



Preparation for College and Careers

Case Statement: The financial benefits of a college degree are clear. Philadelphians with 1-3 years of college earn a third more than high school graduates over a working lifetime, and four-year degree-holders earn twice as much.¹ Furthermore, college-goers contribute substantially more in tax revenues to support services provided through local, state and federal governments.² But while many high school students express their desire to attend college, too often their aspirations go unfulfilled.³ This need not be the case. Intentionally designed approaches that include rigorous academics, opportunities to apply school learning in real-world contexts and comprehensive approaches to college access can increase the numbers of students who graduate from high school ready for college and careers, and can help them to find the right match for their postsecondary aspirations.

Research-Based Practices that Promote Preparation for and Access to College and Careers:

- **Rigor and Innovation.** Rigorous academic preparation and innovative pedagogy are essential for college success, and are most effective when braided together in an environment in which all students are expected to attend higher education.⁴
- **College-Going Culture.** Common expectations that college is a realistic expectation for every student can have powerful impacts on college-going.⁵
- **Career-Connected Learning.** Career and Technical Education, career academies and other forms of contextual learning have the potential to increase education outcomes - particularly for at-risk youth - and enhance long-term earnings and employment while still preparing young people for postsecondary education.⁶
- **College Knowledge.** Focused support for the college search and application process: e.g. test prep, FAFSA support, exploration, relationship-building and institutional selection – can improve the likelihood that high school students, particularly first-generation college-goers, will be accepted and make good decisions about their postsecondary futures.⁷
- **Secondary-Postsecondary Blends.** Dual enrollment programs have produced a number of benefits, particularly for low-income, lower-achieving students, including increased likelihood of earning a high school diploma; enrollment in college; and statistically significant higher postsecondary GPAs one year after enrollment.⁸

Related Efforts In Philadelphia...

- Organizations like College Access, Philadelphia Futures and White-Williams Fellows help students to prepare for and find the resources to attend higher education.
- Thousands of students are enrolled in seven Career and Technical Schools and High School Academies.
- Student Success Centers provide college readiness activities in seven neighborhood high schools.
- Philadelphia high schools students have access to a variety of opportunities for dual enrollment.

¹ Harrington, Paul E. et al. 2008. *The Lifetime Employment and Earnings Consequences of Dropping Out of High School in Philadelphia*. Boston: Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies.

² Fogg, Neeta P. et. al. 2009. *The Tax and Transfer Fiscal Impacts of Dropping Out of High School in Philadelphia City and Suburbs*. Boston: Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies.

³ Roderick, Melissa et. al. 2008. *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.

⁴ Schneider, Barbara. 2007. *Forming a College-Going Community in U.S. Public High Schools*. Michigan State University, for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Kemple, James and Judith Scott-Clayton, 2004. *Career Academies: Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes and Educational Attainment*. New York: MDRC,

Bailey, Thomas R. and Katherine Hughes. 2004. *Working Knowledge: Work-Based Learning and Education Reform*. New York: Routledge-Falmer, and

Silverberg et. al. 2004. *National Assessment of Vocational Education: Final Report to Congress*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

⁷ Roderick, Melissa et. al. 2008. *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.

⁸ Karp, Melinda Mechur & Katherine T. Hughes. 2008. *Supporting College Transitions Through Collaborative Programming: A Conceptual Model for Guiding Policy*. Teachers College Record Volume 110, Number 4, April 2008, and

Karp, Melinda Mechur, et. al. 2008. *CCRC Issue Brief: Dual Enrollment Students in Florida and New York City: Postsecondary Outcomes*, February 2008. New York: Columbia Teachers College.