

Everyone Graduates Center
Johns Hopkins University School of Education

 **PATHWAYS to
ADULT SUCCESS**

PANDEMIC INNOVATIONS

A showcase of the innovative work the members
of the Pathways to Adult Success community
performed in unprecedented times

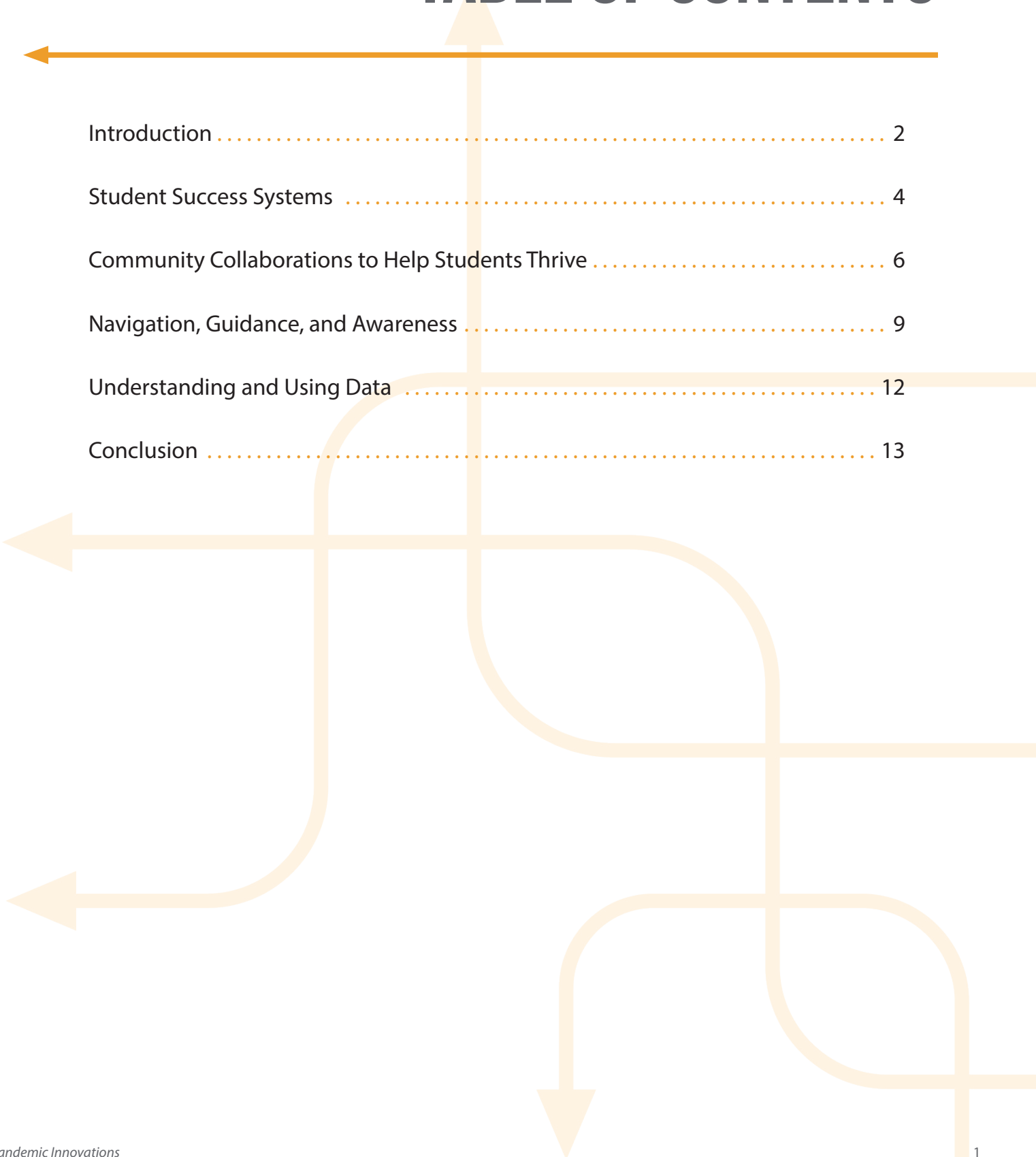
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INTRODUCTION

