

You're not going back to recruit. You're going back to be the proof.

Increasing student engagement and success is the work. You're uniquely qualified for it.

You know which advice was useless, which decisions cost you time and money, and what nobody told you. That's not a small thing. It's the exact thing the students behind you can't get from a counselor with 372 other students or from a billboard.

372:1

Students per school counselor nationally in 2024–25, against a recommended 250:1.

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION, 2024–25 RATIOS

58%

High school teachers who call students' little to no interest in learning a major problem. Nearly three times the 20% who say bullying is.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER, K-12 TEACHER SURVEY, 2024

62%

High school grads going straight on to college in 2021, down from about 70% in 2016.

HECHINGER REPORT / WASHINGTON POST, DEC 2023

What your job isn't

- You're not recruiting for your college. No pitch, no logo, no enrollment goal.
- You're not selling higher education. Trade school, work, military, and college are all fine answers.
- You're not there to have all the answers. You're there because you were recently where they are.

What your job is

- Show up on purpose, with a plan you designed and an adult who agreed to host you.
- Be honest about what you'd do differently. The useful part is the part that cost you something.
- Model that engagement in high school matters, whether someone goes on to college or not.
- Leave the adults in that building better off than you found them, so the next student can come back.

Why students pick this project

When we asked students what they want out of a project, five things came back. PeerTakes hits all five, and it starts from assets you already have instead of a blank page.

Personal value

You use what you already lived through. Nobody hands you a topic.

Impact

A real national problem, not a hypothetical case study.

Critical thinking

You figure out who to talk to, what they need, and what you can finish.

Creativity

There's no script. How you reach students is yours to design.

Community service

It counts as service, and it holds up in an interview.

Why it counts even when it feels small

A national ad campaign costs millions and still can't do what one former student standing in a classroom does. Whether you reach twelve students or two hundred, and whether the room laughs or stares at the floor, your presence models something they can't get from a slide deck. That's the message: engagement and success in high school matter, whether you go on to college or not.

13,360+ school districts, and that's the point

You can run this in your college town or back in your hometown, which means thousands of students can run it at the same time without stepping on each other. One visit is a good deed. Thousands of visits, all carrying the same message, is a collective impact initiative — and it's the fastest way to maximize your impact on society and on your resume at once.

Kelsey ran it, and here's what happened

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY · HEALTH SCIENCES

Kelsey knew the gaps in high school guidance because she lived them. She went back to her former coaches, teachers, and staff and built mentoring sessions for students making the decisions she once made. She traced the gap upstream and built the fix where decisions actually get made.

Highest number of mentoring impressions out of 28 students in her service-learning class.

"I did not stop at the grade. I turned it into real experience I could put on my resume."

Kelsey, PeerTakes member

A session that actually works

You don't need a keynote. You need forty-five minutes, one honest story, and a next step the students can take that day.

1. Who you are

Two minutes. Your school, your major, and one thing you got wrong.

2. The real story

The decision that cost you time or money, and what you'd redo.

3. Their turn

Open questions. Let the room drive. Silence is fine.

4. One next step

Something they can do this week, plus how to reach you.

What you walk away with

- A project you designed and ran, start to finish.
- A proof artifact: the plan, the materials, the numbers you reached.
- A named reference who watched you do the work.
- A LinkedIn post that isn't fluff, because there's something behind it.

Before meetup two

- 1 Write down three adults from your old school you could email: a teacher, a coach, a counselor.
- 2 Pick one. Send four sentences: who you are now, what you'd like to do, how long it takes them, and one date.
- 3 Bring their reply to meetup two, even if it's a no.

The whole project starts with one email

The hardest part is sending it before you feel ready. Bring what happens to meetup two.

plan-ahead-buddy-00.lovable.app/peertakes

Free tools: /project-brief