School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)

June 21, 2017

What supports are provided vulnerable youth after high school?

- **New data on young adults neither in school nor working**

- **Example of one district's approach and an ensuing critique**

- **About organizations focusing on employment for young adults**

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Invitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

Featured Set of Center Resources on

> **>Supporting vulnerable students as they transition from adolescence**

From the Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

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Given shrinking education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

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For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For previous postings of this community of practice, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm
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Note: In keeping with the *National Initiative for Transforming Student & Learning Supports*, this is being sent to and forwarded by over 100,000 school and community stakeholders concerned about (1) daily matters confronting schools, (2) promoting whole child development and positive school climate, and (3) the transformation of student and learning supports.

Last week's *School Practitioner Community of Practice* focused on helping struggling K-12 students; this week the emphasis is on supporting vulnerable youth after they leave high school.

W*hat supports are provided vulnerable youth after high school?*

With commitment to equity of opportunity, families and school staff are increasing high school graduation rates. However, many graduates are vulnerable students who need ongoing supports as they transition to postsecondary education/training/jobs. And the concern is even greater for those who dropped out. The problem is underscored by recent findings.

New data on young adults neither in school nor working

From: *The Conditions of Education 2017* indicator, "Youth Neither Enrolled in School nor Working" – https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_col.asp

> "In 2016, some 17 percent of 20- to 24-year-olds were neither enrolled in school nor working,... the percentage who were neither in school nor working was higher for those in poor households than for those in nonpoor households....

> Schooling and work are considered core activities in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Youth who are detached from these core activities, particularly if they are detached for several years, may have difficulty building a work history that contributes to future employability and higher wages....

> The percentage of youth who were neither in school nor working varied by race/ethnicity in 2016. For example, the percentage of 20- to 24-year-olds neither in school nor working was higher for American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic youth (31, 26, and 20 percent, respectively) than for their White and Asian peers (13 and 12 percent, respectively)...."

Note that as a key reference, the report cites *Disconnected Youth: A Look at 16 to 24 Year Olds Who Are Not Working or In School* – https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R40535.pdf

> Here's an excerpt:

> "In recent years, policymakers and youth advocates have focused greater attention on young people who are neither working nor in school. Generally characterized as 'disconnected,' these youth may also lack strong social networks that provide assistance in the form of employment connections and other supports such as housing and financial assistance. Without attachment to work or school, disconnected youth may be vulnerable to experiencing negative outcomes as they transition to adulthood....

> Interventions to connect youth to school and work depend on a number of factors. The research literature has devoted attention to the *timing* of interventions. The timing can target early childhood, the elementary and middle school years, or the high school years and just beyond. During each of these phases, developmental outcomes are influenced by numerous environmental and social factors, including family structure, stability, and functioning; economic circumstances; education; health care; and schooling. They are also influenced by innate and inherited characteristics. These factors can influence how well youth ultimately make the transition to adulthood....

> Some researchers assert that investments in early childhood can, in part, serve as a protective factor against poor outcomes, especially when coupled with investments during the elementary school years. Other research has focused on the benefits of intervening at an older age when young people are at risk of or are already experiencing negative outcomes. And still other research has begun to examine the effects of a system of interventions that targets youth throughout their early life, from the infant years to young adulthood. Youth might benefit from interventions during all stages of their early life, particularly if they begin

to exhibit markers of risk such as low school performance.

Interventions can also focus on particular *institutions or systems*, such as the family, community, schools, and job training programs. These interventions may help to address some of the reasons why youth are not working or in school....

Finally, school and job training programs that provide wraparound services—counseling, child care, transportation, assistance with attaining a high school diploma, and preparation for the workforce—may help to reengage youth....”

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Example of one district's approach and an ensuing critique

May 24, 2017 Chicago Board of Education –
http://www.cps.edu/News/Press_releases/Pages/PR1_05_24_2017.aspx

“*Learn.Plan.Succeed*. This graduation requirement will help guide postsecondary success for students by requiring that they work with their schools to develop plans for life after graduation....

Requires students to provide evidence of a postsecondary plan in order to graduate, including:
>College acceptance letter received and returned
>Military acceptance/enlistment letter
>Acceptance into a job program
>Acceptance into a trades pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship
>Acceptance into a “Gap-Year” program
>Current job/job offer letter
>Waivers will be developed to accommodate students with extenuating circumstances”

In critiquing Chicago's approach, the U.S. News &World Report declared that “Chicago Public Schools students deserve better than a requirement for their post-high school plans.”
https://www.usnews.com/opinion/knowledge-bank/articles/2017-04-26/post-high-school-plan-wont-ensure-chicago-public-schools-students-success
Here's an excerpt:

“... ‘Learn. Plan. Succeed,' is intended to help Chicago Public Schools students successfully transition from high school to college or career. The proposal would require high school seniors to prove they have post-high school plans in order to receive their diplomas. While well-intentioned, the plan falls short and may even carry unintended consequences for Chicago students.

