



Reconnecting Our Youth

A Scan of Policy Opportunities to Improve Economic Success for Vulnerable Youth

Prepared by Linda Harris, CLASP Director of Youth Policy

For the Annie E. Casey Foundation

March 31, 2012

Reconnecting Our Youth: A Scan of Policy Opportunities to Improve Economic Success for Vulnerable Youth

Context

In March 2012, Grad Nation campaignⁱ released its report on the progress of the nation's public schools in improving graduation rates and movement toward achieving the goal of a 4-year cohort graduation rate of 90 percent by 2020. It revealed that from 2001 to 2009, the graduation rate increased from 72 percent to 75 percent, an average of less than .5 percentage points a year. During that same period of time, nearly a half million young people dropped out of school annually. High school reform and graduation accountability efforts are critical to stemming the disconnection of youth from our public education system. However, until these innovations and reforms are imbedded at scale in our districts, we must pay commensurate attention to the needs of the millions of youth who are dropping out and falling outside of the education and labor market mainstreams.

Many researchers, advocates, and policy leaders worked aggressively over the past decade to bring to light the magnitude of the dropout situation, especially in high poverty districts and communities of color. In many of these communities, fewer than half of the students starting ninth grade graduate four years later, if at all. When more students fall outside of the education mainstream than graduate prepared for postsecondary and labor market success, it presents a multifaceted challenge for communities:

1. Insufficient skills and talents to fuel the regional economy,
2. drain on the tax base and increase in outlays for public assistance and public safety,
3. negative impact on the quality of community life associated with increased risk behaviors, exposure to trauma, crime, violence, and underground economy, and
4. the curtailing of the opportunity for youth to achieve adult economic success and contribute to the healthy social fabric of the community.

This scan was conducted and submitted to the Annie E. Casey Foundation to provide perspective on the policy and strategic leadership opportunities at the federal, state, and local level that can enhance education and economic success of vulnerable youth.

In this paper:

Context

Policy and Strategic Opportunities

Leveraging High School Reform

Building Community Capacity

Legislative Reauthorizations

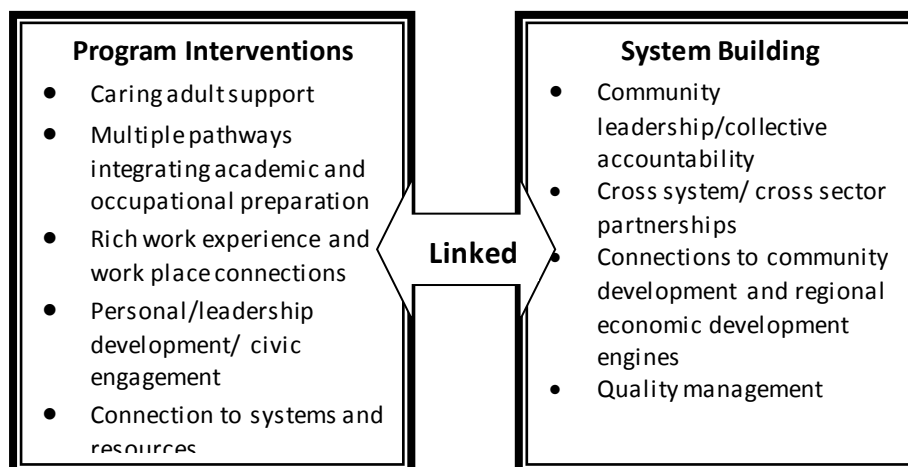
Career Pathways Movement

Engaging Youth Voice

In 2008, the Campaign for Youth, a coalition of national youth policy and advocacy organizations, called for a national investment strategyⁱⁱ for disconnected youth. The Campaign noted that current school reform efforts, while much needed and long overdue, will most likely not touch this group of youth. They are no longer on the school rolls; many are over age for traditional school settings, usually very behind in terms of academic skills and credits, and in need of much greater support. Addressing the needs of this “disconnected” youth population requires a different kind of reform. It requires that public youth serving systems engage with education, business & industry, and the community to structure programs and pathways that support the transition of these young people from the streets to the classrooms. Working together, these systems can create connections to hands-on learning, to college campuses, to leadership opportunities, to apprenticeships and internships, and ultimately to opportunities in the workplace that lead to economic success and lifelong civic engagement.

