cooperatively, responsible risk taking, and self-advocacy

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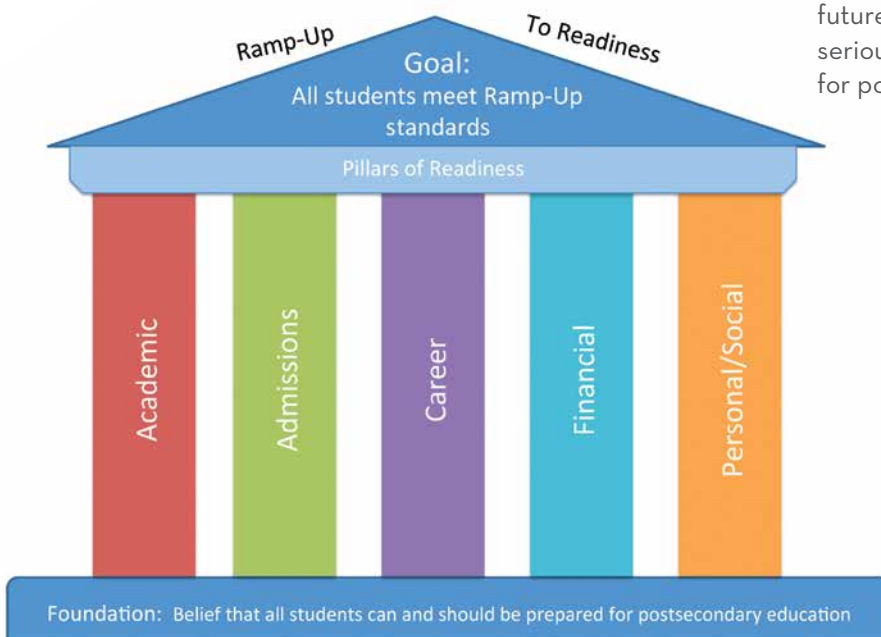
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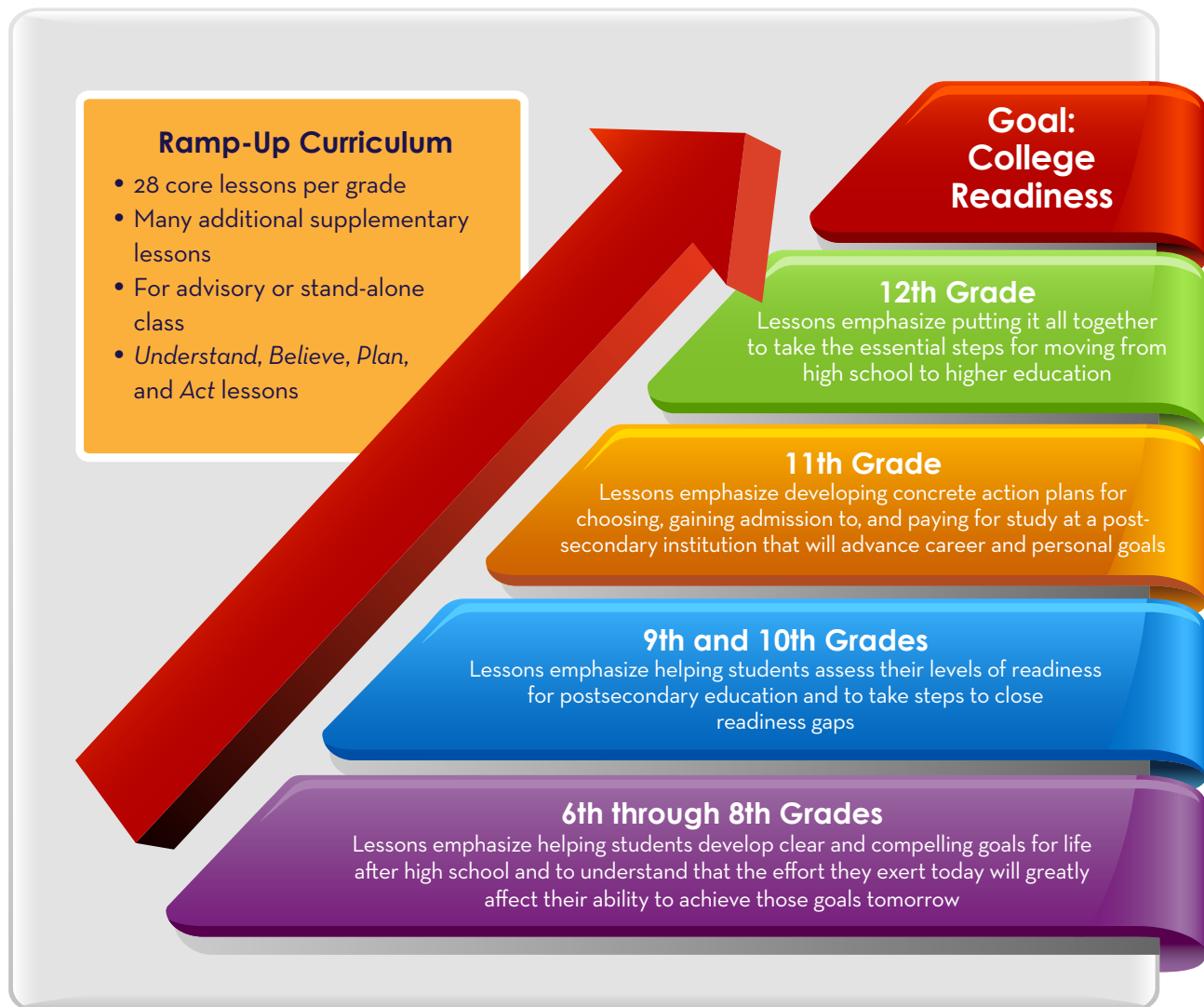
THE RAMP-UP CURRICULUM