Starting with the graduating class of 2020, CPS students would be required to demonstrate that they have a post-high school plan.... In theory, the proposal encourages thoughtful college and career planning on the part of students. But without careful implementation and added investment, the proposal risks becoming a mere exercise in box-checking – one that could put students at risk of not even achieving a high school diploma.

Many CPS students already face substantial barriers to high school and college completion. Across the district, 84 percent of students are low-income – meaning they receive public assistance, are in foster care or are homeless or are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Nearly 20 percent are English-language learners and 4 percent are homeless. The barriers these students face to college or career are complex, and aren't ones of motivation as ‘Learn. Plan. Succeed' suggests....

Without the necessary supports in place, ‘Learn. Plan. Succeed' could carry potentially devastating unintended consequences. For example, placing the burden on the student to navigate increasingly complex education and labor market landscapes may in effect depress graduation rates. Furthermore, increased pressure for students to chart a postsecondary path without additional guidance could lead to more students enrolling in for-profit colleges, taking on substantial student debt often without improved job prospects.

Instead of a new requirement that puts students at risk, CPS should invest in

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developing new and strengthening existing pathways to college and career. That means investing in strategies that evidence shows produce better outcomes for students – like investing in guidance counselors, dual enrollment programs, career and technical education programs and aligning K-12 standards to public college admissions requirements. These changes will help ensure that more students are truly able to succeed....”

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About organizations focusing on employment for young adults

See *Connecting young adults to employment –*
   http://www.aspenwsi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/YAemploy.pdf

Excerpt

“...There are a range of organizations, youth development organizations, public workforce agencies, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and others, who are working hard to provide young adults with the skills and connections needed to succeed in today's labor market. This paper highlights the results of an AspenWSI survey of organizations that *provide services to young adults (ages 18—29) to connect them to employment*.

Close to 400 individuals, representing 340 organizations across the United States, responded to the survey. A little over half of those organizations, 55 percent, are youth development organizations (13 percent) or nonprofit workforce development providers (42 percent). In addition, close to 30 percent of the responses are from Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) (11 percent); one-stop job centers (3 percent); educational institutions, including community colleges (9 percent); and school districts (3 percent). Other responding organizations included government agencies, apprenticeship training programs, ex-offender service providers, foundations, and funder collaboratives....

Given the challenges facing many young adults in navigating both the changing labor market and a range of socio-emotional developmental challenges, service providers need to help their participants on multiple fronts. These include supporting young adults with personal issues, providing soft skills and technical skills training, and assessing the local labor market and individual employers to determine a good fit for employment....

The Importance of Support Services -- Providers were asked to describe which specific service or set of services are especially necessary or helpful in preparing young adults to succeed in the labor market. Overall, providers emphasized the importance of support services. This is especially important given that most of these organizations serve clients who have limited resources. Some of the services most commonly identified as important are case management, a connection to a caring adult, transportation assistance, and assistance with work-related expenses, such as interview and work attire. ...”

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Comments from colleagues in the field

(1) “Working as a school psychologist, I find Learning Centers (sometimes called other names) at local junior colleges to be of great help. They provided assessment, tutoring, assistance with classes, and , in some cases, vocational training. Regional Occupational Programs also offer free or low cost vocational training.

All students with an IEP have a transition plan that is required to address goals and supports for transition. For students with more severe disabilities, that support might be continued through age 22, e.g., in programs at local community colleges or, in some cases, vocational training.

Finally, the employment development department offers some vocational training and assistance to young adults. There are also some additional community centers, such as One Stop, available to assist with job finding and support.
https://www.careeronestop.org/findtraining/types/short-term.aspx

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(2) "In my experience, the supports range from very formal (students with an IEP can receive support through age 21) to very informal.

Some specific examples of which I am familiar:

- We have a program through our special education cooperative called *Project Search* that provides soft-skills training and placement services for students with special needs. It''s housed at our local community college, providing some access to continuing education opportunities when appropriate.

- In our community, all students have access to an area Workforce Center, a federally-funded program that assists in adult training and job placement. They can receive certifications both prior to or after graduation.

- Kansas now requires an *Individual Plan of Study* for all students in grades 7-12. This plan helps students identify an area of career interest (a Pathway) then works to identify supports for achieving those goals. They are intended to be broad and flexible, allowing students to identify a general strength and/or interest and look at all opportunities in that spectrum (for example, a student who is interested in the medical field should be acquainted with requirements ranging from a brain surgeon to a certified nurse's aide and everything in between, depending upon their capacity and means). This helps students realize what is possible and also what is probable, plus identifies supports.