In structuring solutions, it is important to recognize that this population of youth who drop out, or are on the verge of dropping out, of school is not homogeneous. Their reasons for dropping out include academic failure, family crisis, teen parenting, boredom, incarceration, mental health, transiency, and safety concerns. Most of these situations are exacerbated the longer they are disconnected from education, training, work, and other supports. While young offenders, youth in foster care, and runaway and homeless youth are certainly included in this group, these circumstances do not define the majority of the disconnected youth population. Although literacy and numeracy skills are an issue with a considerable subset of the population, the academic abilities span a continuum requiring multiple approaches to remediation. While beset with multiple challenges, most youth practitioners would assert that this population also present amazing resilience, keen coping skills in light of exposure to trauma, an abundance of talent, and aspirations for a better future.

Drawing from decades of demonstration projects and research on their effectiveness, there is a body of knowledge on the key components of effective practice that lead to transformative results for this population.ⁱⁱⁱ Those elements are:



A delivery system is necessary because, given the scale and dimensions of the dropout challenge in so many of our high poverty districts, the solutions are beyond a single program model or target population. It is far easier to develop a single program model or concentrate on a single population or adhere to the demands of a singular funding stream. These types of disparate activities have defined the field of service delivery for disconnected youth for years without measurable impact. What's needed are more systemic, coordinated, comprehensive interventions at the community level to create options for the diverse group of youth that need to be reconnected to the education and labor market mainstreams.

The questions to be considered are 1) Can an agenda be moved nationally and in communities with low graduation rates that will yield significant, sustainable improvements in the education and labor market outcomes for vulnerable, disconnected youth, and 2) Are there opportunities that be leveraged to move this agenda to greater prominence in federal, state, and local policymaking and programming?

The situation of disconnected and vulnerable youth has commanded increased attention in recent years at the national level and in many local areas around the country. There are opportunities to move this agenda, even in the current environment of budget cutting and fiscal constraint. To achieve the momentum and scale needed to make an appreciable impact on the landscape of services and outcomes for these youth, the following is required:

1. Making the issue of reengaging disconnected youth visible and urgent by increased awareness that our national and regional competitiveness and quality of community life is inextricable tied to the success or failure of these youth to thrive economically
2. In light of demographic shifts and historical disparities, advocating for increased investment to dramatically improve the academic and occupational skills of minority youth
3. Engaging the support of leadership across all systems and sectors and at all levels of government – community and faith leaders, governors, mayors and county officials, police commissioners and prosecutors, judges and justice officials, public health officials, school superintendents, education leaders, researchers and policy makers, legislators, foundations, employers, parents, and, youth – in aggressive advocacy for approaches and investments that put vulnerable youth back on pathways to education, training, and employment,
4. Finding ways at the state and local levels for youth serving systems to move beyond existing paradigms and cultural norms to work collaboratively to create the community infrastructure to put these vulnerable disconnected youth on paths that lead to postsecondary labor market success, and
5. Setting national, state, and local goals related to recovery and re-engagement of youth and metrics to chart progress in achieving those goals.

Policy Opportunities

With the above context in mind, there are 5 areas of policy where foundation support may be beneficial in leveraging greater opportunity for vulnerable, out-of- school youth.

They are briefly described below.

1) **High School Reform – Putting Dropout Recovery on the Reform Agenda**

-Working with community leaders and state and local education official to expand dropout recovery options-

Addressing the educational programming for this population is extremely challenging. There is no significant funding stream dedicated to serving the educational needs of youth once they have dropped out of school. There is substantial energy and action at the federal, state, and district level around high school reform and dropout recovery must be an integral part of high school reform initiatives. Finding ways to tap the mainstream educational funding of the k-12 and higher education systems is essential to implementing education interventions at some scale for dropouts who want to be reconnected to education. The policy levers to be considered include:

- **Extended Graduation Rates** to remove the disincentives for dropout recovery in the education accountability structure