SILVER LININGS: THINGS WE LEARNED DURING COVID-19 THAT WE WANT TO KEEP

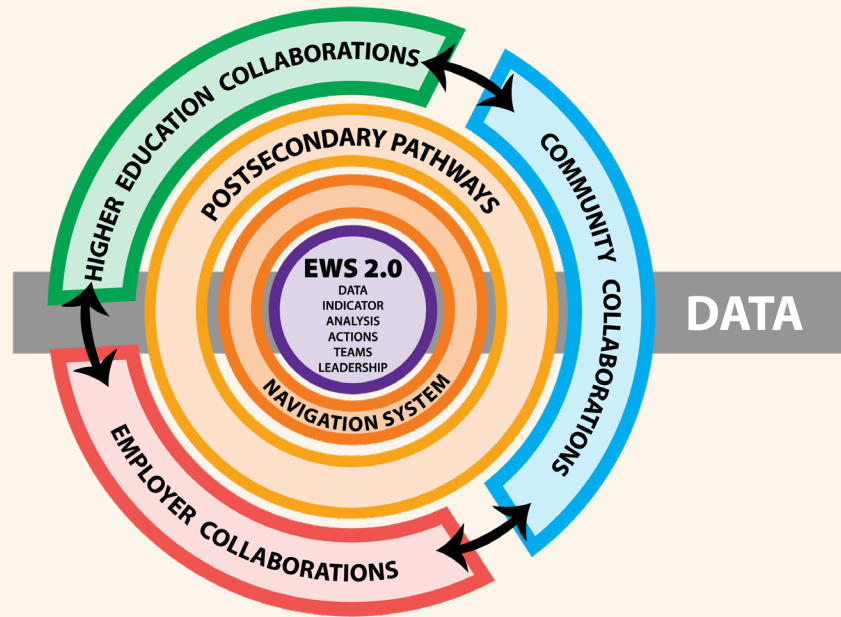
The COVID-19 pandemic brought enormous loss, untold suffering, and unprecedented upheaval in our society and particularly our educational system. We cannot and must not minimize its losses. Yet that very disruption also unleashed exceptional levels of creativity and flexibility among educators, students, and families. As we seek to turn the page on the painful realities of COVID, we've learned many things worth keeping and adapting to the needs of the post-COVID world. In this report, we highlight some of those initiatives and innovations to better serve the ever-evolving needs of young people and offer them improved pathways to postsecondary success.

In 2017—long before the pandemic—the Everyone Graduates Center of the Johns Hopkins School of Education began Pathways to Adult Success, a learning community of educators, academics, and non-profit partners committed to developing better systems, resources, tools, and guidance to help more young people graduate from high school with robust plans and preparation to move forward into higher education or other postsecondary career pathways. As members of the PAS learning community began to engage around this objective, they identified a cluster of crucial areas to be addressed and developed in the context of this work. These areas are

- **STUDENT SUCCESS SYSTEMS** (also called early warning and on-track systems) in which teams of school adults progress-monitor all students on key predictive indicators of high school graduation and post-secondary success, and provide students the supports and experiences they need to succeed

- **COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS** across sectors (school, non-profit, community) and levels (K12 through higher ed) that offer coordinated services to help students thrive
- **NAVIGATIONS, GUIDANCE, AND AWARENESS:** supporting students and their families in understanding their academic and career opportunities and options, so that they can chart a path through school that prepares them for a fulfilling future
- **DATA:** compiling, analyzing, and sharing data to inform, evaluate, and adjust initiatives that support young people through middle and high school, into and through post-secondary schooling or training, and on to adult success.

In each of these areas, exciting new practices have emerged during the pandemic that will inform best practices for years to come. The following represents just a sample of these valuable innovations.



THE PATHWAYS TO ADULT SUCCESS FRAMEWORK

The PAS Framework outlines foundational shifts in beliefs, practices, and structures required to improve postsecondary outcomes and perspectives for all young people to be able to embark on a meaningful career and achieve a family-sustaining wage.

In contrast to the experience of past generations, for whom a high school diploma was sufficient to enable young people to succeed in the workplace and society, students today must complete education or career training beyond high school to have similar odds of adult success.