Ramp-Up to Readiness™ features an engaging and interactive curriculum focused on helping all students meet the Ramp-Up Standards by the end of high school. Those standards are focused on five pillars of readiness: academic readiness, admissions readiness, career readiness, financial readiness, and personal and social readiness. The Ramp-Up curriculum helps students advance toward meeting those standards as they progress through school through four types of lessons:

Understand Lessons—Research conducted during the design of Ramp-Up found that many students have major misconceptions about what it will take to get into and succeed at a postsecondary institution. As a result, students often make decisions and put forward levels of effort that are misaligned with their dreams for life after high school. The *Understand* lessons of the Ramp-Up curriculum focus on helping students understand what it means to master each pillar of college readiness, enabling them to make informed decisions about preparing for college and a career. These lessons also help students understand whether they are on or off track to reach college readiness by the end of high school.

Believe Lessons—While the design phase of the Ramp-Up project confirmed that most students hope to attend college and have a high-skill career, the design team also found that many students do not truly believe they have what it takes to achieve that objective. Experience shows that this gap in belief does not apply only to students who doubt their ability to enroll and succeed in college. It also applies to students who believe they will go to college, but who do not believe that once there they will be able to succeed in the challenging fields of study that will open the door widest to prosperity and opportunity in the 21st century, such as mathematics and science. These lessons help students develop the belief that their futures are not fixed, and that with sustained and serious effort and support they can turn their plans for postsecondary education into reality.





Plan Lessons—Throughout the Ramp-Up process, students are asked to set SMART goals (short for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) and to share their objectives with advisors, peers, parents and others. The *Plan* lessons of the Ramp-Up curriculum help students regularly revisit and revise their plans for life after high school as they gain knowledge and experience through participation in the program.

Act Lessons—The process of becoming truly ready for success in postsecondary education includes many steps that students must take at specific points in their progress through high school. The *Act* lessons of the Ramp-Up curriculum map out those steps to ensure that students accomplish what they need to accomplish when they need to accomplish it.



SAMPLE RAMP-UP CURRICULUM LESSONS FOR GRADES 6 THROUGH 8

Academic Readiness Lessons include:

- **Understanding Your Learning Style:** Students complete and discuss the results of a Learning Styles Inventory
- **Taking Notes:** Students learn an effective note-taking technique such as Q-Notes, which combines SQ3R and Cornell Notes
- **College Knowledge I:** Students are given an overview of the knowledge and skills in reading, writing, and math necessary for postsecondary success
- **Growth Mindset I:** Students learn that effort produces intelligence and that mistakes can often be important opportunities to learn
- **EXPLORE Test:** Students take, understand, and act on the EXPLORE college readiness exam
- **The Middle Grades Matter:** Students are introduced to the ways that their performance in junior and senior high will influence opportunities and outcomes in high school and ultimately college

Admissions Readiness Lessons include:

- **Why Higher Education:** Students learn that people who complete postsecondary education have a higher quality of life in many areas
- **Types of Higher Education:** Students examine the purposes of and differences between the three main types of postsecondary education
- **Admissions Criteria:** Students study the criteria for admission to a range of postsecondary institutions
- **Postsecondary Visit:** Students visit either a two- or four-year postsecondary institution