The use of a cohort calculation method to calculate high school graduation rates brought to light the astonishingly low national graduation rates for students entering 9th grade. This method, which requires schools to account for each student that began the 9th grade, exposed the many schools that were dropout factories and documented the tremendous disparity in graduation rates between white and minority youth. This catalyzed the high school reform movement across the country. In 2005, the nation's governors entered into an agreement to use a common cohort graduation rate to track the number of entering 9th grade students that receive a high school diploma four years later. Forty five states currently use this common methodology for calculating graduation rates and 22 states are also reporting using extended five or six year graduation rates.^{iv} In 2008, the US Department of Education passed regulations requiring states to implement the cohort graduation rate, with an option to also use an extended-year graduation rate to account for students who take longer than four years to graduate. The use of extended graduation rates in the accountability system is important because it recognizes that many struggling students and those who are re-engaged through dropout recovery efforts may need more time to achieve their high school diploma. The extended cohort graduation rates provide incentives for schools and districts to collaborate with community partners to implement dropout recovery efforts with wrap-around supports that can dramatically improve the educational outcomes for the cohort. At the state and district level, there has been an expansion of options to reconnect struggling off track and out-of- school youth including flexible programming, competency-based award of credit,

accelerated learning options, and programs that provide dual enrollment in secondary and postsecondary offerings. Examples are included in the attachment to this scan. We need to greatly expand these options, but need the education funding to do so.

- **Flexible use of state per pupil education funds** to follow students to well-designed supported community-based or alternative environments.

Public education dollars following students to the most appropriate alternative educational environment is not a new concept. Some states like Oregon, Washington, and districts like New York’s transfer schools, Philadelphia’s multiple pathways, and Chicago’s alternative schools network have had mechanisms in place for some time to allow this flow of funding. For the most part, there are not statutory limitations to doing this. Rather, the complexities associated with accessing the education funds, assuring integrity of the education intervention, tracking students, and accountability for meeting graduation requirements make it less likely that states or district will engage at scale in allowing this transfer of funds.

Nonetheless, there has been considerable expansion in programs that through state and/or district level negotiations have been able to access these educational funding streams to blend with other resources to provide supportive educational environments for youth who have dropped out of school. The National Youth Employment Coalition in their brief, “State and Local Policy for Reconnecting Youth,”^v identified the actions taken in several states to advance this agenda, including:

- Colorado, Mississippi, and Massachusetts established state offices or commissions to address the issue of dropout prevention and re-engagement,
- Washington State passed legislation that expanded learning opportunities for students who were off track for graduation, and
- Illinois legislature created Hope and Opportunity Pathways through education to re-enroll significant numbers of out-of-school youth in options leading to high school diploma.

Finding ways to enhance access to public dollars to support an expansion of this menu of options, and also assure the rigor and quality of the education intervention is important to expanding opportunities to reconnect youth. Examples of successful funding relationships are included on the attachment to this scan.

- **Prioritizing Dropout Recovery** in the federal innovation and discretionary funding pots directed at supporting vulnerable youth.

Attention has been elevated within the Department of Education on the situation of disconnected youth. An internal workgroup has formed within its policy office to focus on this population. A federal interagency group has also formed to be more strategic across



agencies in their efforts related to disconnected youth. Among other things, the group will focus on the Performance Partnership Pilots included in the President's 2013 budget request that will be directed at a limited number of partnerships that will be given flexibility to blend funds across federal funding streams in exchange for better performance results for disconnected youth.

This activity is very encouraging and underscores the importance of nurturing and strengthening the local collaborations. In 2010, when US DOE released its High School Graduation Initiative request for proposals it required that all respondents include dropout recovery as part of proposed interventions. The responses that the department received in this regard were not particularly robust and did not incorporate the best of what is known in the field of youth development. This is an area of opportunity – enhancing the quality of responses to discretionary funding opportunities by marrying what is known from best practice from the youth field with the innovations in education delivery.

2) Building Community Capacity – Strengthening Cross-System/Cross-Sector Approaches

-Investments at the local level to strengthen the integration of service across education, workforce, justice, foster care, mental health systems to build a rational youth delivery system-

The Campaign for Youth's document, "Our Youth, Our Economy, Our Future – a National Investment Strategy to Reconnect America's Youth," called for support for community efforts to build a robust youth service delivery infrastructure that involves all systems and sectors and incentives and supports to communities to integrate new and existing services and funding streams in support of youth programming.

The idea of building community capacity to work at scale to address the youth crisis in high poverty communities is not new. Substantial federal investments were made in demonstrations in the late 1990s on community saturation models and the Youth Opportunity (YO) Grant Program in 2000.^{vi} The requirement of these demonstrations was to blend resources and supports in a confined geographic area to maximize the number of youth served and the comprehensiveness of interventions. Quite a bit was learned from those demonstrations. The Youth Opportunity evaluation research found:

- Education Outcomes: YO grants reduced the number of out-of-school and out of work youth; increased Pell receipt in urban sites; reduced dropouts and increased postsecondary enrollment for foreign-born youth; reduced percentage of youth not in school.

