

Reviews of Collections of Programs, Curricula, Practices, Policies, and Tools: Evaluated According to Evidence

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For more information, see: <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/resources/reviews>

This collection originated as part of the Results for Kids: Resources library of The IDEA Partnership, which transferred early contents to NIRN in 2009.

Secondary Education and Transition to Postsecondary Opportunities

A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Students – A First Look

Center for Community College Student Engagement, Community College Leadership Program, University of Texas at Austin. (2012).

“This report provides a first look at the data on promising practices. These are educational practices for which there is emerging evidence of success -- research from the field and from multiple colleges with multiple semesters of data showing improvement on an array of metrics, such as course completion, retention, and graduation. This First Look describes the promising practices from four perspectives: (a) entering students describing their earliest college experiences, (b) students addressing their overall college experiences, (c) faculty members providing their perceptions of student engagement, and (d) colleges focusing on their use of the practices. . . . The Center’s examination of educational practices includes four quantitative surveys, qualitative data from focus groups, and an extensive review of existing research.” This is the first of several reports that are planned.

[Full text – A Matter of Degrees](#)

[Also see – Research About Community Colleges \(a database of publications, searchable in nine categories\)](#)

America’s Youth: Transitions to Adulthood – Statistical Analysis Report

National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. (2011).
S. Aud, A. KewalRamani, & L. Frohlich.

This report “is a statistical compilation of data on the distribution of youth, their family structure, economic factors, school and extracurricular activities, health factors, and other elements that constitute the world of young people between the ages of 14 to 24. These data present a composite of the youth experience, highlighting connections between their lives inside and outside of school. Much of the data in this publication are central to long-term policy debates on education issues. Where possible, trend data are provided as an historical context for interpretation. . . . The report contains indicators that have been adapted from various other federal reports, as well as indicators that have been constructed specifically for this report from the National Center for Education Statistics and other

sources. . . . Many of the indicators in this report use published and unpublished data from other federal agencies and organizations, including: (a) Census Bureau; (b) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; (c) Bureau of Labor Statistics; (d) Bureau of Justice Statistics; (e) Federal Bureau of Investigation; (f) Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; and (g) the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.”

[Full text – America’s Youth: Transitions to Adulthood](#)

Annotated Bibliographies: Secondary Transition

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC),
University of North Carolina at Charlotte. (Continuing Collection).

“NSTTAC staff and external contributors have developed annotated bibliographies on current topics in secondary transition. They are continuing to develop annotated bibliographies on additional topics, as well.” As of fall 2012, topics of the bibliographies include (a) assistive technology; (b) customized employment; (c) health issues in transition; (d) interagency collaboration; (e) outcomes for students with autism; (f) parent and family involvement; (g) secondary transition and students with autism; (h) sexuality and transition planning; (i) special educator’s role in school improvement; (j) summary of performance; and (k) transition assessment.

[Access the annotated bibliographies](#)

Better Federal Coordination Could Lessen Challenges in the Transition from High School (with a focus on students with disabilities)

U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), Washington DC. (2012).

“The transition out of high school to postsecondary education or the workforce can be a challenging time, especially for students with disabilities. Multiple federal agencies fund programs to support these students during their transition. . . . GAO was asked to provide information on the (a) challenges students with disabilities may face accessing federally funded transition services; and (b) extent to which federal agencies coordinate their transition activities. GAO reviewed relevant federal laws, regulations, and agency documents from Education, HHS, Labor, and SSA, which administer the key programs that provide transition services. GAO also administered a data collection instrument to gather program information from these agencies. Finally, GAO interviewed various stakeholders, including state and local officials, service providers, parents, and students with disabilities, in five states selected based on the number of federal grants they received to fund transition services.”

