

Experts agree that middle school is a critical time for instilling in students a passion for college. Kids2College is the only free, national program that uses career aspirations to expose middle school students to the value and accessibility of a higher education. Established in 1992 in collaboration with the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts, Kids2College is supported by The Sallie Mae Fund®. The program has served more than 78,000 students.

Creating a College-Going Culture in Middle School

The Institute for Higher Education Policy reports that while nine out of 10 middle school parents expect their child to earn a college degree, nearly half have not started planning for college and nearly two-thirds have not started saving. During the years that follow middle school, social influences can lead promising students off the path to college. Kids2College is proven to increase the expectation of going to college and spur behavior that keeps a student on a college track, particularly among minority and first-generation college students.



Washington, D.C. participants

Inspiring Students Through Career Aspirations

Research indicates that for middle school students, linking careers, future earnings and dreams to higher education is critical to starting them on a path to college. In a study commissioned by the Gates Foundation, researchers identified the connection between education and career aspirations as the most important drop-out prevention strategy for low-income students after academic enrichment. This is the educational philosophy behind Kids2College.



A sixth grader participates in a science experiment at Cal State

The Sallie Mae Fund's national Kids2College curriculum was built in consultation with the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships and incorporates best practices and research. The six-session program combines hands-on activities with information on careers, college life and academic preparation. The curriculum uses age-appropriate and interactive activities that reinforce the importance of setting students' sights on college. Student handbooks and a companion teacher's guide help facilitate the program in the classroom, and related take-home materials are used to facilitate family discussion. To conclude the program, students participate in a group visit to a local college to cement the college experience.

Partnering for Success

Kids2College is based on partnerships with community groups, schools/districts, and colleges and universities in communities with a desire to inspire a college-going culture. Each program operates with:

- **Schools and school districts:** Teachers are trained to teach the curriculum in the classroom. Schools print materials and provide transportation for the college visit.
- **Universities:** A university representative participates in select sessions and organizes and hosts the campus visit.
- **Program coordinator:** An employee of the school district, university partner or local nonprofit organization provides program structure, recruits colleges and classes, trains classroom teachers and facilitates program evaluation.
- **Curriculum, training and online community:** The Sallie Mae Fund provides the curriculum for free to partners who share the vision and commitment to implement the program locally. The Fund offers training to partners who have the capacity to implement the program. In addition, program partners are supported by an online community for sharing best practices and tips for creating a college-going culture.



Houston sixth graders meet college administrators

Kids2College partners have included: Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (AICUM), California State University Fullerton, Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU), Communities In Schools (CIS), GEAR UP, Houston Independent School District, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), Texas A&M University, United Planning Organization (UPO).

To learn more about bringing Kids2College to your community contact thesalliemafund@thesalliemafund.org