

National High School Center Research Studies: Transition Out of High School January 2010

The research pieces included in this document have been vetted using the National High School Center's research review criteria and received a score of 3 or 2, which are ratings reserved for the most rigorous study designs. A score of 3 or 2 indicates more confidence in the researchers' conclusions. Further explanation of the criteria is available at <http://betterhighschools.org/docs/ResearchReviewCriteria09232008.pdf>.

Alwell, M., & Cobb, B. (2007). *Social/communicative interventions and transition outcomes for youth with disabilities: A systematic review.* (meta-analysis)

This meta-analysis of 30 studies examined whether social and/or communicative skills interventions helped improve transition or transition-related outcomes in high school-aged students with disabilities. Results show little support for interventions aimed at augmentative and alternative communication and modest support for interventions focused on the acquisition of conversation skills or social skills training. The authors were unable to conduct a meta-analysis of interventions designed to reduce inappropriate social behaviors.

Link: http://www.nsttac.org/pdf/social_communications_skills_full_text.pdf.

Alwell, M., & Cobb, B. (2006). *A systematic review of the effects of curricular interventions on the acquisition of functional life skills by youth with disabilities.* (synthesis)

This practice-based literature review provides a summary of research, from the past 20 years, that examines the impact of functional/life skills curricular interventions on high school-aged students with disabilities. Findings provide tentative support for the impact of these interventions on transition-related outcomes. Implications for practice are discussed.

Link: http://www.nsttac.org/pdf/life_skills.pdf

Bailey, T., & Karp, M. M. (2003). *Promoting college access and success: A review of credit-based transition programs.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. (synthesis)

This report examined the research literature on credit-based transition programs: dual enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Tech Prep, and Middle College High Schools. It includes the variation in implementation and summarizes findings from 21 research evaluations. Recommendations on future research are provided.

Link: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/crdbase.doc>

Bottoms, G., & Uhm, J. (2007). *Project Lead the Way works: A new type of career and technical program.* Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board. (quantitative study)

This study reports the findings from an evaluation of Project Lead the Way (PLTW) that compared students who participated in the program with a comparable group of career and technical students in the High Schools That Work (HSTW) network. PLTW students significantly outperformed comparison students on a number of outcomes, including mathematics and science scores on the NAEP-referenced HSTW assessment; completion of at least 4 years of mathematics and 3 years of lab-based science courses; completion of the rigorous HSTW curriculum; and a perception of high school as important for preparing for the future.

Link: http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/2007pubs/07V29_Research_Brief_PLTW.pdf

Cameto, R. (2005). *The transition planning process.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, Institute on Community Integration. (synthesis)

This data brief provides findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS2). It presents a national overview of the planning process involved in helping students with disabilities make the transition from high school to life after high school. Results indicate variability in the extent to which laws and best practices regarding the transition planning process are followed. In addition, it was found that this process develops over time and is more developed as students move closer to making the transition.

Link: http://www.ncset.org/publications/nlts2/NCSETNLTS2Brief_4.1.pdf

Cave, G., & Quint, J. (1990). *Career Beginnings impact evaluation: Findings from a program for disadvantaged high school students.* New York: MDRC. (quantitative study)

This randomized controlled trial evaluation study examined the effects of the 2nd year of the Career Beginnings program implementation. The study showed that Career Beginnings increased the rate of college attendance to 53.2% compared with 48.5% for controls.

Link: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/229/abstract.html>

Cobb, B., & Alwell, M. (2007). *Transition planning/coordinating interventions for youth with disabilities: A systematic review.* (synthesis)

This practice-based review summarizes research that examined the impact of transition planning/coordinating interventions on the transition and transition-related outcomes of high school-aged students with disabilities. Results support the use of student planning and student development interventions.