- Labor Market Outcomes: YO increased labor force participation rate; increased employment rate among black teens, out-of-school youth; and had a positive effect on hourly wages of young women and teens, and
- Community Outcomes: YO successfully recruited and enrolled large numbers, suggesting that a saturation approach to serving youth can work; provided safe space, quality youth/adult relationships; reduced crime and gang activity; had a major impact on youth serving agencies by demonstrating models for holistic programs and combined services.

During the past two years, there has been resurgence in advocacy and support for investing in community collaborations as the best vehicle for addressing the diverse needs of the vulnerable youth population. While the political landscape suggests the little potential for movement on any new federal initiatives or funding in this arena, there is growing consensus that future initiatives must call for community-based partnerships. This has been reflected in several efforts nationally:

- The White House Council for Community Solutions identified disconnected youth as their primary agenda for focus. In February 2012, the White House hosted a summit at which President Obama called this an “all hands on deck” moment to galvanize corporate, government, community alignment of resources and supports to put youth to work. The Council featured two important reports – *The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth*^{vii} and *Opportunity Road: the Promise and Challenge of America’s Forgotten Youth*^{viii} - which highlight the dimension of the youth challenge and advances recommendation for community level investments.
- The RAISE UP Act,^{ix} which calls for targeted grants to community collaborations to create pathways for out-of-school youth, was introduced in both the house and senate. Much of the provisions in this bill were incorporated in the Senate WIA reauthorization discussion draft which provides for a youth innovation fund.
- The Youth Promise Act which has been introduced in Congress also calls for leadership to come together across systems and sectors to apply for funding to implement holistic interventions for youth connected to the justice system or at risk of such involvement.
- Much of the work of the national youth policy and advocacy organizations in the past several years has focused on capacity building in local communities, identifying effective practice in regard to blending and braiding funding streams and services, and identifying the policy and legislative enhancements to support the work. Some of the organizations and their work are noted on the resource list accompanying this scan.
- The Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth (CCRY) network formed as the Youth Opportunity Grant funding was ending in their communities. The communities formed a network to preserve the learning and expertise that had been assembled over the decade and to serve as a learning exchange on best practice in serving high risk youth. Network members include Baltimore, Boston, Los Angeles, Houston, San Diego, Seattle,

Portland, Washington, D.C., Hartford, Rural Arkansas, Brockton, Kansas City, Tucson, Philadelphia, and Molokai, Hawaii. Across these communities are impressive examples of recovery strategies, community partnerships, postsecondary connections, and policy leadership on behalf of disconnected youth. Some of these efforts are summarized in the attachment to this scan.

3) Legislative Reauthorizations - an Opportunity to Raise Priority for Out-of-School Youth
-Supporting advocacy at the national and state levels to maximize the legislative opportunities and to prepare the field for implementation-

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and the Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTE) are all up for reauthorization and considerable activity has been invested in advocating for provisions in each of these pieces of legislation to enhance outcomes for disadvantaged youth. The chance of movement on any of these reauthorizations before the 2012 election is quite small given that the two parties in Congress have very different stances related to investment in workforce and other domestic programs. However, as these three pieces of legislation move through Congress for eventual reauthorization there is tremendous potential to align the provisions of each of these pieces of legislation to support more strategic blending of k-12, career-tech, WIA, and adult education funding to support the kind of interventions that will be needed. It is well worth continuing the advocacy and preparing the field to take advantage of the opportunities on the federal, state, and local levels that can be leveraged in the legislative, regulatory, and implementation processes as reauthorization moves forward. The opportunities that exist across these three federal funding streams include:

- The opportunity to require collaborative planning in the design and implementation of dropout recovery and education and training pathways. This could require that the State WIA Integrated Plan be explicit about how these systems and funding streams will support this population; that local WIA Workforce Investment Boards (WIB's), Youth Councils, or other designated entity provide strategic guidance to the blending of funds and design of a local youth delivery system; that local education agencies be required to establish "horizontal alignment" with other youth serving systems to address the education and support need of high risk populations.
- The opportunity to align data systems in ways that allow tracking and measurement of students' movement through various entry and exit points, dropout, reenrollment, completion of high school diploma or recognized equivalent, postsecondary enrollment, remedial coursework in postsecondary settings, and postsecondary completion.
- The opportunity to build incentives and measures into the accountability systems that encourages the outreach and inclusion of more difficult youth populations and

