

# What Research Says About College Access Work

## Clear Expectations

A school culture where the entire faculty ensure all students are prepared, support students in completing college applications, and push students to go to college is the single most consistent predictor of postsecondary enrollment.

*Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Coca, V., Meller, E., Roddie, K., Gilliam, J., & Patton, D. (2008). From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.*

## Information and Resources

It is key that adolescents become active agents in their own postsecondary futures.

*Bouffard, S., & Savitz-Romer, M. (2012). Ready, Willing, and Able: A Developmental Approach to College Access and Success. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.*

Focus groups conducted as a part of Tennessee's current GEAR UP grant determined that students and families understand the intrinsic value of a degree but lack the knowledge and resources to turn postsecondary aspiration into reality.

One research study has shown that helping students select institutions, apply for admission, and complete a financial aid application increased college enrollment by 5.2%.

*Oreopoulos, P., & Ford, R. (2016). Keeping college options open: A field experiment to help all high school seniors throughout the college application process. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.*

A separate study indicated that students who receive information and assistance in completing the FAFSA are 8.1 percentage points more likely to enroll in college.

*Bettinger, E., Long, B., Oreopoulos, P., & Sanbonmatsu, L. (2012). The role of application assistance and information in college decisions: Results from the H&R Block FAFSA experiment. Quarterly Journal of Economics, 127(3), 1205 - 1242.*

## College Connections

Creating strong links between career goals and degree requirements is key to postsecondary success. In fact, students making this connection are six times more likely to attain a degree.

*Bedsworth, W., Colby, S., & Doctor, J. (2006). Reclaiming the American Dream. Boston, MA: Bridgespan Group.*

## College Access Research Continued

### Faculty Involvement

Many students report discussions about postsecondary options begin during their junior and senior years of high school (TDOE, 2017). By this time, students have already made choices that may limit their postsecondary options. Schools that effectively counsel students into postsecondary take proactive steps to ensure students are thinking about their postsecondary and career options as early as possible.

*Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Seamless Pathways: Bridging Tennessee's Gap Between High School and Postsecondary. Nashville: TDOE.*

### Family & Community Involvement

One study demonstrates that 88% of students share their parents' beliefs regarding acceptable careers and the appropriate preparation needed for those professions. Valuing and enhancing the role families play in the college-going process is a key strategy.

*Otto, L. (2000). Youth Perspectives on Parental Career Influence. Journal of Career Development, 27(2), 111.*

To best leverage the influence parents have on students' decision-making, Bouffard and Savitz-Romer suggest practitioners engage families in college planning events, implement services that allow active collaboration between students and their families, and commit to ongoing, accessible communication with families.

*Bouffard, S., & Savitz-Romer, M. (2012). Ready, Willing, and Able: A Developmental Approach to College Access and Success. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.*

### College Talk

Student relationships – both one-on-one and larger peer networks – have a significant impact on student decision-making, including decisions related to postsecondary planning.

*Bouffard, S., & Savitz-Romer, M. (2012). Ready, Willing, and Able: A Developmental Approach to College Access and Success. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.*

Research has determined that students who are surrounded by peers who are going to college are four times more likely to enroll than youth with no friends going to college.

*Choy, S., Hom, L., Nunez, A., & Chen, X. (2000). Transition to College: What Helps At-Risk Students and Students Whose Parents Did Not Attend College.*

*A. Cabrera, & S. La Nasa (Eds.), Understanding the College Choice of Dis-advantaged Students (pp. 45 - 63). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.*

# College Access Research Continued

## Curriculum

Academic preparation is the most effective means of increasing student postsecondary readiness, matriculation, and completion.

*Bedsworth, W., Colby, S., & Doctor, J. (2006). Reclaiming the American Dream. Boston, MA: Bridgespan Group.*

A rigorous high school curriculum has greater impact on postsecondary degree completion than any other pre-college indicator of academic preparation, regardless of socioeconomic status or race.

*Adelman, C. (1999). Answers in the tool box: Academic intensity, attendance patterns, and bachelor's degree attainment. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.*

## Articulation

Academic preparation and aspirations are not enough if schools do not have organizational norms and structures in place to effectively guide students through the postsecondary-going process.

*Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Coca, V., Meller, E., Roddie, K., Gilliam, J., & Patton, D. (2008). From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.*