Link: http://www.nsttac.org/pdf/what_works/2c_full_text.pdf

Constantine, J. M., Seftor, N. S., Martin, E. S., Silva, T., & Myers, D. (2006). *A study of the effect of the Talent Search Program on secondary and postsecondary outcomes in Florida, Indiana and Texas: Final report from phase II of the national evaluation.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service. (quantitative study)

This retrospective study examined the effects of the Talent Search Program on a cohort of students who participated in the program in one of three states (Florida, Indiana, and Texas) and were ninth graders in 1995–96. Overall, the study found that Talent Search participants were more likely than a comparable control group to enroll in a public college or university, especially 2-year institutions, in their state by the 1999–2000 school year. They were also more likely to apply for federal financial aid.

Link: <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/talentsearch-outcomes/index.html>

Dougherty, C. Mellor, L., & Jian, S. (2006). *The relationship between advanced placement college graduation: 2005 AP study series, report 1.* Austin, TX: National Center for Educational Accountability. (quantitative study)

Students who took AP courses and passed the exams tend to have a higher probability of college graduation compared to students not participating in AP even after controlling for student’s 8th grade mathematics test score, free and reduced price lunch status, average test scores, and percent economically disadvantaged students in the student’s school. The percent of a school’s students who took and passed AP is the best AP-related predictor of the probability of students from that school to graduate from college.

Link: [http://www.just4kids.org/en/files/Publication-The Relationship between Advanced Placement and College Graduation-02-09-06.pdf](http://www.just4kids.org/en/files/Publication-The%20Relationship%20between%20Advanced%20Placement%20and%20College%20Graduation-02-09-06.pdf)

Gandara, P. (with Bial, D.). (2001). *Paving the way to postsecondary education: K–12 intervention programs for underrepresented youth.* Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (synthesis)

This report identifies and reviews selected K–12 postsecondary education college access programs. Information on how the program works and under what conditions and the limitations on the research are discussed. The characteristics of effective programs, as shown by the research, are provided.

Link: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001205.pdf>

Hayward, G. C., Brandes, B. G., Kirst, M. W., & Mazzeo, C. (1997). *Higher education outreach program: A synthesis of evaluations*. Sacramento, CA: Policy Analysis of California Education. (synthesis)

This report discusses what has been learned about outreach programs aimed at improving access and postsecondary outcomes for underrepresented students. Outreach programs are described and the evidence of their effectiveness is presented. Principles for designing student-centered and school-centered programs that are based on effective practices are also provided.

Link: <http://www.ucop.edu/sas/publish/pace/>

Jackson, A.J. & Smith, S.A. (2001). *Postsecondary transitions among Navajo Indians*. *Journal of American Indian Education* 40(2), 28-47. (qualitative study)

Interviewers used active listening skills and encouragement to maximize the depth of participant responses during structured interviews with recent Navajo Indian high school graduates. The data collection was very exploratory in nature and researchers identified the following themes among Navajo Indian high school graduates' postsecondary transitions: family (pressure, financial problems, conflicts, and encouragement), a discrepancy between high school and college learning environments, emphasis on faculty relationships, vague understanding of educational and vocational careers, and also a connection to homeland and culture. The findings point to a need for more attention needs to be given to support transitions into postsecondary education for Navajo youth.

Link: <http://jaie.asu.edu/v40/V40I2A2.pdf>

James, D. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Some things do make a difference for youth: A compendium of evaluations of youth programs and practices*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. (synthesis)

This compendium identifies and summarizes evaluations on a variety of youth programs that have a positive impact on the lives of young people. Basic principles of effective strategies based on the research are provided.

Link: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/compendium/comp01.pdf>

James, D. W. (Ed.) (with Jurich, S.). (1999). *More things that do make a difference for youth: A compendium of evaluations of youth programs and practices* (Vol. II). Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. (synthesis)

This compendium is an update on an earlier one and identifies and summarizes evaluations on a variety of youth programs that have a positive impact on the lives of young people. An update on the basic principles of effective strategies, based on the research, is provided.

Link: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/compendium/comp02.pdf>

James, D. W., Jurich, S. & Estes, S. (2001). *Raising minority academic achievement: A compendium of education programs and practices.* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. (synthesis)

This synthesis identifies, summarizes, and analyzes research evaluations of school and youth programs, focusing on those that show gains for minority youth across a broad range of academic achievement outcomes from early childhood through advanced postsecondary study. Recommendations on how to raise the minority academic achievement are also provided for researchers, practitioners, families, community members, and students.

