

Caucus Council News

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE CAUCUS, BLACK & HISPANIC COUNCILS

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2015

After-school Benefits

By Del Stover

School boards are well aware that children—particularly those living in low-income households—benefit enormously from the safe environment, enriching activities, and supportive and caring mentorship offered by after-school programs.

So what if school boards rallied their communities to expand and improve these programs—not only by focusing on school-based programs but also by building closer ties with off-campus programs sponsored by the parks and recreation department, YMCA, and other community organizations?

The need is there, says the After-school Alliance, one of the nation's foremost advocates for after-school programs. It estimates that as many as 20 million more school-aged children would enroll in such programs if they had access.

School boards can play a role in providing that access, says Jen Rinehart, the Alliance's vice president of policy and research.

"I'm sure that greater partnerships between schools and



community-based organizations could be leveraged to close the gap so more kids have access to quality programs," she says. "I'm 100 percent certain there are resources out there that can be tapped, and I'd love to see superintendents and school boards be active voices in leveraging those partnerships."

So where to begin? According to the research of after-school program advocates, a school board can start with four simple steps:

1. Enlist the support of community leaders

Your school district can take the lead in launching a debate over

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expanding after-school programs, but there’s some research to suggest that—especially if you’re looking to establish a more strategic, community-wide network of high-quality programs—you need strong leadership from the community’s “major players.”

“There is no substitute for the leadership of a committed mayor or county executive, especially in the early stages of getting a system off the ground,” concludes “Growing Together, Learning Together: What Cities Have Discovered About Building Afterschool Systems,” by The Wallace Foundation. As one observer noted in the report, “when the mayor calls a meeting ... everyone shows up.”

Over time, of course, any systemic effort at collaboration will require the buy-in of all stakeholders. As the Wallace report notes, “for an after-school system to thrive long term, all the major players—from city agencies, private funders, and schools to program providers and the families they serve—need to ‘own’ the effort to some degree.”

2. Establish a foundation or advisory committee

Once you’ve gotten community partners on board, you need a mechanism to facilitate communications and collaboration. In school districts with existing successful efforts, local leaders commonly have

established some kind of “coordinating entity” to develop strategic plans, raise funds, recruit partners, assess progress, and keep the lines of communications open.

The structure of this collaboration often will develop out of the circumstances of your community, say after-school advocates. In a small town, for example, it might make sense to ask the parks and recreation department or YMCA to serve as the coordinating entity, if they already are major sponsors of after-school activities in the community.

A larger community likely will require a more substantive organization. In New York City, such oversight is provided by a department specifically devoted to youth services, the Department of Youth and Community Development.

Meanwhile, in Norfolk, Virginia, the school board established the Norfolk Education Foundation to provide such leadership and work with community partners. Its executive director serves, at the same time, as head of the district’s Office of Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships.

3. Align programs with needs.

Does it make sense for a principal to recruit an outside partner to sponsor an after-school STEM program when literacy is the major concern at the school?

This is where data comes into play. Data can help your district identify the needs at each school, guide decisions on establishing new programs, and help assess the quality and effectiveness of both district-run and partner-run programs.

In addition to guiding your district's decisions, data also can be used to persuade community partners to shift or expand resources to where they're needed, says Carlos Clanton, executive director of the Norfolk Education Foundation.

In Norfolk, he says, there is great interest among community providers to focus services at schools serving high-poverty populations. But, while such interest is understandable, "we have schools that don't have those pockets of poverty but still have challenges ... there is a little frustration as we seek a more equitable spread of resources."

Such alignment is not just valuable, at the district planning level, Rinehart says. At the school level, a tutoring program can have a greater impact if school faculty and after-school tutors are communicating about what students are studying each week, as well as what academic concepts and instructional practices are being used in the classroom.

That way, she says, "when they see a kid is struggling in math, the after-school program can pick up from there and help that particular student."

4. Develop a comprehensive approach to quality

Your school district can demand some accountability of the programs operating out of your schools, but a more collaborative, voluntary approach is needed to convince community-based programs to "buy in" to a shared community vision of what makes a high-quality after-school program.

Your education foundation or coordinating entity is the logical place for this conversation to start. According to the Wallace report, a coordinating group in Palm Beach County, Florida, "spent 13 months working with providers, funders, city agencies, social service organizations, and the local state college to review examples of standards across the nation and develop their own."