Career Readiness Lessons Include:

- **Identifying 21st-Century Careers:** Students understand the types of careers that will pay enough to support a family in the 21st century and that will be in demand in the economy and society of the decades ahead

- **Career Speakers:** Students engage with people working in a diverse set of careers about the knowledge and skills for success
- **Identifying Potential Careers:** Students complete a Career Interest Inventory to identify careers of interest and the postsecondary educational programs that lead to those careers

Financial Readiness Lessons Include:

- **Globalization I:** Students learn that in the 21st century, globalization and the advance of technology are raising the importance of high levels of education and skill
- **Expenses and Income:** Students learn about the cost of living, average annual salaries by education level, and the need to keep living expenses within income
- **Good Debt/Bad Debt:** Students are introduced to the basics of borrowing and return on investment

Personal and Social Readiness lessons Include:

- **Understanding Academic Organization:** Students learn the basics of self-management and persistence
- **Using a Planner:** Students learn to use a planner to manage assignments and other deadlines
- **Taking the PREP (Personal Readiness Evaluation for Postsecondary):** Students complete and discuss a self-assessment of their personal college readiness
- **Positive Peer Relationships:** Students examine the ways that peers can enhance or impede progress toward personal and academic goals



“The Ramp-Up curriculum and tools have transformed our advisory to a meaningful experience where students use incremental steps to break down their career aspirations to weekly goals. We believe the Ramp-Up program is a major factor that has helped our attendance increase.”

Travis Wasley, counselor, Roosevelt High School, Minneapolis



SAMPLE RAMP-UP CURRICULUM LESSONS FOR GRADES 9 THROUGH 12

Academic Readiness Lessons Include:

- **Understanding GASP:** Students learn to **G**ather, **A**nalyze, **S**ynthesize and **P**resent information
- **Access vs. Success:** Students understand that the knowledge and skills for admission at many postsecondary institutions often differ from those needed to succeed there
- **Understanding College Grading:** Students explore how learning is assessed at each type of postsecondary institution
- **Maintaining Momentum:** Students avoid the “senior slump” and maintain academic momentum through the end of the 12th grade

Admissions Readiness Lessons Include:

- **Finding the Right Fit:** Students are introduced to the importance of finding a postsecondary institution matching their interests and aptitudes
- **The Admissions Process:** Students study what needs to be done (and when) to get in to different types of colleges
- **Application Essays:** Students learn about the criteria for a successful application essay and draft and share one of their own
- **Entrance Testing:** Students register, prepare for, and take ACT, SAT, and/or Accuplacer postsecondary admissions tests
- **College Applications:** Students receive guidance and support in applying to at least three postsecondary institutions

Career Readiness Lessons Include:

- **The “Soft Skills” for Career Success:** Students understand the non-academic skills and habits that employers identify as essential for 21st-century careers
- **Lifelong Learning and Careers:** Students understand that because many 21st-century careers will include jobs not only for more than one company, but also in more than one field, lifelong learning is essential to career success
- **Career Clusters:** Students match their strengths, values, personality type, and skills with career clusters of interest
- **Creating a Resumé:** Students develop and learn how to update a high-quality resumé

Financial Readiness Lessons Include:

- **Intro to Financial Aid:** Students are introduced to the ways that families with differing incomes finance college
- **Understanding Your Aid:** Students are provided with information on the type and level of financial assistance they are likely to receive from various types of postsecondary institution
- **Completing the FAFSA and Scholarship Applications:** Students complete a sample FAFSA and find applicable scholarships

Personal and Social Readiness Lessons Include:

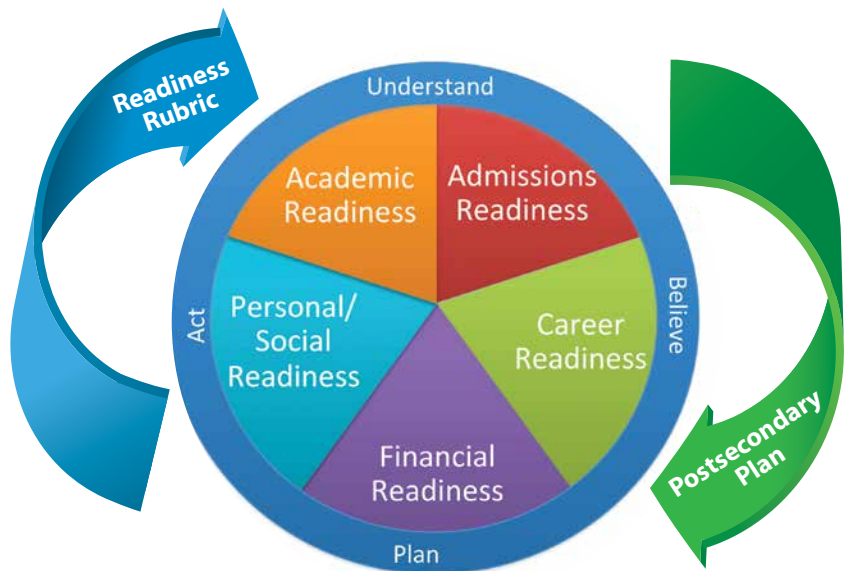
- **Engaging With Authority:** Students consider effective ways to work with adults in authority in postsecondary institutions and the workplace
- **Overcoming Obstacles:** Students learn specific strategies for persisting in the face of challenges