This fact profoundly changes the responsibility of public preK-12 schools in preparing students for their future and calls on high schools to become the launching pad for further and more tailored schooling and training for all. This change in mission requires substantial and widespread changes in practices and structures at many levels and in many different ways, including

- ways preK-12 public schools use predictive indicators and tiered support systems to recognize and address the challenges students face on the pathway to adult success, based on the identified needs and available resources

- the systematic experiences, exposure, and assistance that preK-12 schools provide to help all students navigate postsecondary planning and preparation
- how preK-12 school systems, higher education, employers, and nonprofit or community organizations work together to help strengthen young people's pathways to adult success
- the role of data to support, orient, monitor and adapt initiatives to improve young people's postsecondary outcomes

Together, these important shifts provide a framework of crucial elements to enable a community to significantly improve its young people's opportunities to achieve adult success.

STUDENT SUCCESS SYSTEMS



While COVID-19's impacts were felt across demographic groupings, it soon became clear that the pandemic's impacts disproportionately affected communities of color and high poverty neighborhoods, exacerbating existing disparities.¹ School districts pivoted to reach out to students in new ways and at a new scale. The PAS Solutions Forum [Enabling Student Progress through School During COVID-19](#) (September 16, 2020) highlighted several of these initiatives. Sarah Frazelle of the [Puget Sound Educational Service District](#) addressed the need to measure student engagement rather than simply attendance, while Nalani Linder of [Tacoma Completes](#) explained the "senior check-in" process that her organization had implemented to help ensure that through the disruptions of COVID-19 all graduating seniors in Tacoma were connected to an institution of higher learning, and Jared Epler of the [Philadelphia Education Foundation](#) described ways that different organizations within the city created a leadership roundtable to provide students more holistic supports, including "College Access Online," a "one-stop shop" to address multiple needs and facilitate access to needed resources.

As the pandemic's impacts continued despite the return to in-person classes, educators became increasingly aware of the need to monitor all students' mental health and well-being and academic progress and intervene as necessary. This was the focus of the April 6, 2021, Solutions Forum, [Extending On-Track Supports to All Students in the 2021 and 2022 School Years](#). Sarah Howard, Kareem Sayegh, Andrea Cortes, and Jillian Carew of the University of Chicago [Network for College Success](#) highlighted the need to elevate student voices and experience to

construct the way forward, welcoming young people into the planning process. Dave Calhoun, Victor Ignacio-Phu, and Amanda Meyer of the [CORE Districts](#) emphasized measuring and promoting developmental relationships with supportive adults—those that not only express care, challenge growth, and provide support, but also share power and expand students' opportunities to interact with the world—in the Breakthrough Success Community initiative to improve student outcomes by transforming the ninth-grade experience. Jenny Scala of the [American Institutes for Research](#) shared research from the "Graduate Ready Project," an impact study of the AIR's early warning intervention and monitoring system (EWIMS), conducted in the 2020 and 2021 school years. Preliminary findings included higher levels of student risk—creating a need for more Tier 1 or whole-school approaches and a more robust catalog of interventions and strategies—and, again, the need to embed student voice in the process.

The need for robust, high-quality student success/ early warning systems propelled the creation of the [GRAD Partnership](#), a new collaborative of nine organizations committed to the vision of expanding such systems at scale so all students can graduate from high school ready for college and career, which was announced at the January 25, 2022, Solutions Forum [Engineering Student Success in Pandemic-Impacted Times](#). The forum also featured an example of one such system: Jonathan Mathis of [City Year](#) presented CY's recent work expanding its Student Success Coach program to support holistic academic and social-emotional development.

1 See US Dept. of Education Office for Civil Rights, "Education in a pandemic: The disparate impacts of COVID-19 on America's students," 2021 <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf>; America's Promise Alliance, "The state of young people during COVID-19: Findings from a nationally representative survey of high school youth," June 2020 https://pathwaystoadultsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/YouthDuringCOVID_FINAL.pdf

RESOURCES: STUDENT SUCCESS SYSTEMS

How teams of adults can use student data to help kids thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond.