[Highlights – Better Federal Coordination](#)

[Click at the top for the full text]

Career Readiness and College Access: Publications and Resources

What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
(Continuing Collection)

“In this topic area, the What Works Clearinghouse focuses on interventions whose goal is to increase the likelihood of students enrolling in college. Items reviewed are intended to improve outcomes in: (a) college age enrollment and (b) financial aid enrollment. The Grade/Age Range is Middle through High School. Population: All.” Contents cover Single Study Reviews, Practice Guides, and Multimedia.

[Full texts -- Career Readiness and College Access](#)

Charting the Course: Supporting the Career Development of Youth with Learning Disabilities

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth in collaboration with the Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor. (2010).

J. Timmons, J. Wills, J. Kemp, R. Basha, & M. Mooney.

"In researching this guide, the authors found few resource materials that blend successful strategies from various service delivery systems (in-school, out-of-school, and workforce development) into one easy-to-use document. The available research on effective practices for this population, albeit limited, suggests that success for youth with learning disabilities, both diagnosed and undiagnosed, will require such an approach. This Guide brings together effective techniques from both educational and workforce systems in an effort to foster a different way of thinking to support young people. The Guide includes numerous quick reference charts, tables, and tools for counselors, career advisors, and other professionals who work directly with youth."

[Full text -- Charting the Course](#)

College Readiness: A Guide to the Field

College Readiness Indicator Systems (CRIS), Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. (2012). S. McAlister & P. Mevs.

This guide "highlights opportunities to address students' needs both in and out of school to ensure they have what it takes to be successful throughout college. To this end, (the authors) conducted a scan of the field, which drew on a review of education news coverage and publications by national education research and policy organizations from fall 2010 through summer 2011, supplemented with Web searches, covering a range of initiatives and organizations from the national to the local level, including school districts, states, and non-governmental organizations. . . . (The brief focuses) on college readiness rather than career readiness (although many of the initiatives that are highlighted focus on both)."

[Full text -- College Readiness: A Guide to the Field](#)

Diploma Options, Graduation Requirements, and Exit Exams for Youth with Disabilities: 2011 National Study

National Center on Educational Outcomes, University of Minnesota. (2012).

D. R. Johnson, M. L. Thurlow, & M. J. Schelka.

"The present study was undertaken to update the status of graduation policies across the nation. It follows up on previous work, the last study having been conducted in 2006-2007. Three research questions served as the focus of this national study of high school graduation requirements and diploma options for students with and without disabilities: (a) What is the range and variation in state graduation requirements and diploma options across the United States for students with and without disabilities? (b) What are the intended and unintended consequences that result for students when they are required to pass exit exams to receive a high school diploma? and (c) What are the intended and unintended consequences of using single or multiple diploma options for students with disabilities? Responses were collected from states via an online survey that contained questions aligned to previous surveys. Respondents were state directors of special education or their designees in all 50 states and the

District of Columbia. The return rate was 100%.

[Full text – Diploma Options](#)

Effects of College Access Programs on College Readiness and Enrollment: A Meta-Analysis (with a focus on disadvantaged populations)

Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, Evanston, Illinois. (2012).

E. L. Harvill, R. A. Maynard, T. H. Nguyen, T. H. Hoa, C. Robertson-Kraft, & N. Tognatta.

Distributed by the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC).

“Though several published reports have produced comprehensive inventories of college access programs, no systematic review and meta-analysis of the evidence regarding their effectiveness exists. This paper fills that knowledge gap by systematically gathering, reviewing, and synthesizing the findings on the effectiveness of programs designed to improve college readiness and enrollment for disadvantaged populations. In so doing, it is intended to provide guidance for policymakers and practitioners implementing college access programs, and to identify important gaps in the scientific evidence base that warrant further research. The authors address the following questions: (a) What evidence is available to judge the effectiveness of programs aimed at increasing college readiness and enrollment? (b) What does that evidence base tell individuals about the effectiveness of these programs? More specifically, what are the estimated average impacts of programs on college readiness outcomes within the following four domains: math achievement, language arts achievement, completed coursework, and high school graduation? What is the estimated impact of programs on college enrollment? The review only includes studies of interventions that target students between grades six and 12, or students of comparable ages who have not yet graduated from high school or earned a General Education Development certificate.”