THE POSTSECONDARY PLAN AND THE READINESS RUBRIC

To bring continuity to the Ramp-Up to Readiness™ curriculum as students progress from one phase to the next, each lesson is connected to one of two tools that students use throughout their time in the program: the Postsecondary Plan and the Readiness Rubric.



The Postsecondary Plan and the Readiness Rubric are the threads that connect the lessons of the Ramp-Up curriculum to each other, ensuring that those lessons are not random acts of college readiness but a coherent sequence of concepts and ideas that move students toward readiness in logical if not linear ways.

The Postsecondary Plan helps students ask and answer the question: *What do I want to do with my life after high school?* Similarly, the Readiness Rubric helps students ask and answer: *What do I need to do to reach that goal?* Students articulate, communicate, and update their plans for life after high school in their Postsecondary Plans, while they continuously monitor their progress toward being college ready by the end of high school using the Readiness Rubric.

The lessons of the Ramp-Up curriculum prepare students to continually update and act upon the content of their Postsecondary Plans and Readiness Rubrics. Students store and share their most recent Postsecondary Plans and Readiness Rubrics using one or both of the two technology platforms that are integrated into Ramp-Up: Naviance Succeed and eFolio.

The contents of both the Postsecondary Plan and the Readiness Rubric vary by grade level. The plan and rubric for each year focus on the skills and concepts that students should encounter at that point in their progress toward college readiness.

RAMP-UP AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology plays an integral role in Ramp-Up to Readiness™ enabling schools to more effectively personalize the college preparation process. The recommended technology platform for Ramp-Up is Naviance Succeed, a web-based application that integrates tools for researching colleges and careers with tools for sharing and storing data and information.

Schools that implement Ramp-Up using the Naviance platform license the software and receive support directly from Naviance, a company based in the Washington, D.C. area that has an extensive customer base in Minnesota. Schools that do not have or decide not to purchase Naviance Succeed can implement core elements of Ramp-Up using MCIS (Minnesota Career Information Systems).

If students do not have access to computers during a session of their Ramp-Up class or during their advisory period, a version of each lesson in the core curriculum is available that does not require the use of a computer during class or advisory time. When such a non-computer-based lesson is used, students later enter the most important information from the lesson into an electronic format.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Ramp-Up to Readiness™ schools track and share with University of Minnesota coordinators relevant measures of their efforts to prepare students for postsecondary success. The following measures are key indicators of the impact Ramp-Up has on students:

- The number and percentage of students who take dual-credit courses such as AP, IB, PSEO, College-in-the-Schools, and other options
- The number and percentage of students who score at the “college ready” level or above on the ACT exam or other assessments that measure college readiness
- The number and percentage of high school seniors who have completed the FAFSA financial aid form
- The number and percentage of students who apply to a postsecondary institution
- The number and percentage of students who are admitted to a postsecondary institution
- The number and percentage of students who take remedial courses at a postsecondary institution
- The number and percentage of students who return to a postsecondary institution for the second year
- The percentage of students that have a GPA of 3.0 or higher
- The percentage of students scoring proficient on the MCAs
- The percentage of seniors who graduate from high school

Each Ramp-Up school works with the University of Minnesota coordinators team to develop a performance monitoring plan that uses some or all of these measures. Postsecondary enrollment and other postsecondary data will be obtained through the state of Minnesota starting with the 2013-14 year.