[Introducing the GRAD Partnership](#)

Robert Balfanz and Patricia Balana, of Johns Hopkins University, introduce a new collaborative of nine organizations committed to the vision of scaling high-quality student success (on-track) systems to enable all students to graduate from high school ready for college and career. (5/18/22)

[Engineering Student Success in Pandemic-Impacted Times](#)

Jenny Scala (AIR), Angela Jerabek (BARR Center), Kelly McMahon (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching), and Tara Madden (Talent Development Secondary) present the GRAD Partnership for Student Success, a collaboration of nine organizations with a vision for scaling high quality student success (on-track) systems to enable all students to graduate from high school ready for college and career. Jonathan Mathis (City Year) presents CY's recent work expanding the student success coach program to support students' holistic academic and social-emotional development. (1/25/22)

[Extending On-Track Supports to All Students in the 2021 and 2022 School Years](#)

Robert Balfanz (Johns Hopkins University School of Education); Sarah Howard, Kareem Sayegh, Andrea Cortes, and Jillian Carew (University of Chicago Network for College Success); Dave Calhoun, Victor Ignacio-Phu, , and Amanda Meyer (CORE Districts); and Jenny Scala (American Institutes for Research) offer guidance for extending the reach of on-track systems, even amid the challenges of remote and/or hybrid learning. (4/6/21)

[Enabling Student Progress through School During COVID-19](#)

Sarah Frazelle (Puget Sound Educational Service District), Nalani Linder (Tacoma Completes), and Jared Epler (Philadelphia Education Foundation) share ways their organizations compiled and responded to data to support students' college access and overall well-being in the early months of the pandemic. (9/16/20)

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS TO HELP STUDENTS THRIVE



The Philadelphia leadership roundtable and GRAD Partnership consortium are just two examples—one on a local, and the other on the national, level—of the all-hands-on-deck collaborative approach needed to enable more young people to thrive, especially in the face of new and intensified challenges. Improved cross-sector and inter-agency partnerships were a recurrent theme as members of the PAS learning community learned to navigate the educational landscape that emerged during COVID-19.

The Oct. 20, 2020, Solutions Forum, [Advancing Historically Underserved Students During COVID-10 and Beyond](#), highlighted ways that nonprofit, community, and higher education partners refocused strategies to help maintain student momentum toward success amid the upheaval of the pandemic. For example, Jeremy Greenfield and Kim Cambridge of [New Visions for Public Schools](#) (NYC) described their partnership with three trusted community-based organizations, [St. Nicks Alliance](#), [Local Civics](#), and [PENCIL](#), to provide student-facing virtual programming for rising juniors and seniors, as well as Career Development and Occupational Studies online workshops. Tracy Templin of Chicago's [National Louis University](#) shared ways that higher ed institutions responded to meet students' needs and help them stay engaged in learning, while Ryan Reyna of the [Education Strategy Group](#) identified the "Momentum Metrics," measures of engagement and progress toward postsecondary preparation and enrollment that states and districts can use to close equity gaps and drive overall improvements in postsecondary access and success.

The same concern drove the November 17, 2020, Solutions Forum, [Promoting Equity During COVID-19 and Beyond](#), focusing on innovative collaborations among K12 schools, nonprofits, and higher education to promote

equitable pathways to success students in historically underserved groups. Ryan Mick of [City Year](#) described CY's Action Communities schools, wteachers teams and AmeriCorps members drew on a set of evidence based strategies to foster student belonging, resilience, and engaged learning during pandemic-impacted schooling. Leslie Cornfeld of the [National Education Equity Lab](#) explained how EdEquity works with top public and private universities to bring rigorous credit-bearing college courses and support into classrooms in Title 1 high schools. And Rosie Ayala of the [Tacoma Students College Support Network](#) highlighted the Graduate Tacoma program, in which dozens of middle and high schools, higher ed, and community nonprofits worked together to offer creative wholistic supports to help local students enroll and thrive in postsecondary education.

College access was a major focus of the organizations featured in the September 14, 2021, Solutions Forum, [Opening Doors to College for Under-Represented Students](#), all recipients of 2020-21 PAS Design Challenge stipends. Sylvia Symonds and Erin Chastain of [Access Arizona State University](#) worked with 179 volunteers from 28 different organizations—high schools, nonprofits, business and media partners—to offer a dozen free drive-in FAFSA workshops to hundreds of students and families in easy-access outdoor locales. Rick Moses and Kelly Staskel of the [Philadelphia Education Fund](#) developed a toolkit for 9th grade college and career fairs, so recruiters could build students' vision for their future and help them make wise choices early in their high school years. Marygrace Hemme, Chris Xa, and Sara Benson of Tennessee's [Peer Power Foundation](#) worked with the University of Memphis and partner high schools to offer virtual learning labs accessible to high school students throughout the state.

