

News You Can Use

John Gugerty, Column Editor

Jobs for the Future have produced several new publications that are available for downloading at <http://www.jff.org/Margins/Publications.html#LtoS>

Four Building Blocks for a System of Educational Opportunity: Developing Pathways To and Through College for Urban Youth

By Adria Steinberg, Cheryl Almeida, Lili Allen, and Sue Goldberger

The promise to “leave no child behind” can only be realized by moving beyond the limitations of current policies and institutions. Hence, the demand grows for learning environments that are effective and efficient in getting young people onto pathways to economic self-sufficiency and active citizenship. Drawing on several years of study through JFF’s From the Margins to the Mainstream initiative, *Four Building Blocks* speaks to that need. It identifies and describes four building blocks for a system of educational opportunity—and it proposes strategies for improving and expanding effective learning environments.

Better and Faster: Accelerating Advancement in School and Work

By Hilary Pennington

In 2001, JFF CEO and co-founder Hilary Pennington was a featured speaker at the Aspen Institute Congressional Seminar on “The New Challenge for Public Education: Secondary School Reform.” Pennington made four key points: The nation needs to focus on where students go when they leave high school—that is, their transition to postsecondary education and work. If education beyond high school is the goal for all students, high school reform alone will not get us there. The task is to create multiple pathways to and through the second year of college, not to reform the “one-size-fits-all” comprehensive high school. We have a unique moment of obligation and opportunity to address these challenges, and Congress has a key leadership role to play.

Connected Learning Communities: A Toolkit for Reinventing High School

By Jobs for the Future

This toolkit grows out of JFF’s ongoing efforts to help practitioners with the challenging task of implementing community-connected learning. Because community-connected learning requires the school to situate itself in relationship to other institutions and individuals in the community, these practitioners include not only teachers but also an array of partners and mentors from neighborhoods, workplaces, agencies, higher education institutions, and organizations.

Forty-Three Valedictorians: Graduates of the Met Talk About Their Learning

By Jobs for the Future

In June 2000, 43 young people received diplomas from the Metropolitan Career and Technical Center—the first graduating class of a unique, state-funded high school in Providence, RI. Instead of being handed a schedule of classes, each Met student plots how s/he will make progress towards the school’s learning goals in meetings with a team including a teacher-advisor and a parent. Instead of classes, the students fashion independent projects through which to explore their interests and meet their learning goals. Instead of tests, they do quarterly exhibitions of their work and accumulate a four-year portfolio. *Forty-Three Valedictorians* look at this success story in the making through the eyes and voices of Met students.

From Large to Small: Strategies for Personalizing the High School

By Adria Steinberg and Lili Allen

In communities across the United States, the conversion of large high schools into small, focused learning environments is gaining currency as an education reform strategy. From Large to Small offers concrete guideposts to leaders of comprehensive high schools who seek to implement a small schools strategy. From Large to Small is a joint publication of JFF, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University.

More News You Can Use

John Gugerty, Column Editor

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation Publications has produced several new publications that are available for downloading at <http://www.mdrc.org/Education.htm>

Business Partnerships: How to Involve Employers in Welfare Reform

By Amy Brown, Maria L. Buck and Erik Skinner

This guide provides practical advice on engaging the business community in welfare reform. By describing the efforts of initiatives and programs across the country, it offers guidance for the public sector on how to engage the business community, for employers on how to integrate welfare recipients into their workforce, and for other interested parties on how to bridge the gap between welfare recipients and jobs. Since many of these strategies are new and as yet unproven, the guide presents a variety of approaches for readers to consider in developing their own partnerships.

Work First: How to Implement an Employment-Focused Approach to Welfare Reform

By Amy Brown

Many states have already taken steps to redesign their welfare-to-work programs. One of the most popular strategies is commonly called “work first.” Work first programs aim to move participants into unsubsidized employment as quickly as possible through job search and short-term education, training, or work experience activities. Programs incorporating a work first approach have been shown to produce positive impacts under varying conditions. Recent studies have also shown some of the trade-offs in this approach compared to other strategies. Knowledge about work first programs comes from comprehensive evaluations and discussions with program managers, practitioners, and participants. This guide seeks to summarize that knowledge so that program planners, administrators, and staff can put in place effective, well-designed programs.

After AFDC: welfare-to-Work Choices and Challenges for States

By Dan Bloom

This volume offers a foundation for state and local welfare reform efforts. It is a built of sturdy material: reliable evidence gained through two decades of rigorous research, mostly focusing on previous state and local innovations. The book summarizes the key findings and lessons from this research and, just as important, highlights some of what we don't know. Its goal is to help states and localities make informed and realistic choices in the critical months and years ahead. The book is written in plain, nontechnical language, and is targeted to a diverse audience: state legislators and legislative staff, Governors' policy advisors, public welfare administrators, budget officials, journalists, advocacy groups, and others with a stake in state and local social welfare policies.

Course Taking, Test Preparation, and Career Academy Programs: Findings from a Field Study

By Thomas J. Smith

One of the nation's most widely adopted school reform initiatives designed to help smooth students' transitions to careers and to postsecondary education, Career Academies operate as “schools within a school.” In collaboration with local employers, the Academies develop college preparatory curricula with a career-oriented theme and aim to provide Academy students a coherent and distinctive educational experience. Yet Academies must also reckon with the realities of the larger educational environment of which they are a part - including the need to meet district and state curriculum prerequisites for graduation and to have students take, and pass, the high-stakes standardized tests that purport to measure educational progress. Based on interviews with school administrators, counselors, Academy coordinators, teachers and students, this paper investigates how course selection is monitored and test preparation is managed for students registered in Academy program. And it recommends how Academies can better achieve their unique program objectives while also adapting to externally imposed requirements.

NAVESNP Mission and Membership Benefits

The National Association of Vocational Education Special Needs Personnel (NAVESNP) is an association of individuals who are involved in vocational special needs education. Members serve disabled, disadvantaged, limited English proficient, and incarcerated individuals. NAVESNP was organized in 1974 with the following objectives serving as a basis for growth and development:

- Serve as a unifying association for all personnel in the United States interested in the development or operation of vocational education programs for learners with special needs.
- Promote and maintain active leadership in vocational, career and occupational education.
- Provide service to members of the Association.

All members annually receive three issues of the Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education, three Newsnotes newsletters, and regional newsletters. In addition, special projects are undertaken to develop and publish needed research in the field. An annual business meeting of NAVESNP is held in conjunction with the annual convention of the Association for Career and Technology Education. The annual meeting includes reports of the Executive Board and various committees.

Executive Board meetings are held several times during the year. Regional business meetings are held in conjunction with annual regional conferences and at the national convention.

NAVESNP membership is open to all persons involved in or interested in vocational special needs education programs. Membership may be obtained through individual application or by application submitted through affiliated state organizations. Active membership is for those persons who are employed in programs or services related to vocational special needs education (\$20 non ACTE, \$15 ACTE member). Associate membership is for persons who are interested in, but not employed in, programs or services related to vocational special needs education (\$12). Student membership is for those students whose interest is to become employed in vocational, career and occupational education (\$8). Paraprofessional membership is for those persons who are employed in programs or services related to special needs but are not required to have a Baccalaureate Degree and who report directly to professional staff (\$12). Honorary membership may be conferred by the Board of Directors. Voting privileges shall be held by active, associate, paraprofessional and student members only. NAVESNP Regions

JVSNE Information

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