[Full text – Effects of College Access Programs](#)

Emerging Evidence on Improving High School Student Achievement and Graduation Rates: The Effects of Four Popular Improvement Programs

National High School Center, American Institutes for Research, Washington DC. (2006).

C. H. Hirlihy & J. Quindt.

“The National High School Center released methods for improving low-performing high schools based on some of the most rigorous research currently available in the school reform arena. This research brief identifies lessons learned as well as key practices used to strengthen high schools and is based on evaluations of four widely used high school improvement programs – (a) Career Academies, (b) First Things First, (c) Project GRAD, and (d) Talent Development. . . . While all schools included in the four evaluations are low-performing -- compared to other schools in their districts, State, and against national norms -- some were facing extreme challenges. . . . Together, these four interventions are being implemented in more than 2,700 high schools across the country, and various components of these models are being used in thousands more schools.”

[Full text – Emerging Evidence](#)

Employment Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis

Child Trends, Washington DC. (2002). S. Jekielek, S. Cochran, and E. Hair.

"This synthesis places youth employment programs within the context of youth development. It focuses on ten programs that serve youth under age 18, but it also considers some programs that include older youths. The programs share the broad goal of improving the employability of young people, but some take an academic approach, while others focus on job skills training. The majority of the programs are community-based, although some are school-based and one stands out as a residential program. The effects of the programs on youth outcomes in four domains — educational and cognitive attainment, health and safety, social and emotional well-being, and self-sufficiency — have been evaluated. . . . (The synthesis) first describes the approaches taken by employment and job skills programs, then summarizes the impact of the programs and studies, and finally highlights elements that contribute to effective programs." The report covers six experimental evaluations, three quasi-experimental evaluations, and one non-experimental evaluation. Program profiles and study descriptions are shown in Appendix A.

[Full text -- Employment Programs and Youth Development: A Synthesis](#)

[Click on the title under "Programs for Teens Full Reports"]

Evaluating the Impact of Interventions That Promote Successful Transitions From High School

National High School Center, American Institutes for Research, Washington DC. (2008). M. Bangser. Distributed by MDRC, New York City.

"This Research Brief focuses on the challenges and opportunities presented in evaluating whether the interventions achieve their goals of increasing students' educational attainment, employment, and earnings after high school. . . . The discussion first provides an overview of studies that used a variety of research methods to examine the impact of interventions on students' postsecondary experiences. The focus then turns to five large-scale, random assignment evaluations to highlight several key points for policymakers and administrators to consider. In addition to using a random assignment research design, each of the five studies described: (a) examined an intervention that operated in multiple schools or locations, (b) had reasonably large sample sizes, and (c) analyzed follow-up data on students' postsecondary experiences or on high school outcomes that are likely to directly affect these postsecondary experiences. The basic elements of the five interventions are presented in Table 1." The interventions evaluated with a random assignment design are (a) Career Academies, (b) Upward Bound, (c) Career Beginnings, (d) Quantum Opportunity Program, and (e) Math-Enhanced Learning in Career and Technical Education. For those details, see pages 5-8.

[Full text -- Evaluating the Impact of Interventions That Promote Successful Transitions From High School](#)

[Click at the left]

Evidence-Based Practices in Secondary Transition

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC).
University of North Carolina at Charlotte. (Continuing Collection).

"The purpose of NSTTAC's review of the literature regarding transition services is to determine the evidence-base for transition practices, disseminate that information, and make recommendations to IES for a comprehensive meta-analysis of specific transition services. . . . To do this, NSTTAC will conduct a narrative literature review of the evidence- base of transition services. This will be a descriptive analysis, focused on articles (a) published in peer-reviewed journals, (b) that include students with disabilities participating in secondary education, (c) in which a transition service, so designated by the author, or so

assessed by the reviewer, is described clearly as the independent variable, predictor variable, or discussion point, (d) in which the dependent variable or outcome variable are student in-school or post-school outcomes, and (e) in which results are reported or there is discussion of in-school or post-school outcomes." Click on each skills topic for an overview of the practice, the evidence base, and the references used to establish the evidence base.

