Preparing Young Adults to be Career Ready: The Role of Career Guidance and Multiple Pathways

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Arizona GEAR UP
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The Global Pathways Institute

• **HOW IT EVOLVED**

  *My Background*
  *Pathways to Prosperity Project: report/response*

• **CREATION OF THE INSTITUTE**

  The Broad Coalition of Supporters:

  1) Business
  2) Government
  3) Foundations
  4) ASU
GPI’S Vision

We are committed to creating an America in which all young people are prepared to lead productive and successful lives. We believe that providing young people with high-quality multiple pathways is the best way to help them discover and develop their potential and achieve economic independence.
THE MISSION OF THE INSTITUTE

Building Effective Pathways to Economic Independence for All Young People

Collaborate

Convene

Communicate

Research
TODAY’S AGENDA

• The Pathways Challenge
• Why We Are Failing So Many Young Adults
• How We Can Help Prepare More Young Adults to Achieve Economic Independence:
  ➢ Career Guidance/ “Career Literacy”
  ➢ Promote Multiple Pathways
• The Southwest Pathways Conference:
  May 28-29 at ASU SkySong
THE PATHWAYS CHALLENGE

“EVERY FAMILY IN AMERICA”

• Our existing system fails to prepare many young adults for success
• Education: The world’s highest college dropout rates; over $1 trillion in student loan debt
• Employment: Staggering levels of teen and young adult (20-24) unemployment/underemployment
• The “Skills Gap”: even many educated youth are not equipped with the skills needed to succeed

THE DANGER: A WASTED GENERATION
THE PERSISTENCE OF POVERTY

• For the first time in 50 years, the MAJORITY of U.S. schoolchildren live in poverty or low-income families

• Economic opportunity is evaporating: it is much harder for those born into poverty to rise into the middle class

• The Opportunity Index: AZ, NM, and NV rank in the bottom 10: AZ is 44th; NM is 49th; NV is 51st

• THE SOUTHWEST IS THE EPICENTER OF THIS PROBLEM
ONE ROAD TO HEAVEN?

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

• Four-year college is seen as the only true pathway to success.

• High school is about preparing students for four-year college. Academics are emphasized at the expense of career education/preparation.

• Community/technical colleges are a far less prestigious option.

• Career Technical Education is for students who aren’t smart enough for four-year college
FOR MANY, THE ROAD IS BROKEN

- **MOST** high school students are not ready for college – not even community college
  - What we found in New York: only 37% are college ready. In Arizona the picture is similar
  - The Achievement Gap: AZ has far more Hispanic/Native American students
  - How Many are Career Ready?: We hardly even measure it

A Broken System Contributes to Massive Levels of Youth Unemployment/Underemployment
U.S. “on time” college completion rates are alarmingly low

Completion rates at two-year institutions are much lower than at four-year schools

Note: Two-year schools have a three year graduation window. Four-year schools have a six-year window
College for All does not mean everyone needs a B.A. Even in this decade most jobs do not require a B.A.

Source: March CPS data, various years; Center on Education and the Workforce forecast of educational demand to 2018.
What are the Trends in Arizona?

By 2018, ARIZONA expected to have over 3 million jobs:

• 61% OF THESE JOBS WILL REQUIRE PSE
• BUT ONLY 26% WILL REQUIRE A 4-YEAR DEGREE OR HIGHER
• 35% WILL REQUIRE AN AA DEGREE OR SOME COLLEGE

SO: MORE THAN 7 OUT OF 10 JOBS DO NOT REQUIRE A FOUR-YEAR DEGREE
WHY ARE WE FAILING SO MANY?

• The “One Road to Heaven” approach is far too narrow, and doesn’t work for most students
• This approach re-enforces an elitism in which jobs that don’t require a four-year degree are demeaned
• We can’t possibly prepare students for the middle class if we steer them away from many middle class jobs

WE NEED A NEW APPROACH!
STRATEGIES FOR BOOSTING SUCCESS

1. CAREER GUIDANCE: EQUIP STUDENTS TO BE “CAREER LITERATE”

2. PROMOTE MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS
THE CRISIS IN CAREER GUIDANCE

CURRENT REALITIES:

• We have far too few counselors
• Most counselors have little time to provide career counseling
• Many counselors don’t understand the labor market
• The result? Most students don’t receive effective career guidance
THE COSTS OF THIS NEGLECT:

• Disengagement: Students who don’t see the purpose of learning lose interest:
  *76% of elementary students are engaged
  *But only 44% of high school students