- We also have a *JAG* program (*Jobs for America's Graduates*) that helps students find supports for post-graduation. It is a national program and really has served those in our district who may be at-risk of dropping out and of helping them make community connections.

- We have programs through a partnership between our county schools and the local community college that are called *Early College Academies*, that allow high school students to pursue an area of interest and even obtain certifications in career and technical education fields, up to and including their Associate's Degree. This is a huge benefit and helps even those who are looking for an immediate post-graduation vocation that may be temporary or provide an economically-sound "gap year" opportunity.

- I can't comment on what is available through colleges and universities, but know the focus on post-secondary success has created some partnerships in Kansas between the State Department of Education and the Kansas Regents to help with retention."

(3) "These are very interesting questions that from personal experience inspired me to pursue a masters in higher ed given that the resources from high school to college transition are very limited.

When it comes to high school graduates you do have several options if you are part of a minority group or are low-income. Programs such as Early Academic Outreach Programs (EAOP) and Academic Advancement Program (AAP), provide students with free tutoring, informational workshops, individualized academic planning, among other useful services for students.

Other programs that help with the transition to college are first year programs, such as the Freshman Summer Program (FSP), that focus specifically on helping students slowly get adjusted to the academic rigor by having them take university courses in the summer before the start of their first year. These programs give student the individual academic help that they need and are able to confide in other first year students.

As far as career training for high school students that decide to pursue a vocational career instead of going to college, the opportunities for training are not widespread. From personal experience, I feel like training for these programs are not as promoted as they should be maybe for fear that students may not be as encouraged to go to college. I believe that promoting career training should be taking place at the high school level in order to give students more options for

advancing their education after they graduate.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the transition from high school to college, there are many vulnerable students who either do not apply to college or who end up going to college but not finishing. Now the vulnerability may come from the type of support they received or did not receive in high school. Many of the high schools that are located in low-income communities are not given the adequate resources or guidance they need during the college application process. It can be from not having enough college counselors available, to being the first person in their family to apply to college and feeling overwhelmed by the entire process and not having anyone at home or at school to help them. This may leave some students unmotivated to even attempt the process, while for others it is their motivation to get a college degree.

Therefore, in my opinion the most effective support system for high school students will be to have individualized guidance during junior and senior year that attend to the students need after graduation, whether they are applying for career training, college, or are planning to work. In this way, students are getting first-hand, reliable information from their college counselors and are given an opportunity to ask any questions in a one-to-one setting."

(4) "I know that for youth in foster care, this has been an ongoing problem. There is a program in our state that pays for post-secondary education for youth in foster care, yet hardly any take advantage because they "age-out" of the system and have no support system to help them through. While I worked in state government, we struggled to figure this out — unsuccessfully.

The only programs that appear to have some success (that I've seen) are apprenticeships where youth learn new skills and are paid as they work through the program. They apply their newly learned skills under the supervision of mentors and are paid for their work. These programs are typically run by trades/unions rather than education systems and have a relatively good success rate. Wouldn't it be nice to have similar programs connected to community colleges. Having an income would eliminate some barriers to further education and the staff could build connections with students to help oversee their progress."

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*I*nvitation to Listserv Participants to Share Perspectives

How does your community support youth in connecting with postsecondary education or a career/job training?

What is done for those who have dropped out?

Send your responses to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

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*F*eatured Set of Center Resources on

>Supporting vulnerable students as they transition from adolescence

See: *Interventions to Support Readiness, Recruitment, Access, Transition, and Retention for Postsecondary Education Success* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/postsecondary.pdf

Browse the resources on our Center's Online Clearinghouse Quick Finds:
>*Transition from Adolescence* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/transition_from_adolescence.htm
>*Transition to college* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/transitiontocollege.htm

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If you missed the quarterly ejournal for summer, 2017, you may be interested in the following articles at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/newsletter/summer17.pdf

- *Escaping Old Ideas to More Effectively Address Barriers to Learning and Teaching*
- *Re-engaging Students in Classroom Instruction*
- *Making Motivation a Primary Focus*
- *The Challenge of Ensuring Equity of Opportunity*

AND DOWNLOAD THE CENTER'S NEW (FREE) BOOK

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide

Access this and other free resources from the Center's homepage at
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/

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**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND
INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**
For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.
We post a broad range of issues and responses to the *Net Exchange*
on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm
and on *Facebook* (access from the Center's home page http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/)

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*Information is online about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Also online is the report from the National Summit on the

**Every Student Succeeds Act and
Learning Supports: Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching
to Enhance Equity of Opportunity** –
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/summitreport.pdf

And see the new book:

>*Transforming Student and Learning Supports:
  Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System*
https://titles.cognella.com/transforming-student-and-learning-supports-9781516512782.html