[To access the Evidence-Based Practices](#)

[Also see – Predictor Resources \(evidence-based predictors correlated with improved post-school outcomes\)](#)

Family Involvement in Middle and High School Students' Education

Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts. (2007).

This brief "summarizes the latest evidence base on effective involvement — specifically, the research studies that link family involvement during the middle and high school years to outcomes and programs that have been evaluated to show what works." Programs that are briefly profiled in this paper include (a) Brief Strategic Family Therapy (Family Therapy Training Institute of Miami); (b) Parent Institute for Quality Education (headquarters in San Diego, California) (c) Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (National Network of Partnership Schools), and (d) the Puente Project (University of California Office of the President and California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office).

[Full text – Family Involvement](#)

Guideposts for Success, Second Edition

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington DC. (2009).

"NCWD/Youth has identified Guideposts for Success based on what research tells us that all youth need to transition to adulthood successfully. The Guideposts provide (a) a statement of principles; (b) a direction that will lead to better outcomes for all young people; and (c) a way to organize policy and practice. . . . After providing a detailed list within each Guidepost of what all youth need, the framework then describes additional specific needs pertaining to youth with disabilities." The document is based on an extensive review of research, demonstration projects, and effective practice. It covers: Guidepost 1 -- School-based preparatory experiences; Guidepost 2 -- Career preparation and work-based learning experiences; Guidepost 3 -- Youth development and leadership; Guidepost 4 -- Connecting activities; and Guidepost 5 -- Family involvement and supports.

[Full text -- Guideposts for Success](#)

Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do -- IES Practice Guide

Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2009).

W. G. Tierney (Panel Chair), T. Bailey, J. Constantine, N. Finkelstein, & N. F. Hurd.

"This guide targets high schools and school districts, and focuses on effective practices that prepare students academically for college, assist them in completing the steps to college entry, and improve their likelihood of enrolling in college. . . . The evidence that the panel considered in developing this document ranges from experimental evaluations of college access programs to expert analyses of

college access practices. The panel paid particular attention to high-quality experimental and quasi-experimental studies, such as those meeting the criteria of the What Works Clearinghouse, and to patterns of practices that are replicated across programs." A checklist for carrying out the recommendations is included.

[Full text -- Helping Students Navigate the Path to College](#)

[Also see – Doing What Works: Helping Students Navigate the Path to College](#)

High School Knowledge Database

National High School Center, American Institutes for Research, Washington, DC. (Continuing Collection).

The National High School Center's Knowledge Database is a repository for collected resources-- research, tools, and products -- that address a number of high school improvement areas which are important to the needs of stakeholders. Using Tools and Products Review Criteria, the Center identifies research-supported tools and products to assist education consumers in locating credible and useful information. The National High School Center has also developed a comprehensive research review process to identify high-quality research on important high school improvement topics. There are several options for searching the site: (a) search by keyword conducts a general keyword search of the entire database; (b) search by high school topic area(s) allows a search by one or more high school topic areas; or (c) search by eight elements of high school improvement to select one or more of the National High School Center's Eight Elements of High School Improvement."

[To search the High School Knowledge Database](#)

High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09)

National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

"The High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSL:09) is a nationally representative, longitudinal study of more than 21,000 9th graders in 944 schools who will be followed throughout their secondary and postsecondary years. The study focuses on understanding students' trajectories from the beginning of high school into postsecondary education, the workforce, and beyond. What students decide to pursue when, why, and how are crucial questions for HSL:09, especially, but not solely, in regards to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses, majors, and careers. This study features a new student assessment in algebraic skills, reasoning, and problem solving and includes, like past studies, surveys of students, their parents, math and science teachers, school administrators, as well as a new survey of school counselors. The first wave of data collection for HSL:09 began in the fall of 2009 and produced not only a nationally representative dataset but also state representative datasets for each of ten states. The next data collection began in January 2012."