Yet the pandemic also exacerbated the social, emotional, academic, and financial challenges faced by first-generation students who did enroll in college. Addressing those hurdles was the focus of the March 31, 2022, Solutions Forum, [Holistic Supports to Help Students Connect, Thrive, and Persist in College](#). Monique Gagnon and Esme Ortiz described the [Boys' and Girls' Clubs of the Peninsula Future Grads](#) program to support students from participating high schools to *and through* college graduation at two-year and four-year institutions. Susanne Diggs-Wilborn shared the [Achieve Atlanta Scholars'](#) work with partners and participating colleges to help 4,468 scholars—almost a third of Atlanta's public school graduates—surmount struggles faced in pursuing their education in 319 postsecondary institutions.

Several presentations at the May 2022 PAS National Conference also highlighted the impacts of cross-sector and inter-agency collaboration. Robert Baade, Linda Ortega, and Zia Martinez of the Robert F. Kennedy High School in Albuquerque, NM, presented [Collaborating to Identify Promising Local Career Pathways](#), focusing on RFK's Farm to School project, a collaboration with the Youth Conservation Corps and many other community partners to provide on-the-job training and career exposure through workshops and field experience. In [Community Collaboration for Student Support](#), Ashley Seiler and Tashanna Staniel of [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri](#) and Doug Elmer of [Prep Kansas City](#) shared strategies for engaging entire communities and multiple non-profits to support students in multiple schools and offer them pathways to future success. Rosie Ayala, of Graduate Tacoma, offered [Community and College Collaboration for Successful Postsecondary Completion](#), identifying ways to help higher ed institutions work with each other—and with K12 and community partners—to help students persevere and attain postsecondary credentials.

RESOURCES: COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS TO HELP STUDENTS THRIVE

How to build collaborations across sectors (school, nonprofit, community) and levels (K12 to college).

[Collaborating to Identify Promising Local Career Pathways](#)

Robert Baade, Linda Ortega, and Zia Martinez of the Robert F. Kennedy High School in Albuquerque, NM, talk about RFK's Farm to School project, a collaboration with the Youth Conservation Corps and many other community partners to provide on-the-job training and exposure to various career pathways through workshops and field experience. (5/18/22)

[Community Collaboration for Student Support](#)

Ashley Seiler and Tashanna Stanciel of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri and Doug Elmer of Pre-Kansas City share strategies for engaging entire communities to support students in multiple schools and offer them pathways future success. (5/18/22)

[Community and College Collaboration for Successful Postsecondary Completion](#)

Rosie Ayala of Graduate Tacoma discusses ways to help higher ed institutions work with each other and with K12 and community partners to help students persevere and attain postsecondary credentials. (5/18/22)

[Holistic Supports to Help Students Connect, Thrive, and Persist in College](#)

Monique Gagnon and Esme Ortiz (Boys' and Girls' Clubs of the Peninsula Future Grads) and Susanne Diggs-Wilborn (Achieve Atlanta Scholars) explain how these two seasoned nonprofits adapted their work to provide holistic supports to address the challenges faced by first-generation college attenders. (3/1/22)

[Opening Doors to College for Under-Represented Students](#)

Sylvia Symonds and Erin Chastain (Access Arizona State University); Rick Moses and Kelly Staskel (Philadelphia Education Fund); and Marygrace Hemme, Chris Xa, and Sara Benson (Peer Power Foundation, TN) built collaboration among high schools, colleges, nonprofits, and business partners to help students in their communities overcome obstacles to successful college matriculation.

[Promoting Equity During COVID-19 and Beyond](#)

Ryan Mick (City Year), Leslie Cornfeld (National Education Equity Lab), and Rosie Ayala (Tacoma Students College Support Network) highlight innovative collaborations among K12 schools, nonprofits, and higher education that promote equitable pathways to success and achievement for students in historically underserved groups. (11/17/20)

[Advancing Historically Underserved Students During COVID-19 and Beyond](#)

Jeremy Greenfield and Kim Cambridge (New Visions for Public Schools), Tracy Templin (National Louis University), and Ryan Reyna (Education Strategy Group) share ways that nonprofit, community, and higher education partners refocused strategies to help maintain student momentum toward success amid the upheaval of the pandemic. (10/20/20)

NAVIGATION, GUIDANCE, AND AWARENESS



Even before the pandemic, many school systems were stretched thin, lacking the person power needed to provide students awareness and guidance to help them chart a pathway through school that would prepare them for a fulfilling future. The shift to virtual interaction imposed steep learning curves on students and adults alike, but also drove the adoption of creative solutions and new flexibilities.

