Best Practices for Alumni Parent Outreach – “Supporting Your Child in College” night

**Context:** This event is designed to empower parents to support their children in college. It is for parents of freshmen in college, and the panelists are parents of older alumni in college. Ideally, this meeting will result in the group meeting more frequently and will be parent run, but hosted by the high school (space, snacks).

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| **Date** | **Action Item** | **Details** | **Owner** | **Notes** |
| One month before event | Identify parents of older alumni to speak on panel, at least 5 so that you’ll ideally have 3 reps | Email parents individually (identify at least 5) with outline of event; set up time further to talk if they have questions | Alumni Counselor | These should be parents who represent different types of schools and different experiences; ideally will also have a mix of gender (parent of a boy, parent of a girl). |
| Two weeks before event | Postcard invite sent home; email invite sent out | Postcard to all; email to all parents we have emails for | Alumni Counselor | Handwrite notes on all tier 3 families; bcc email addresses on email invite. All relevant info should be included (think: who, when, where, what, why). Advertise refreshments as well. |
| One week before event | Email reminder | Email reminder to all parents we have emails for | Alumni Counselor | Can be the same email that was sent a week ago with “reminder” in the subject line |
| One week before event | Phone calls to tier 3 families | Personal phone call to see if they will come, get a commitment | Alumni Counselor (could also have parents outreach to other parents) | Share all details, share importance. |
| Day before event | Voice blaze reminder | To all primary guardians | Alumni Counselor | Be sure it is translated into Spanish for those families that need it. |
| Day of event | Email reminder | Quick reminder that the event is tonight | Alumni Counselor | Can be same email as initial email invite with any necessary updates |

**Sample alumni parent panelist email:**

Hi Ms. Gibbons,

I hope this email finds you well, and that you’re enjoying your last few weeks with Ashley home this summer! I am reaching out to see if you would be interested and available to assist as an alumni parent panelist during our annual AF AHS Alumni Parent Night in September. We really appreciated your help last fall and I’m hoping that this event will lead to the formation of an alumni parent group. The event details are below:

* **Date: Tuesday, September 18th**
* **Time:** 6:00-8:00 PM
* **Location**: AF AHS – 49 Prince Street New Haven, CT 06519
* **Invited families and parents**: AF AHS Class of 2012 Parents and Guardians; approx. 30 families if everyone attends 

The format of the parent night will be very similar to last year’s event – I will give a short presentation with suggestions and information to help parents support their student, which will be followed by a panel discussion with alumni parents. I will start the panel discussion with a few guiding questions, and then we will open up for questions from families. A casual dinner will also be provided for all.

**If this is something you are interested in participating in, could you please let me know by next Friday, 8/31?** If you have any questions or concerns, I am happy to set up a time for us to talk early next week. Additionally, if you are interested in participating, I will send along my questions in advance of the evening and am happy to talk with you through the format.

Thanks so much for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Gallagher

**Helpful notes:**

* Attendance goal for this event is 50% of all freshman parents. Advertise this event in conversations with families even in their senior year – mention it at the senior dinner, put it on the alumni calendar handed out at the senior dinner. It is critical to have parents be partners in this journey and the best coaches possible.
* This event should happen within 3 weeks of all colleges starting – while families still feel connected to AF High Schools but after they’ve experienced a bit of what it is like to have their child in college.
* It may feel like a lot of outreach is suggested – it is NECESSARY in having a successful year to have great attendance at this event.