- recognizes the long-term nature of engagement that will be necessary to deliver them to secondary, postsecondary, and labor market credentials. This includes extended graduation rates, and interim benchmarks in WIA performance measures.
- The opportunity to be explicit and intentional on the targeting of funding to support recovery and reattachment of dropouts to supported educational pathways. The bipartisan WIA senate draft and the House democratic WIA bill both increase the targeted expenditure for out-of-school youth from thirty percent to sixty percent. It is worth advancing the recommendation that in areas of high poverty, dropouts, offenders, and those in foster care under the age of 21 should have automatic eligibility for participation in career pathways funded by these multiple funding streams.
 - The opportunity to use workforce, career-technical, and higher education resources more creatively to prepare this low-skilled youth population to access higher wage jobs and careers in growing sectors of the regional economies.

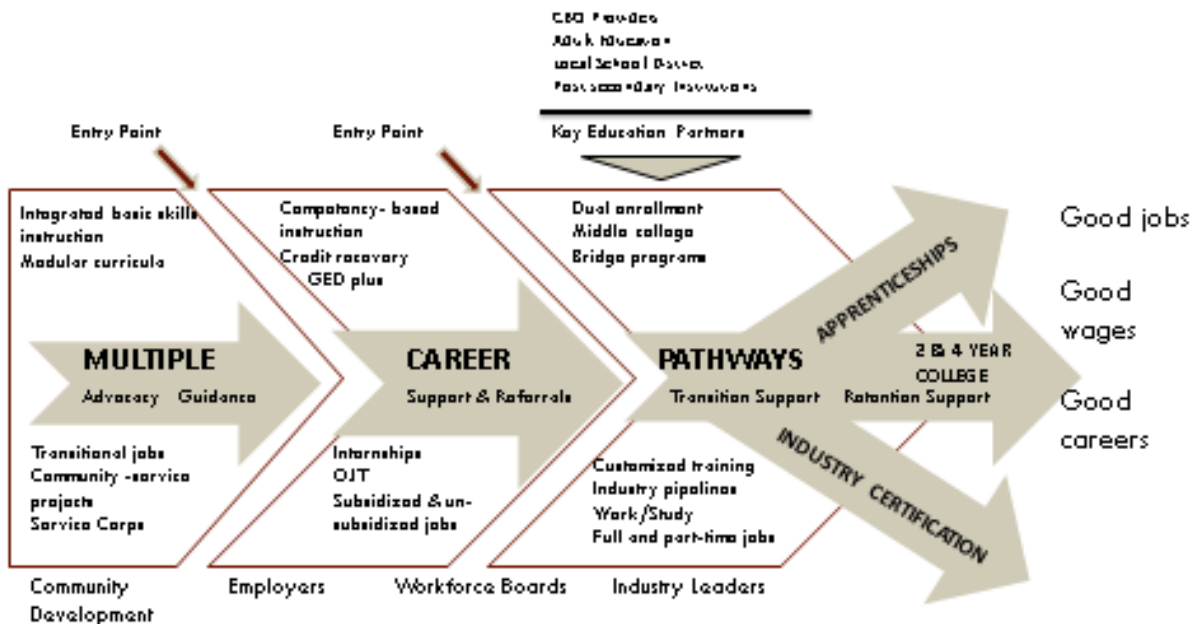
It should be noted that most of the opportunities mentioned above could be accomplished within current statute with enlightened leadership and focused advocacy. But given the workforce needs of the older, more skilled unemployed population, it is often difficult to get priority focused on higher risk youth.