[Overview – High School Longitudinal Study of 2009](#)

[Also see the first report – A First Look at Fall 2009 Ninth-Graders' Parents, Teachers, School Counselors, and School Administrators](#)

Higher Education and Disability: Improved Federal Enforcement Needed to Better Protect Students' Rights to Testing Accommodations

U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). (2011).

"Standardized tests are often required to gain admission into postsecondary schools or to obtain professional certifications. Federal disability laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act require entities that administer these tests to provide accommodations, such as extended time or changes in test format, to students with disabilities. GAO examined (a) the types of accommodations individuals apply for and receive and how schools assist them, (b) factors testing companies consider when making decisions about requests for accommodations, (c) challenges individuals and testing companies experience in receiving and granting accommodations, and (d) how federal agencies enforce compliance with relevant disability laws and regulations. To conduct this work, GAO interviewed disability experts; individuals with disabilities; officials from high schools, postsecondary schools, testing companies; and officials from the Departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services (HHS). GAO also reviewed testing company policies and data, federal complaint and case data for selected testing companies, and relevant laws and regulations."

[Full Text – Higher Education and Disability](#)

[Highlights](#)

Improving Education and Employment for Disadvantaged Young Men: Proven and Promising Strategies

The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. (2011). C. J. Heinrich & H. J. Holzer.

The authors "review the evidence base on youth development policies for adolescents and young teens; programs seeking to improve educational attainment and employment for in-school youth; and programs that try to 'reconnect' those who are out of school and frequently out of work, including public employment programs. They identify a number of programmatic strategies that are promising or even proven, based on rigorous evaluations, for disadvantaged youth with different circumstances, and conclude that policy efforts need to promote a range of approaches to engage and reconnect youth, along with ongoing evaluation efforts to improve our understanding of what works, including which program components work, for whom."

[Abstract – Improving Education and Employment for Disadvantaged Young Men](#)

[Full text for purchase]

Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice (middle and high school)

Students at the Center, Jobs for the Future Project, Boston, Massachusetts. (2012).

E. Toschalis & M. J. Nakkula.

"This paper provides "a tour through enduring and cutting- edge research on achievement motivation, school engagement, and student voice. (The authors) review the knowledge base in these fields to highlight the general concepts and specific strategies that promote academic achievement and to show, in particular, how a focus on student voice in student-centered learning contexts can enhance growth opportunities in the cognitive, behavioral, and social-emotional domains. Throughout the paper, (they) focus on the role that demographic differences play in shaping adolescent students' motivations, their decisions to engage, and their particular need for voice in the classroom."

[Full text: Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice](#)

National Assessment of Vocational Education (NAVE): Final Report to Congress

Office of the Under Secretary, Policy and Program Studies Service, U.S. Department of Education. (2004). M. Silverberg, E. Warner, M. Fong, & D. Goodwin.

This report "presents a synthesis of evidence on the implementation and outcomes of vocational education and of the 1998 Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Perkins III). The comprehensive report examines questions about the effectiveness of vocational education in improving student outcomes, the consequences of new funding and accountability provisions for programs and participants, the implementation and quality of vocational education, and the extent of its alignment with other reform efforts. The report also provides options for the future direction of vocational education legislation. . . . Studies included found that vocational education increased short- and medium-run earnings benefits for most students, and these benefits extend to those who are economically disadvantaged. Students in vocational programs have also significantly increased their academic course taking and achievement over the last decade, although there was little evidence that vocational courses contributed to improving those outcomes."