THE RESEARCH BEHIND RAMP-UP TO READINESS™

An array of studies and other evidence have been used to develop the Ramp-Up to Readiness™ program. Examples include:

- In the 21st-century economy, completion of a postsecondary credential or degree is the best—and in many cases the only—path to a middle- or upper-class income and standard of living (Goldin and Katz, 2008).
- By 2018, 63 percent of all jobs in the United States and 70 percent in Minnesota will require postsecondary education and training (Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl, 2010).
- The rest of the world is investing in postsecondary success while college completion rates in the United States have been relatively flat. As a result, although the United States ranked 3rd in college graduation rates among the developed countries of the world in 1998, in 2001 we ranked 5th and in 2006 we ranked 10th (Bowen, Chingos, and McPhereson, 2009).
- The vast majority of teenagers today aspire to obtain high-paying jobs and to attain high-levels of status within society as adults. One major study found that more than 90 percent of high school seniors expect to attend college and more than 70 percent expect to work in professional jobs. Those students often, however, do not understand what they need to do to reach those objectives (Schneider and Stevenson, 1999).
- American students receive highly confusing and contradictory information about what it takes to gain access to and succeed in college. Consequently, many make decisions and put forward levels of effort that undermine their chances of succeeding in higher education (Kirst and Reeves Bracco, 2004).
- The content of many high school courses is misaligned with what students need to know and be able to do in college, which leads many students to believe that they are much readier for postsecondary success than, in fact, they actually are (Conley, 2005).
- Many students believe that how hard they work in high school has little relevance to their future careers (Rosenbaum and Person, 2003).
- When students believe that intelligence is not fixed and adopt a growth mindset, they choose more challenging tasks and work harder at them (Dweck and Master, 2009).

- Career guidance can have its largest impact in the middle grades (Hughes and Karp, 2004).
- Students who develop formal plans for college and a career are much more likely to take the high school classes that will prepare them for success in higher education and the workforce (Orfield and Paul, 1994).
- Nonacademic factors such as motivation, self-discipline, and self-confidence have a significant impact on academic performance in college (ACT, 2007).
- High-skill jobs that do not require a college degree but that pay well and offer opportunities for advancement require levels of knowledge and skill in mathematics and reading that are similar to the levels required for success in credit-bearing first-year courses (ACT, 2006).
- Many high school students choose colleges for which they are academically overqualified or underqualified (Roderick, 2008).
- The demographic groups that are growing fastest within our preK-12 schools are those that have the least experience preparing for and making the transition to higher education: students of color and low-income students. Given that gap, those students and families will need enhanced and ongoing support from schools and community organizations (McMurray, 2006).
- An expert panel convened by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences identified the following strategies as recommendations for helping more students successfully navigate the path from high school to college. Ramp-Up helps schools implement each of these strategies in powerful, yet practical, ways:
 1. Through courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work, and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade
 2. With assessment measures throughout high school so that students are aware of how prepared they are for college, and assist them in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified
 3. By surrounding students with adults and peers who build and support their college going aspirations
 4. Through engaging and assist students in completing the critical steps for college entry
 5. By increasing families' financial awareness, and helping students apply for financial aid (Tierney et al., 2009)



A CRITICAL PARADIGM SHIFT

Schools that adopt Ramp-Up to Readiness™ are taking an important step toward moving from a 20th-century paradigm, in which only some students are expected to continue their education after high school, to a new paradigm, in which all students are expected to complete a postsecondary credential or degree. Transformation will not be fast or easy, but it is essential. The University of Minnesota is committed to work with middle, junior, and senior high schools and other partners to complete that transformation in the long-term interest of our students and state.

	The Old Paradigm: College Prep for Some	The New Paradigm: Every Student Ramps-Up to Readiness™
Expectations	Only some students are seen as “college material” and only some schools are seen as “prep schools”	All students are expected to succeed in higher education and schools are intentionally organized to help them reach that goal
Rigor	Many students do not take the courses required for admission to and success at most four-year colleges and selective technical programs	Every student completes a core curriculum that prepares him or her to enter and succeed in a range of postsecondary programs
Planning	Many students choose courses with no clear destination after high school	Students develop and act upon postsecondary plans that give direction and motivation to their high school careers
Mindset	Intelligence is seen as a fixed commodity that defines a limited set of options for each student	Intelligence is viewed as a quality that can, like a muscle being exercised, be continually increased over time
Guidance	Most students navigate the transition to college largely on their own	All students receive guidance and direction from school counselors, advisors and other caring adults
Funding	Planning to pay for postsecondary education is seen as the family’s or student’s responsibility	Students learn about financial planning steps throughout their years in junior and senior high
The Finish Line	Many students embrace and many schools tolerate a “senior slump” during the final year of high school	Students maintain their academic momentum through senior year and start postsecondary education ready for success the following fall

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