



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The National Postsecondary Strategy Institute (NPSI) in partnership with Reach Higher launches the Power of Hope Awards to recognize school districts that engage school counselors in leadership roles to improve student college and career success outcomes.**

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The **Power of Hope Awards** will recognize school districts that engage school counselors in leadership roles that effectively organize and implement grades 6-12 college and career postsecondary enrollment strategies. The **Power of Hope Awards** advance the work of NPSI and Reach Higher, supporting the vision that *all* students can achieve educational and career goals.

The **Power of Hope Award** is built on the belief that the nation's economic growth is dependent upon continuing to significantly increase the percentages of low income and predominantly minority students' successfully completing postsecondary pathways. Former First Lady Michelle Obama articulated the message of the power of hope in January 2017 at her last speech at School Counselor of the Year Award Ceremony—“the belief that something better is always possible if you're willing to work for it and fight for it, that we strive to instill in all children, especially across districts with large percentages of low-income minority students”. School counselors are integral to accelerating this goal—serving as key stakeholders to facilitate and implement proven school district academic and career pathway strategies. Utilizing data to inform the strategic use of resources and personnel is central to overall student success.

School districts across the country with at least 50% FRL populations and where school counselors use research-based data elements and implement college and career readiness programs, are encouraged to apply for the Power of Hope Award. Multiple districts will be recognized. The application period opens October 5, 2020 and extends to December 15, 2020. Winners of the **Power of Hope Award** will be announced at the National Postsecondary Strategy Institute (NPSI) national virtual conference, March 4-7, 2021. Districts can access application materials [here](#).

The National Postsecondary Strategy Institute (NPSI) supports districts to solve problems of practice through devising strategies and interventions that close attainment gaps across race and income, around a framework of leadership, a data strategy and school counselor engagement. This model is rooted in NPSI's leadership team's work as founders of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) postsecondary success strategy from 2003 to 2009 which has led to improved postsecondary outcomes for CPS students over a 12-year period: college enrollment increased from 43% to 68% and BA degree completion went from 6% of entering high school freshmen to over 20%. In our first two years of launching, NPSI has engaged over 150 school districts of all sizes, and many have reported significant increases in postsecondary success measures after implementing NPSI strategies.

*In January 2019, the Common App united with Reach Higher, the college access and success campaign started by former First Lady Michelle Obama during her time at the White House. Its core programming includes Better Make Room, UpNext, College Signing Day, Beating the Odds, and school counselor support. The **Power of Hope Award** advances the work of Reach Higher and the vision that students have the ability to achieve their educational and career goals.*