The pandemic had an immediate impact in the hands-on world of CTE learning. At the December 16, 2020, Solutions Forum [Enhancing Students' Career Development Experiences During COVID-19 and Beyond](#), Doug Elmer of [Prep KC](#) (Kansas City, MO) shared ways to help students build “market-value assets”—both hard and soft skills—and a compelling postsecondary plan throughout the K12 experience. Austin Estes of [Advance CTE](#) discussed innovations to improve career awareness, preparation, and credentialing for high school students, citing model best-practice programs implemented in such states as ND, ND, WV, OH, FL, NC, and OR. Other resources shared included Advance CTE's [“State Resources for High-Quality Virtual CTE”](#), FHI 360's [“Instructional Leadership in Remote and Hybrid Learning”](#), *The Economist's* white paper [“Emotion and Cognition in the Age of AI”](#), and CASEL's [“CTE Resources”](#).

State-level initiatives to empower students to become the drivers of their own success were highlighted at the March 2, 2021, Solutions Forum, [Putting Students On Track to Adult Success During and After COVID-19](#). State Department of Education leader Lisa Harney shared the [Massachusetts “My Career and Academic Plan” \(MyCAP\)](#) and “College, Career, and Civic Readiness” programs, while [Ohio's](#) Graham Wood and Cassie Palsgrove described state-level initiatives in credit flexibility and simultaneous credit to help students fulfill graduation requirements

based on their mastery of core content. The presenters provided links to the Massachusetts DESE's [“Helping Youth Become the Drivers of Their Own Success”](#) and [“Candidate Assessment Performance Resources”](#), as well as the Ohio DOE's [“Career Connections Framework”](#), [“Strategic Plan for Education”](#), [“Workforce or College Prep Units for HS Graduation”](#), [“Integrated Coursework and Simultaneous Credit”](#), and [“Standards by Design”](#).

The June 22, 2021 Solutions Forum, [Enabling Underserved Students to Progress through Postsecondary Schooling](#) turned the spotlight on current research on factors associated with perseverance and postsecondary success of underrepresented students. Jenny Nagaoka of the University of Chicago [Consortium on School Research](#) and Roneeta Guha of the [Linked Learning Alliance](#) presented recent reports from their organizations, [“Understanding CPS graduates' paths through college”](#) and [“Linked Learning student outcomes”](#), as well as the UCLA Center's [“Stories of Linked Learning alumni”](#)

Yet for some educators, the disruption caused by the pandemic provided an opportunity to ask more fundamental questions and envision more radical changes that would make the high school experience bridge more seamlessly into the worlds of college and work. Such concepts were the focus of the October 19, 2021, Solutions Forum, [Re-Imagining High School for a Post-Pandemic World](#). Eddie Branchaud and Mark Heath of [Education Resource Strategies](#) discussed ways that districts can use high-quality credit recovery programs to pilot innovative competency-based or self-paced approaches to learning. Bob Balfanz of the JHU [Everyone Graduates Center](#) spotlighted the innovations of the Cross-State High School Redesign Collaborative's efforts to reimagine school reform in ways that are evidence-based but locally customized, by organizing school adults,

putting students at the center, focusing on teaching and learning, and building equitable pathways to adult success for all. Finally, Joel Vargas of [Jobs for the Future](#) presented “The Big Blur,” an argument for erasing the boundaries between high school, college, and career, and creating one new system that would work for everyone. Highlighted resources included Strada’s article [“Reconnecting HS grads to educational aspirations,”](#) the DC public schools [credit recovery](#) program, and San Antonio ISD’s [“Evening FLEX HS,”](#) as well as ERS’ [“Guides for ESSER Spending, Scheduling, and Staffing”](#) and [“Do Now, Build Toward.”](#)

The December 14, 2021, Solutions Forum focused specifically on [Meeting the High School Graduation and Post-Secondary Success Challenge for Students with Disabilities](#), as Lindsay Kubatsky and Joey Hunziger of the [National Center for Learning Disabilities](#) offered recommendations to help students with disabilities graduate and successfully transition into postsecondary education or training and adult life. Several additional resources shared included the Civil Rights Project’s [“Disabling Inequity,”](#) the 2020 GradNation report: [“Students with Disabilities,”](#) and the National Center on Educational Outcomes’ report [“Graduation options for youth with disabilities.”](#)