- 4) **Career Pathways/ College Access and Completion Movement** - Harnessing the Momentum of the College and Career Pathways Movement to Connect Vulnerable Youth
- *Investing in innovations that directly target getting dropouts on pathways to postsecondary credentials-*

In 2011, 27 percent of those unemployed were under the age of 25. The slow job recovery has had a devastating impact on youth employment prospects. Those without a high school diploma and youth in other risk categories will not be able to rise above the low wage labor market. It is widely accepted that sustained labor market and economic success will require some level of postsecondary education and credential. There is clearly a movement to make postsecondary preparedness and college access and completion priority in our education and workforce interventions. This has been reflected in administration priorities, legislative initiatives, and in many foundation funding priorities. The Department of Labor is administering the \$2 billion Community College and Career Training Grant program; the President requested \$12.5 billion for his Pathways Back to Work Act in the 2013 budget; the Rebuild America Act introduced recently in the senate includes funding to build and improve career pathways; the senate WIA reauthorization discussion draft and the WIA reauthorization bill introduced by the House minority both establish competitive grant programs to build and strengthen career pathways.

Career pathways are not a separate program in itself. Rather, it is a framework that weaves together existing adult education, training, and college programs into a pathway that streamlines the path to postsecondary education and credentials. There is a considerable body of work on career pathways. CLASP developed a career pathways policy tool kit for states.^x On the ground, there are encouraging approaches that are being successfully deployed in youth recovery and adult education programs that integrate academic and occupational preparation and bridge the transition to postsecondary education and training. Examples are included in the attachment to this scan. The key to career pathways in communities is the purposeful alignment of education and training interventions to assure that they create a path to credentials with value in the labor market.

The Goal: Connections to Multiple Pathways



From: Building Postsecondary Pathways for Young Men of Color for Low Income Young Men of Color www.clasp.org

5) Youth Engagement/Youth Voice – Youth as the most powerful advocacy tool

- *This should be a priority area for investment – not one model, but reinforcing that youth voice should be infused in all aspects of youth service work -*

Whenever youth present their story or make the case in a public forum for more investment, their presence is powerful. There are thousands of young people engaged in civic and leadership activities in youth programs across the country. How do we best make them ambassadors? This question was posed to several local youth practitioners and, while there was no good answer on how to collectively harness the youth voice, many successful approaches were identified as summarized below.

Youth Councils

Formal youth councils are used in several states and local areas as the vehicle to advise decision-makers and elected officials. The Forum for Youth Investment, in collaboration with the National League of Cities and the National Conference of State Legislators, published “Building Effective Youth Councils - A Practical Guide to Engaging Youth in Policy Making.”^{xi} In the guide, they identified six keys for successful youth council development related to membership infrastructure, work environment, building youth capacity, deepening youth motivation, and negotiating access to policy makers and youth constituents. States with formal youth councils include: Arizona, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Washington.

Several programs reported having Youth Advisory Councils that played a more specific role in assuring that youth had a voice in the design and implementation of the programs and services. That role included such things as participation in facility design, program development, outreach and recruitment, interviewing program staff, and planning and implementing service learning projects. This type of youth engagement should be a requirement for all youth program delivery.

Student Researchers and Organizers

There are several examples of approaches which engage youth in research, analysis, documentation, messaging, and preparing them to engage in activism. This is an exciting approach to enhancing youth voice that helps youth develop skills in so many domains – leadership, communications, writing, public speaking, civics, and analytical thinking. At the same time, their engagement in participatory research allows them to play an active role in policy making and program design. The following are examples of this approach:

Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (V.O.Y.C.E)



VOYCE is a youth organizing collaborative whose mission is to advance education justice through youth-led policy reforms that increase the graduation rates and college readiness of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students. All of VOYCE's work is driven by the belief that the people most directly affected by the problem must be the ones to develop meaningful, long-lasting solutions. VOYCE uses youth-driven research and organizing to advance district-level policies that support student achievement. In a recent effort, the youth partnered with researchers, conducted site visits to 13 communities around the country and analyzed over 1000 surveys to release a report on "Failed Policies - Lost Futures: The True Cost of Zero Tolerance in Chicago."^{xii} They met with public officials to share their recommendations and findings and are actively engaged in school reform and other efforts related to school climate. This is a link to the video that tells their story: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L25zCvH5y10>.

Boston Youth Violence Prevention Summer Jobs Participatory Research Project

Boston provided internships to high risk youth to serve as research assistants on a research project to document the impact of a summer jobs program in an area of high crime and violence. Trained by a researcher at Northeastern University, the youth conducted very extensive pre- and post-surveys of summer jobs participants asking questions to document changes in attitude, lifestyle, risk behavior. They participated in the research focus groups as peer leaders, did data entry and participated in the analysis. The findings were positive and they got the opportunity to design presentations and present to funders and city officials who were very impressed with their command of the material, their poise, and their communications skills. They were employed by Northeastern University, with all the access to university facilities. These youth were transformed from high risk of dropping out to University research assistants. Undoubtedly, this exposure to the college environment, to professional responsibilities associated with research, and to the leadership role will dramatically alter their horizons.