[Full text -- NAVE Final Report to Congress](#)

[Also see related papers on this page]

National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) (focuses on students in special education)

National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

NLTS2 is intended to provide a national picture of the experiences and achievements of students in special education during high school and as they transition from high school to adult life. NLTS2 involves a nationally representative sample of students who were 13 to 16 years old and receiving special education services in December 2000 when the study began. These students will be followed until 2010 in an effort to understand their educational, vocational, social, and personal experiences as they transition from adolescence to early adulthood. Findings from NLTS2 generalize to special education students nationally as a group, to each of the 12 disability categories in use for students in the NLTS2 age range, and to each single-year age group.

[Overview and links to publications and products](#)

New Rules, New Roles: Preparing All Young People for a Changing World

DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund, New York City. (2000).

"This report profiles six school-to-career programs that mix rigorous academics with job training to prepare young people for today's high-skill positions. They have moved beyond vocational education, blending challenging coursework, real-world experience and activities that interest students to better prepare young people for life after graduation. The report offers recommendations for school-to-career program design, as well as case studies that show how several groups have applied them." Evaluative evidence is included. The featured programs are (a) High Schools That Work; (b) Career Academy Support Network; (c) Communities and Schools for Career Success; (d) Benchmark Communities Initiative; (e) National Association of Service and Conservation Corps; and (f) YouthBuild USA.

[Full text -- New Rules, New Roles](#)

Pathways to Success: Integrating Learning with Life and Work to Increase National College Completion (with a focus on non-traditional populations)

A Report to the U.S. Congress and Secretary of Education by the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance (a federal advisory committee chartered by Congress). Washington DC. (2012).

“At the federal level, the goal to have the world’s highest rate of college completion is now front and center. Achieving this important goal by 2020 will require a formidable effort to increase the nation’s college degrees and certificates. Previous Advisory Committee reports have shown how challenging the achievement of the 2020 goal will be among the nation’s recent high school graduates. Complementing those reports, this effort focuses on students referred to in the past as the nontraditional population, the largest subset of students in the nation. . . . This population — often referred to as 21st century or contemporary students — consists of many subgroups, each with unique circumstances, educational needs, and goals. . . . In order to understand the challenge of degree attainment for nontraditional students, the Advisory Committee conducted a literature review, convened two hearings, and used numerous meetings, presentations, and conversations with experts to gain feedback on the study.” Appendix A (page 89) provides examples of subgroups that comprise the nontraditional student population. This list of 27 subgroups includes low-income students, public assistance recipients, homeless students, historically underrepresented minorities, English as a second language students, students with disabilities, first generation students, undocumented students, and others.

[Full text – Pathways to Success](#)

Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Critical Review of the State of Knowledge and a Taxonomy to Guide Future Research (Policy Research Brief)

Research and Training Center on Community Living, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. (2011).

“In November 2009, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and the Office of Postsecondary Education in the U.S. Department of Education hosted a ‘State of the Science Conference on Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities.’ The consensus at that conference was that the field was at a critical juncture. Knowledge about the characteristics of current programs, their participants and their outcomes was viewed as far too limited to determine to what extent, in what areas, and for what reasons postsecondary education (PSE) may be yielding benefits for persons with intellectual and other learning-related developmental disabilities. . . . In the summer of 2010, a team of researchers from the University of Minnesota began work on a taxonomy for the field, based on these identified needs. They reviewed current knowledge and research practice to establish the components of a taxonomy that would sufficiently and accurately describe the characteristics of students with IDD, the programs they attended, the diversity of program goals, and the diversity of activities and experience related to achieving program goals. . . . This Policy Research Brief reviews the state of knowledge and research practice in the emerging field of PSE for students with intellectual and other learning-related developmental disabilities.”

[Full text – Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#)

Programs and Policies to Assist High School Dropouts in the Transition to Adulthood

Future of Children. (2010). A Collaboration of The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University & The Brookings Institution. D. Bloom.