These conversations should never end. In Norfolk, school officials are looking to form an advisory council to support greater collaboration, and the district regularly sponsors a "summit" of faith-based organizations to discuss standards and coordinate services where they're needed.

This quest for quality should also target volunteers and staff working in after-school programs, says the Wallace report.

"Training and coaching are particularly important because quality improvement isn't possible without skilled afterschool workers," it con-

cludes. "Professional development is one of the areas in which a cooperating entity can be most helpful to providers, whose employees tend to be low-paid part-timers with varying degrees of experience."

The four steps listed align with the recommendations of "Growing Together, Learning Together," which is available at: <http://bit.ly/1Gc5lWi>

Del Stover (dstover@nsba.org) is senior editor of *American School Board Journal*.

Success Without College

By Patte Barth

Ask new high school graduates what their plans are and chances are very good they will say college. Once a sign of privilege, going to college is now seen as almost a rite of passage. And little wonder. By 2020, two-thirds of all jobs will require education beyond high school.

But what about the small proportion of grads who, for whatever reason, say “enough” to school? What does the future hold for them? And what difference, if any, does high school make in their ability to be productive, self-supporting adults?

We recently published a study at the Center for Public Education that examines these questions based on the experiences of the graduating class of 2004. The analysis, “The Path Least Taken II: Preparing non-college-goers for success,” written by Jim Hull, is the second in a series of reports that take a close look at the 12 percent of high school graduates who had not enrolled in college by age 26.

Our first finding was not a big surprise. Like other studies, Hull’s analysis found that a high school diploma alone is not a sure ticket to getting and keeping a good job that pays decent wages. Overall, college-goers are much more likely than non-college goers to work full-time in a job with benefits and far less likely to be unemployed or receive public assistance. But the report also found that a high school preparation with certain characteristics can give a big boost to non-college goers, making them as likely—and in some cases *more* likely—to fare well economically as their college-going peers.

The high school factors that were identified as having an impact are:

- **Algebra II.** For decades, education researchers have found a correlation between this high-school course and college going, college completion, employment, wages, voting, community volunteering, healthy living

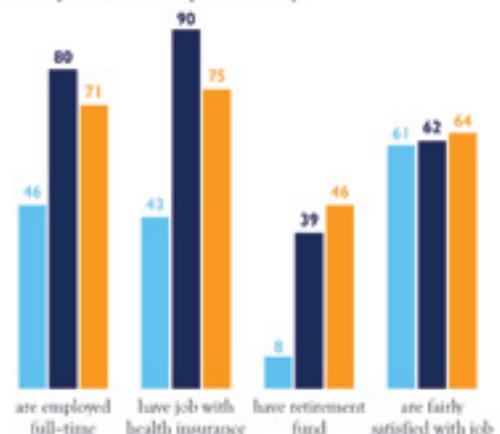
... the list seems infinite. While research has yet to identify a cause and effect, evidence continues to mount that high-level mathematics in high school is a powerful predictor of success in work and life. And its impact extends to adults without college. High-level science also made a big difference in predicting outcomes for non-college goers.

- **An occupational concentration.** This is defined as three or more vocational courses in a specific labor market area. Interestingly, taking unrelated vocational courses had little or no effect.
- **Above average GPA.** The successful non-college goers tended to have earned a grade point average of at least a C+ while in high school.

Credentials matter for non-college goers

Non-college goers with “high credentials” – that is, a strong high school preparation plus professional certification—were more likely to be employed and have health insurance than college goers, although they were less likely to have a retirement fund.

Percent of 26-year-olds who report that they



- **Professional certification or license.** Earning a professional certificate or license showed its influence more often than any other factor.

While each of these factors typically has a positive effect, their greatest power is in combination. At age 26, non-college-goers with the full suite of above credentials earned about \$8.50 more per hour than non-college-goers who completed high school with none of them. What's more, the high-credentialed non-college-goer earned \$3 more per hour than his or her college-going classmates. That translates to about \$6,000 more per year for a full-time job.