A number of the presentations at the May 18, 2022 PAS National Conference explored such innovations in navigations, awareness, and guidance. In a workshop titled [Developing Systems to Improve Advising for Postsecondary Success](#), Susanne Diggs-Wilborn of [Achieve Atlanta](#) and Jeremy Greenfield and Jessica Sasko of [New Visions for Public Schools](#) in NYC, discuss ways to mitigate the counselor shortage and scale quality advising for postsecondary planning to all students, especially in large urban districts. Another workshop, [Helping Students Develop Social Capital to Enhance Adult Success](#), featured Dave Calhoun and Juli Coleman of California’s [CORE Districts](#); they shared early results from a program promoting developmental relationships with adults that help increase students’ social capital and open doors to adult success.

In the workshop [Rethinking the High School to College Transition](#), Erica Cuevas and Meredith Hills of Jobs for the Future further discussed JFF’s vision for [The Big Blur](#), while

Asheley Seiwnarine and Shaquille Dunbar shared the [National Education Equity Lab](#)’s program offering rigorous college credit-bearing courses to high school students in underserved communities. In the [Reimagining High School Credits and Graduation Requirements](#) workshop, Graham Wood and Cassie Palsgrove, of the Ohio State Department of Education, and Kerrie Alley-Violette and Sean Peschel, of the New Hampshire “Learn Everywhere” Program, presented their states’ respective initiatives to help students attain credits and fulfill graduation requirements based on learning rather seat time.

RESOURCES: NAVIGATION, GUIDANCE, AND AWARENESS

How to help kids chart a pathway through school that prepares them for a fulfilling future.

Developing Systems to Improve Advising for Postsecondary Success

Susanne Diggs-Wilborn, of Achieve Atlanta, and Jeremy Greenfield and Jessica Sasko, of New Visions for Public Schools in NYC, discuss ways to mitigate the counselor shortage and scale quality advising for postsecondary planning to all students, especially in large urban districts. (5/18/22)

Helping Students Develop Social Capital to Enhance Adult Success

Dave Calhoun and Juli Coleman of the CORE Districts (CA) share early results from a program designed to promote developmental relationships with adults that help students develop social capital to open doors to adult success. (5/18/22)

Rethinking the High School to College Transition

Erica Cuevas and Meredith Hills of Jobs for the Future discuss “The Big Blur,” JFF’s innovative proposal for erasing the boundaries between high school, college, and careers; Asheley Seiwarnarine and Shaquille Dunbar of the National Education Equity Lab share their organization’s program to create a college-going culture by offering credit-bearing courses from top colleges and universities to high school students in historically underserved communities nationwide. (5/18/22)

Reimagining High School Credits and Graduation Requirements

Graham Wood and Cassie Palsgrove, of the Ohio State Department of Education, and Kerrie Alley-Violette and Sean Peschel, of the New Hampshire “Learn Everywhere” Program, present their states’ respective initiatives to help students attain credits and fulfill graduation requirements based on learning rather than seat time. (5/18/22)

Re-Imagining High School for a Post-Pandemic World

Eddie Branchaud and Mark Heath (Education Resource Strategies), Bob Balfanz (JHU Everyone Graduates Center), and Joel Vargas (Jobs for the Future) envision ways to re-imagine high school so that it bridges seamlessly into the worlds of college and work. (10/19/21)

Bearing Strange Fruit: How Disinvestment and Disconnection Hinder Adult and Career Success

Richard Lofton, of Johns Hopkins University and the Nobody Asked Me Campaign, addresses this important topic in a keynote address followed by a Q&A panel discussion.

Meeting the High School Graduation and Post-Secondary Success Challenge for Students with Disabilities

Lindsay Kubatsky and Joey Hunziger of the National Center for Learning Disabilities offer recommendations to help students with disabilities graduate and successfully transition into postsecondary education or training and adult life. (12/14/21)

Enhancing Students’ Career Development Experiences During COVID-19 and Beyond

Doug Elmer (Prep IC, Kansas City, MO) and Austin Estes (Advance CTE) discuss innovations to improve career awareness, preparation, and credentialing for high school students, whether locally or statewide. (12/16/20)