• Many students don’t have the information they need to make good decisions about their future. The result: many make poor choices

• This is a major cause of the Pathways Challenge
A VISION FOR EFFECTIVE GUIDANCE

➢ MAKE CAREER GUIDANCE A CENTRAL GOAL/MISSION OF EDUCATION:
  * Begin in elementary school
  * Help each student discover their passion, and develop a pathways plan

➢ ADOPT A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH:
  * Involve the Entire School Community
  * Engage business
  * Enlist the broader community
  * Partner with Parents
Who Attended: Business, educators, Gov’t

Key Conclusions:

* What we spend: ”One Can of Coke”

* We need a National Movement

The Concept of Career Literacy:

* Equipping Students with the Knowledge, Tools and Support they need to make Good Career decisions: Now and in the Future

* The Appeal of “Literacy”
NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON GUIDANCE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS:

• Counselors Cannot do it Alone: Collaboration is Essential

• Technology is essential, but not a panacea: a caring adult is critical

• Begin early and expand middle school efforts

• Require all teachers to take a course in career development

• Incorporate Career Readiness into State Accountability Systems
THE PAYOFF OF IMPROVED GUIDANCE

FOR STUDENTS:
- More engagement
- Increased attainment/achievement
- Improved transitions to college/work

FOR PARENTS:
- Less financial stress/debt

FOR EMPLOYERS:
- A strengthened pipeline; better-prepared workers;

FOR THE COMMUNITY:
- A more vibrant economy; fewer social problems
ARIZONA CAREER LEADERSHIP NETWORK

• Who is Involved and Meetings
• Focus on ECAPs
• Efforts to Improve Technology: AzCIS; ASU e-Advisor; Expect More Arizona
• How we Can Expand the Circle of Caring Adults: AmeriCorps; Retirees, Experience Matters
• Plans to launch a Pilot Program
THE CASE FOR MULTIPLE PATHWAYS:

Pedagogical
• Best way for many young people to learn
• Relevance increases engagement, motivation

Higher attainment
• In the US and abroad, high-quality “vocational education” produces superior results

Youth Employment
• Strong pathways to good jobs
• Countries with the best systems have very low rates of youth unemployment
In many European countries over half of upper secondary students are in vocational educational and training.

**FEATURES OF THE “DUAL SYSTEM”**

**Vast choice of Career pathways**
**Based on an apprenticeship system**
**Integration of Academic/Vocational Instruction**
**Promotes the dignity/professionalism of all careers**
**The payoff: a seamless pathway to employment**
THE MASSACHUSETTS MODEL

• HOW IT WORKS:
  **A network of regional vocational high schools
  **Students spend half time on a career major
  **Students must still pass MCAS exams
  **Heavy emphasis on work-based learning

• IMPRESSIVE RESULTS:
  **Sky-high graduation/attendance rates
  **National leader in technical skill attainment
  **Most go on to Post-secondary education

NPR DOCUMENTARY: “Ready to Work”

www.AmericanRadioWorks.org/documentaries
WHERE CAREER READINESS COUNTS:

- **Florida**: nearly 50% of high school students now earn industry-recognized credentials.
- **North Dakota**: over half of students are CTE concentrators; and these students graduate at much higher rates.
- **Kentucky**: Measures College and Career Readiness.
- **New York**: has just approved multiple pathways to a high school diploma.
How Can We Expand Pathways in Arizona?

1. Expand Pathways to the High School Diploma:
   - 22 Credits are required, including 15 Core Courses. Could we use the other 7 Courses to create a CTE Pathway and other Pathways?

2. Develop a Competency-based Pathway

3. Expand Accountability so that Career Readiness is included in the A-F System
SUMMING UP: WHY THIS MATTERS

- Our Existing Approach has Failed Most Youth
- Arizona has Especially Fallen Behind
- We need a Fresh Start/ a Cultural Change

What We Can Do:

- Champion “Career Literacy,” strive for excellence in ECAPs Implementation
- Engage Business and community groups
- Promote multiple pathway options to students
- Emphasize Career Readiness
SOUTHWEST PATHWAYS CONFERENCE

MAY 28-29 AT ASU
*350 Attendees Maximum
*Cross-Sectoral Teams From Five States
*Many National Attendees

KEY PARTNERS:
*INNOVATE+EDUCATE
*NATIONAL PARTNERS: US Chamber, Opportunity Nation, State Directors of CTE

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QUESTIONS?