Link: <http://www.aypf.org/publications/rmaa/index.html>

Johnson, D. R., & Thurlow, M. L. (2003). *A national study on graduation requirements and diploma options for youth with disabilities (Technical Report 36).* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes. (quantitative study)

The researchers of this study administered a survey to state directors of special education or other appropriate representatives from all 50 states and the District of Columbia in an effort to collect data on the variation in state graduation requirements and diploma options for students with and without disabilities, the intended and unintended consequences of exit exams as a requirement for receiving a diploma, and such consequences of using single or multiple diploma options for students with disabilities. They found a wide range of graduation policies across states and local education agencies, and noted that they are ever-changing even within states and districts. In addition, there is also variance in the diploma options being made available to students with and without disabilities as well as an increased trend toward "high-stakes" exit exams as a graduation requirement.

Link: <http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/Technical36.htm>

Kemple, J. (2001). *Career Academies: Impacts on students' initial transitions to post-secondary education and employment.* New York: MDRC. (quantitative study)

This randomized controlled trial study examined the impact of Career Academies. Although Career Academies had some significant positive impacts on high school outcomes, such as school engagement and participation in career awareness and work-related activities, the program did not make a significant difference on course content and classroom instructional practices, likelihood of graduating high school, college enrollment, and employment.

Link: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/105/overview.html>

Kemple, J., & Scott-Clayton, J. (2004). *Career Academies: Impacts on labor market outcomes and educational attainment.* New York: MDRC. (quantitative study)

This randomized controlled trial study examined the impacts of Career Academies on labor market outcomes. Career Academies appeared to have substantially improved the labor market prospects, including increased wages, hours worked, and employment stability, for males. However, the same effect was not found among females. Further, the program did not appear to have been more effective than other options available, and the positive effects were concentrated among individuals that were of high or medium risk of dropping out of high school when they started the program.

Link: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/366/overview.html>

Kemple, J. J., & Willner, C. J. (2008). *Career Academies: Long-term impacts on labor market outcomes, educational attainment, and transitions to adulthood.* New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corp. (quantitative study)

The researchers investigated the effects of participation in Career Academies on the labor market preparation, school-to-work transitions, and other long-term outcomes for young people. The findings suggest that academic learning need not be compromised by career education, and investments in career-preparatory activities for high school students can create significant improvements in long-term outcomes.
Link: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/482/full.pdf>

Lerner, J. B., & Brand, B. (2006). *The college ladder: Linking secondary and postsecondary education for success for all students.* Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum. (synthesis)

This compendium describes several secondary-postsecondary learning options (SPLOs) and highlights the research that assesses their effectiveness. SPLOs include dual enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), Tech Prep, Middle College High Schools (MCHS), early college high schools (ECHS), programs serving disadvantaged youth, and college access programs (such as International Baccalaureate [IB], Career Academies, and summer enrichment programs).

Link:

<http://www.aypf.org/publications/The%20College%20Ladder/TheCollegeLadderlinkingsecondaryandpostsecondaryeducation.pdf>

Myers, D., Olsen, R., Seftor, N., Young, J., & Tuttle, C. (2004). *The impacts of regular Upward Bound: Results from the third follow-up data collection.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, Policy and Program Studies Service. (quantitative study)

This is a 3rd year follow-up study evaluating the impact of Upward Bound, which is a federally funded precollegiate program that aims to assist economically disadvantaged students prepare for, enter, and succeed in college. Students were randomly assigned to Upward Bound and control groups. The study found that although Upward Bound students were not more likely to attend postsecondary institutions or earn more credits, Upward Bound may increase the likelihood of attending a 4-year postsecondary institution. Further, Upper Bound had a larger effect on those students who remained in the program for a longer period of time.