Putting Students On Track to Adult Success During and After COVID-19

State Department of Education leaders from Massachusetts (Lisa Harney) and Ohio (Graham Wood and Cassie Palsgrove) share state-level initiatives to put students on track for academic and career success amid severe external challenges. (3/2/21)

Research

Enabling Underserved Students To Progress Through Postsecondary Schooling

Jenny Nagaoka (University of Chicago Consortium on School Research) and Roneeta Guha (Linked Learning Alliance) share findings on factors associated with perseverance and success of underrepresented students in postsecondary schooling. (6/22/21)

UNDERSTANDING AND USING DATA

Effective systems for collecting, analyzing, and sharing data underlie and inform most effective programs to broaden access to pathways to adult success for all students. Amid the shifts and adjustments required by the pandemic, organizations that already had effective data systems in place were able to pivot quickly to respond to student and staff needs. Cutting-edge use of data was the focus of the November 16, 2021, Solutions Forum, [Building Student Agency to Boost Success in School and Life](#).

At this forum, Michelle Caldwell, Kristin Labs, and Keith White of the [Public Education Foundation](#) (Chattanooga) showed how their organization uses its data system to monitor outcomes and trends in the effectiveness of its College Advancement Mentors program in boosting students' postsecondary persistence. Abiodun Durojaye of the [National Louis University](#), a 2020-21 PAS Design Challenge awardee, shared data used to track and refine NLU's career prep and student internship program. Finally,

Sarah Frazelle of the [Puget Sound ESD](#) and Eric Meredith of the [Montana University System](#), also 2020-21 Design Challenge recipients, shared ways to incorporate student voice into data cycles. Other resources shared included NLU's ["Innovative career preparation model to drive equity in student employment outcomes"](#) and PSESD's [short video on student voice](#).

At the May 18, 2022, national conference, data use was the focus of the workshop [Using Technology to Improve Student Advising](#). During this session, Frances Dumas-Hines and Jacqueline Barnette of the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (IN) discussed ways to use robust data systems in support of more effective student advising in middle to high school planning, while Keith White and Dave Morton of PEF Chattanooga addressed the use of data to improve institutional match in postsecondary decisions.

RESOURCES: UNDERSTANDING AND USING DATA

How to compile, analyze, and share data to inform initiatives that support students.

[Using Technology to Improve Student Advising](#). Frances Dumas-Hines and Jacqueline Barnette of the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (IN) and Keith White and Dave Morton of PEF Chattanooga discuss some of the ways that robust data systems can support more effective student advising in middle to high school planning, and improve institutional match in postsecondary decisions. (5/18/22)

[Building Student Agency to Boost Success in School and Life](#). Michelle Caldwell, Kristin Labs, and Keith White (Public Education Foundation, Chattanooga); Abiodun Durojaye (National Louis University); and Sarah Frazelle (Puget Sound ESD) and Eric Meredith (Montana University System) share ways that organizations can use good data practices to support students' agency to create a brighter future for themselves. (11/16/21)

CONCLUSION



The pandemic was a time of hardship and uncertainty. It was also a time, as we see in the Pathways to Adults Success learning community members' innovations highlighted in this report, when both necessity and opportunity drove invention. Some innovations resulted from the need to find new ways to provide students with supports and learning experiences, when the face-to-face interactions around which most traditional student supports and experiences had been built were not available. Others arose from the opportunity to much more easily connect educators and students in virtual networks that enabled people from diverse locales to work and learn together. It was also a time when everyone was seeking answers to new challenges and no one was an expert. This situation helped flatten traditional hierarchies, enabling good ideas to bubble up from more sources and propelling collaboration.

The educational experience of the pandemic also showed that some aspects of the education system, which had seemed either critical or so deeply established that change was unlikely, were in fact neither. The idea that high school students can only learn sitting in a classroom six hours a day, five days a week, was demonstrated not to be the case.

At the same time, the pandemic also showed that there were aspects of schooling, which prior to the pandemic operated in the background with little notice, that once lost revealed how essential they are. The importance for students of having adults at school who know and care about them as individuals, along with a supportive peer group and engagement in pro-social activities, was brought into clear relief.

Finally, the pandemic reminded us that as a species, humans are adaptive and resourceful. Thus, hopefully, some of the broad innovations and insights gained

from the school experience during pandemic-impacted times, as well as the more specific actions and strategies highlighted, will take hold as we move forward with the work of building Pathways to Adult Success for all our students.



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