The author "describes eleven employment-focused or education-focused programs serving high school dropouts that have been rigorously evaluated over the past thirty years. Some relied heavily on paid work experience, while others focused more on job training or education. Some programs, especially those that offered paid work opportunities, generated significant increases in employment or earnings in the short term, but none of the studies that followed participants for more than a couple of years found lasting improvements in economic outcomes. Nevertheless, the findings provide an important foundation on which to build. . . . Bloom concludes with recommendations for policy and research aimed at building on current efforts to expand and improve effective programs for dropouts while simultaneously developing and testing new approaches that might be more effective and strengthening local systems. . . . A recurring theme is that providing young people with opportunities for paid work may be useful both as an engagement tool and as a strategy for improving long-term labor market outcomes." The 11 reviewed programs are shown in Table 1.

[Full text -- Programs and Practices to Assist High School Dropouts](#)

[Click on the fifth title]

Report of the Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities

U. S. Department of Education. (2011).

"The Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities released on December 6, 2011, a report providing Congress with vital recommendations for improving the ability of postsecondary students with disabilities to obtain accessible instructional materials in a timely and cost-effective manner. . . . Established by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, the commission brought together government leaders, representatives from the publishing industry, individuals with print disabilities, representatives from two- and four-year institutions of higher education, leaders in accessible technology, and other stakeholders. Over the course of 14 months, commission members studied the current state of accessible materials for students with disabilities in postsecondary education. . . . The commission offered diverse perspectives on the state of accessible instructional materials across postsecondary campuses nationwide." Findings are reported, along with 18 recommendations to address the findings.

[Overview – Report of the Advisory Commission](#)

[Full text – Report of the Advisory Commission](#)

Special Education in High School Redesign: Annotated Bibliography

National High School Center (NHSC), American Institutes for Research, Washington DC, and the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center, University of North Carolina-Charlotte.

“The robust list of special education and general education articles that compose this new publication is organized around the National High School Center’s ‘Eight Elements of High School Improvement: A Mapping Framework.’ . . . All the articles included here have been vetted by the explicit and rigorous review processes of the National High School Center and NSTTAC. . . . Articles in this annotated bibliography are annotated according to their source (i.e., research, intervention study, and product or tool). . . . The table contains the bibliographic information for each publication and identifies the type of source and the key elements it relates to. After the table, each publication is annotated with bulleted points about what it provides. The table and annotated list are in alphabetical order.”

[Full text – Special Education in High School Redesign](#)

Success at Every Step: How 23 Programs Support Youth on the Path to College and Beyond

American Youth Policy Forum, Washington DC. (2009). S. Hooker & B. Brand.

"This publication is designed to help policymakers and practitioners learn about programs and policies that have been effective in helping youth become ready for college and careers. Twenty-three evaluations of programs that support youth as they prepare for college and careers are briefly summarized to give policymakers and practitioners a quick understanding of the research findings on effective programs, along with a description of why the programs work. The 23 programs summarized in this publication clearly do not represent the universe of programs that are successful in helping youth prepare for college and careers; rather, they are the ones that had quality evaluations. This review was also limited to programs that serve older youth, primarily middle and high school youth. . . . Because the process of developing young people who are college- and career-ready is complicated and multi-faceted, AYPF has developed a comprehensive logic model to illustrate what it takes to prepare youth for postsecondary education, careers, and long-term success." The contents cover (a) a national after-school program, (b) national schoolwide models, (c) programs that are effective for culturally diverse students and low-income schools, and (d) a few State and local initiatives.

[Synopsis and click for the full text – Success at Every Step](#)

Systematic Reviews of Research: Postsecondary Transitions -- Identifying Effective Models and Practices

National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Louisville, Kentucky. (2009). J. C. Valentine, A. S. Hirschy, C. D. Bremer, W. Novillo, M. Castellano, & A. Banister.

The authors of this paper "address the following questions: (a) What models or programs of transition exist?; (b) On what basis can we say one transition is more effective than another?; In other words, how is successful transition defined?; (c) How are transition models and programs evaluated?; and (d) What is the impact of transition programs, specifically those that aim to facilitate transition from one educational system to another, to program completion, or to specific career-related employment for disadvantaged youth? . . . A literature review of over 8,000 citations yielded over 100 studies that warranted further examination. . . . Most paths identified as potential targets for intervention appear not to have been studied using a comparison groups design. (The authors) were able to meta-analyze two paths, which they combined, that had 19 studies of interventions that aim to keep students in college once they get there."