Forward Ever Media (Game Changers Project)

Forward Ever Media's Game Changers Project, is designed to nurture the next generation of community reporters and filmmakers, who will then capture and share the stories of black men and boys. The Game Changers fellows regularly film, edit, and produce 3-minute mini-documentaries about black men and boys in America who are "changing the game" by addressing critical issues such as education, mentoring and youth employment. Forward Ever Media produced the video "In Their Own Words- The Real Experiences of Young, Disconnected Males of Color."^{xiii}

Riverside County Voices for Youth

This is a volunteer effort. Youth meet on Saturdays and are first engaged in learning how to understand the local, state, and national political process. They are guided through a carefully constructed curriculum to hone their skills. They research who the politicians are and how the various bodies of government work. The youth then craft and deliver their message. This format provides leadership opportunities for youth, empowers them to create their own message and take action, prepares them for adult civic engagement, and provides an



opportunity for politicians to hear from youth as a constituency group. The group started with 26 youth and has grown to 40.

In summary, there is sufficient opportunity to move a robust agenda on behalf of vulnerable, disconnected youth. There is a substantial knowledge base to build on in terms of interventions that hold promise and that have demonstrated effectiveness. What is most needed is aggressive advocacy, public will, entrepreneurial leadership, and support to the innovators at the state and on the ground as they manage the complexities of cross system programming, and resources.

ⁱ Barnett,R., Bridgeland,J., Bruce, M., Building a Grad Nation, Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic, Civic Enterprise, March 2012, <http://www.americaspromise.org/our-work/grad-nation/~media/Files/Our%20Work/Grad%20Nation/Building%20a%20Grad%20Nation/BuildingAGradNation2012.ashx>

ⁱⁱ Our Youth, Our Economy, Our Future: a National Investment Strategy for Reconnecting America's Youth, Campaign for Youth, 2008, <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/0437.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Harris,L., Hastings,S., and Tsoi-A-Fatt, R. Building a Comprehensive Youth Employment Delivery System: Examples of Effective Practice, CLASP, February 2010, available at www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/Youth-Employment-Systems.pdf

^{iv} American Youth Policy Forum, Gateway to College Network, and National Youth Employment coalition, **Making Every Diploma Count – Using Extended Graduation Rates to Measure Student Success**, August 2011, <http://www.aypf.org/projects/briefs/makeeverydiplomacount.pdf>

^v Wheeler, C. and Martin, N., State and Local Policy for Reconnecting Youth, National Youth Employment Coalition, February 2011, http://www.nyec.org/content/documents/1-POLICY_brief_final.pdf

^{vi} Harris, L., Learning from the Youth Opportunity Experience: Building Delivery Capacity in Distressed Communities, Center for Law and Social Policy, [out](#)

^{vii} The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth,

^{viii} Opportunity Road: the Promise and Challenge of America's Forgotten Youth,

^{ix} Stabenow, Kildee: Legislation Will Provide Educational Support to Youth Who Have Dropped Out of High School, summary of the RAISE UP act, http://www.stabenow.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=370

^x Funding Career Pathways and Career Pathway Bridges: A Federal Policy Tool Kit for States, Center for Law and Social Policy, October 2010, <http://www.clasp.org/postsecondary/pages?id=0003>

^{xi} Shanetta Martin, Karen Pittman, Thaddeus Ferber, Ada McMahon, Building Effective Youth Councils - A Practical Guide to Engaging Youth in Policy Making, Forum for Youth Investment, July 2007, <http://www.forumfyi.org/files/Building%20Effective%20Youth%20Final.pdf>

^{xii} Failed Policies - Lost Futures: The True Cost of Zero Tolerance in Chicago, Voices Of Youth in Chicago Education, July 2011, <http://library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1104628315334-14/VOYCE+report+2011.pdf>

^{xiii} In Their Own Words – The real experience of young disconnected males of color, video produced by Forward Ever Media and CLASP, 2010, <http://ccrynetwork.articulatedman.com/reports/ccry?id=0013>