Link: <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/upward/upward-3rd-report.pdf>

Myers, D., & Schirm, A. (1999). *Impacts of Upward Bound: Final report for phase I of the national evaluation*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary, Policy and Program Studies Service. (quantitative study)

This randomized controlled trial evaluation examined the impact of Upward Bound. Although students could participate in the program for 3 to 4 years, the study found that 35% left after the 1st year, and it is estimated that another 20% left before they graduated from high school. Further, the study had only a few positive impacts on students during high school. For example, compared with the control group, students in the treatment group were expected to complete more years in high school and obtain more credits in mathematics and social studies. However, Upward Bound did not have an impact on high school graduation, in-school behavior, participation in extracurricular activities, grade point average, or credit earned in English or science. Upward Bound did appear to have some impact on postsecondary outcomes for participants. Although Upward Bound students were not more likely than control students to attend college, they did earn more credits from 4-year colleges, were more likely to receive financial aid, and were more actively engaged in some college activities. Further, Upward Bound had differential effects on different student populations. Students with lower initial educational expectations, boys, Hispanic and white students, low-income only or low-income and potential first-generation college students, and poorer performing students benefited more.

Link: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/higher/upward.pdf>

Schirm, A., Stuart, E., & Mckie, A. (2006). *The Quantum Opportunity Program demonstration: Final impacts*. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (quantitative study)

This randomized controlled trial study examined the impact of the Quantum Opportunity Program (QOP). The report focuses on the fourth follow-up when participants were about 6 years out of high school (23 to 25 years of age). Overall, this study did not find that participating in QOP benefited students' high school or postsecondary outcomes. There were some differences by site, however; sites with more intensive implementation (Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Washington, DC) appeared to have some positive effects on student outcomes.

Link: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/QOPfinalimpacts.pdf>

Schiller, K., & Muller, C. (2000). External examinations and accountability, educational expectations, and high school graduation. *American Journal of Education* 108(1), 1-16. (quantitative study)

The purpose of this study was to explore whether state testing policies were related to difference in students' likelihood of earning a high school diploma. The study also explores whether there is variation in the association of high school graduation with students' backgrounds and expectations. It was found that the relationship between students' likelihood of graduating from high school and their background, aspirations and teacher expectations varied among states with different practices. However, there was a strong positive association between the extensiveness of state-mandated testing and high school graduation rates.

Link: No public link available.

Venezia, A., Kirst, M., & Antonio, A. L. (2003). *Betraying the college dream: How disconnected K-12 and postsecondary education systems undermine student aspirations. Final policy report from Stanford University's Bridge Project. Stanford, CA: Stanford Institute for Higher Education Research.* (qualitative study)

This study found that the overwhelming majority (80%) of Hispanic and African American students surveyed planned to pursue some kind of postsecondary education, but misaligned K-16 systems are putting up barriers to college access. Furthermore, high school assessments do not measure the same skills and knowledge that colleges require for entry. Compounding these problems are the fact that state longitudinal data systems are not sophisticated enough to track students throughout the K-16 pipeline, and students and parents are given mixed and often contradictory information on postsecondary options. The report also includes recommendations for making college access more equitable.

Link: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/bridgeproject/betrayingthecollegedream.pdf>

Watt, K.M., Powell, C.A., Mendiola, I.D. & Cossio, G. (2006). *Schoolwide impact and AVID: How have selected Texas high schools addressed the new accountability measures? Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk 11(1), 57-73.* (quantitative study)

This study examines the impact of the AVID model being implemented in 10 high schools in 5 Texas districts, over a 4-year period. Each school and district was matched on student demographic variables, student enrollment patterns and accountability ratings. The study found that AVID schools and districts: 1) had a greater increase in accountability ratings after at least 2 years of implementation, 2) showed increases in advanced course enrollment whereas non-AVID schools showed a decrease in enrollment, 3) had a higher increase in the number of AP/IB test takers and 4) showed an increase in graduation/completion rates whereas the rates at non-AVID schools declined. In addition, both groups had an increase in the number of students graduating with the recommended or distinguished graduation plan.

Link: No public link available.