Visit a community college, sharing local options to students. Don’t simply look at college academics, but include the community college’s technical and certification programs. Introduce students to the college setting, letting them know what a college looks like.

For an example, please refer to:
- *The Signature Project – How will YOU make your mark?*
  at Walla Walla Community College

Visit a small college that is close to home (like Eastern Washington University and Central Washington University). Provide some time in a college classroom. Provide an overview of what is taught in a college and what are some career options. As part of the day, also include “When you choose a college, why make that choice?”

More ideas:
- Possibly have 1/3 of the students sign-up for the college experience that interests them most, providing an opportunity for smaller groups to visit different state colleges.
- During the college visit, provide an overview of college fundamentals.
- Make it fun.
- Provide team building activities.
- Involve college students. Have them share their stories: how did they get there and what do they have to do to stay there. As Principal Hernandez, at Harrison Middle School in Sunnyside, explained, “Help set them up for college.”

For examples, refer to:
- *Time to Experience Campus Life and Programs 7th Grade Cohort Campus Visits*
  YOU Can Go to College!

Principal Janie Hernandez asks schools to consider:
Take the students on a day trip to a university, but not an overnight trip. Overnights are not necessary. Middle school students’ maturity level isn’t quite there, plus it is difficult for the parents to let them go. Therefore, it would make a college experience less accessible for many middle school students.  [Interview with Gretchen Hormel-Tomkins on November 17, 2009]
For examples, refer to:

**Charting Your Course for Success**

**9th Grade Career & College Fair**

**Destination: Healthcare**

**Lessons Learned in Early Outreach**

Jerri Doyle and Marika Tomkins, Walla Walla GEAR UP Program Specialists, have a combined 14-plus years experience working with middle school students and their families, and provide the following suggestions to early outreach staff members from colleges and universities planning to host students and their parents:

- It is important to have campus leaders greet parents to project the value of the parents’ time visiting the campus.
- It is strongly recommended that parents be issued at least one page of information to take home.
- Information should include:
  - Why the college or university would be best for their student?
  - What kind of supervision is provided for students on campus (campus police service, dorm monitoring, etc)?
  - What major/significant academic accomplishments have occurred on campus in past two years?
  - What is the connection of the college or university with early outreach?
- Student ambassadors from the college should focus on why they chose to attend and how they have benefited from attending. Parents need information on why the college is the best choice.
- Parents should be asked what buildings and programs they would like to visit so arrangements to visit the facility can be made in advance of their visit. Not permitting parents to visit programs and facilities they are interested in can have a negative effect on recruitment efforts.