[Full text – Systematic Reviews of Research: Postsecondary Transitions](#)

[Click at the end of the summary for the full report and research snapshot]

The College Ladder: Linking Secondary and Postsecondary Education for Success for All Students

American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), Washington DC. (2006). J. B. Lerner & B. Brand.

This report "is the result of a two-year effort to identify, summarize, and analyze schools, programs, and policies that link secondary and postsecondary education to help students earn college credit or take college-level courses. . . . AYPF focused on identifying secondary-postsecondary learning options (SPLOs) serving first-generation, low-income, and low-performing students, students with disabilities, and under-represented minorities. . . . AYPF's efforts were driven by the following guiding questions: (a) is there evidence that these different models of SPLOs are effective at increasing academic performance, closing the achievement gap, and increasing entry to and retention in postsecondary education, particularly for first-generation, low-income, or students of color and students with disabilities; (b) do financing mechanisms support equity and success by all students; is there evidence that these programs are cost-effective; (c) are college courses for high school students as rigorous and at the same level as regular college courses; and (d) what evidence exists to demonstrate that these programs meet their respective goals of serving a specific target population or solving a specific problem? . . . AYPF undertook an extensive review of literature to identify research, evaluations, and studies. Programs in this compendium either have a third-party evaluation or have participated in a semi-rigorous data collection effort. Twenty-two programs were identified as meeting AYFP criteria and have been categorized by program type."

[Full text – The College Ladder](#)

What Works Transition Research Synthesis Project: Systematic Reviews

Distributed by the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), University of North Carolina-Charlotte. (Various dates).

The *What Works Transition Research Synthesis Project* was funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to review and synthesize the past 20 years of research and advancements in the area of transition for youth with disabilities. The project office was located at the School of Education at Colorado State University." The project's publications are available from NSTTAC.

[Full texts – Systematic Reviews](#)

Young Adults and Higher Education: Barriers and Breakthroughs to Success (with a focus on at-risk students)

National Poverty Center, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. (2010). T. Brock.

"Thomas Brock reviews systematic research findings on the effectiveness of various interventions designed to help at-risk students remain in college. Brock shows how changes in federal policy and public attitudes since the mid-1960s have opened up higher education to women, minorities, and nontraditional students and also shifted the 'center of gravity' in higher education away from traditional four-year colleges toward non-selective community colleges. Students at two-year colleges, however, are far less likely than those at four-year institutions to complete a degree. Brock argues that the nation's higher education system must do much more to promote student success. Three areas, he says, are particularly ripe for reform: (a) remedial education, (b) student support services, and (c) financial

aid. In each of these three areas, Brock reviews programs and interventions that community colleges have undertaken in order to raise completion rates.”

[Full text – Young Adults and Higher Education](#)

Youth Transitions to Work: Programs Outside the Traditional Education System

MDRC, New York City (Various dates).

"MDRC projects test a range of innovative interventions for low-income youth who have dropped out of school, are at risk of dropping out, are teen parents or youth offenders, or are disabled. Some programs focus on improving participants' marketable job skills or high school completion rates; others use more comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing a broader range of needs. . . . Some prior MDRC projects have evaluated programs serving young adults outside the traditional education system. The left-hand side of this page provides access to summaries of these evaluations. Programs include (a) National Guard Youth Challenge Program; (b) JOBSTART; (c) New Chance; (d) Social Innovation Fund Project; (e) Youth Transition Demonstration; (f) YouthBuild – and others. Most evaluations have been completed but a few are still in progress.

[Overview -- Youth Transitions to Work: Programs Outside the Traditional Education System](#)

[Click at the left for overviews and access to reports.]



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