The benefits continue. High-credentialed non-college-goers were more likely than college goers to work full-time (80 percent to 70 percent) and to have a job with medical insurance (90 percent to 75 percent). On the flip side, however, graduates who earned few of these credentials in high school faced the dimmest prospects

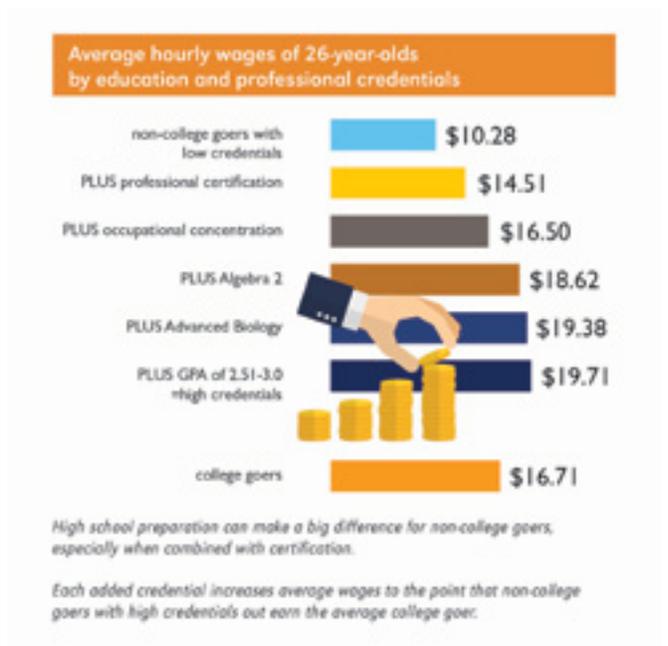
as adults. Fewer than half of them worked full-time at age 26. About a third of them had been unemployed for more than six months. They were the most likely to receive public assistance.

Our analysis offers more proof that the academic preparation that leads to success in college serves double duty for success in the workplace. For this reason, school districts need to make sure all high school students complete high-level math courses—at least through Algebra II or its equivalent—and high-level science. They should further provide opportunities for students to complete a vocational program that leads to professional certification.

Giving students the support they need to be successful is essential. All students need to be well-informed about the range of after-high school options, including college, jobs, and financial aid. It also means helping them develop personal plans as early as middle school and monitoring their progress towards meeting it.

Equipping all graduates with these tools, we believe, benefits everyone—non-college-goers and college goers alike. After all, we expect all of them to be working eventually.

Patte Barth (pbarth@nsba.org) is the director of NSBA's Center for Public Education. The report, "Path Least Taken II: Preparing non-college-goers for success," can be found at www.centerforpubliceducation.org.



Reports of Note

What's trending in education

Changing How High Schools Serve Black and Latino Young Men: A Report on NYC's Expanded Success Initiative

This Research Alliance for New York City Schools' report covers findings from their evaluation of the NYC Department of Education's Expanded Success Initiative: a program that aims to improve college and career readiness among Black and Latino male students. Through funding and professional development, participating NYC high schools have been able to expand or develop programming to strengthen academics, support youth development, and create a college and career-focused school culture. While too early to determine whether it is yielding positive effects on indicators of college readiness and success—it is only two years into the four-year initiative—the Research Alliance found that participating schools have made notable changes and will continue to track progress.
<http://bit.ly/1Gc5lWi>

The Path Least Taken: A Quest to Learn More About High School Graduates Who Don't Go on to College

In this report, NSBA's Center for Public Education (CPE) shifts the discussion about college and career readiness from graduates who go to college after high school toward a much smaller than previously thought group—the non-college-goers. CPE found that only 21 percent of high school graduates don't go to a two- or four- year college by age 20 and by age 26 that percentage reduces to 12. While it's important for public schools to prepare all students to be life-long learners, regardless of whether or not they go on to college, CPE found that on average, non-college enrollees took fewer and less rigorous academic courses than their college-going peers.
<http://bit.ly/1CBzn6K>

The Path Least Taken II: Preparing Non-college Goers for Success

This second study of a series by Center for Public Education (CPE) looks at the credentials and high school experiences of non-college-going graduates to identify factors that lead to success after school in both work and life. CPE found that high school graduates who don't attend college are more successful later on if they've taken high-level math courses and focused vocational training in high school—reinforcing the essential role of high school preparation in students' success regardless of the paths they chose after graduation.
<http://bit.ly/1F9lRwB>

Please Note:

The Fall 2015 edition of *Caucus Council News* is the last issue that will be sent to subscribers. Starting in November, all members of the American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus, and Black & Hispanic Councils will receive NSBA's *American School Board Journal (ASBJ)* magazine delivered electronically. *ASBJ* is produced six times per year and will include articles, reports, resources, and much more that is both timely and relevant to our valued Caucus and Council members.