



## AMERICAN YOUTH POLICY FORUM e-bulletin

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### UPCOMING AYPF EVENTS

*Mark your calendars – events you don't want to miss*

#### **Friday, May 21, 2010: Preparing Students for the Rapidly-Changing World: Implications for Instruction and Assessment (Forum 2)**

Second in a series of three forums to discuss new strategies for instruction and assessment given the needs of the knowledge economy and the demand for more workers with postsecondary skills. This forum will focus on implications for teacher training and professional development. Tony Wagner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education will provide an overview of the skills students need to be successful in today's economy and will present new findings about professional development from his recent research on Finland's education system. Dr. Wagner will be joined by Monica Martinez, President of the New Tech Network, a network of public high schools that has pioneered a model of collaborative, project-based learning paired with innovative uses of technology. As of fall, 2010, there will be 64 New Tech High Schools nationwide.

***Please note:*** *For the May 21 Forum we have capped registration, as the event is full. We are currently placing additional registration requests on a wait list.*

#### **Friday, June 11, 2010: Building a Portfolio of Options to Ensure All Students Graduate**

This forum will highlight the work of the Association for High School Innovation (AHSI), a collaboration of education providers and advocates that works to create pathways and expand options to future success for all youth. Over the past seven years, AHSI members have engaged in a variety of efforts at the state and local level to create and sustain the development of education options to ensure all students graduate. Presenters will share lessons learned from their work along with implications for policy. Presenters include Talmira Hill, Director, Association for High School Innovation, Elliot Washor, Co-Director, Big Picture Learning, Nick Mathern, Associate Vice President, Policy & Partnership Development, Gateway to College National Network, and Dan Gohl, Executive Assistant for Innovation and Change, Newark Public Schools (invited).

#### **Tuesday, June 22, 2010: Webinar: Preparing College- and Career-Ready Students**

This webinar will examine the elements of program models that have demonstrated effectiveness in preparing students for postsecondary access and success, based on the results

of rigorous evaluations. The webinar will be anchored by the findings of the new AYPF publication, Success at Every Step: How 23 Programs Support Youth on the Path to College and Beyond, and will feature two of the included program models. First Things First is a comprehensive school reform model that aims to transform struggling schools by transforming relationships and improving instructional quality, and Early College High Schools are small schools that directly connect underrepresented students with a college experience and allow them to earn significant college credits while still in high school. The webinar will also address the role of policy in supporting local, state, and national goals for college- and career-readiness. Presenters will include James Connell, President, Institute for Research and Reform in Education; Joel Vargas, Program Director, Jobs for the Future; Ryan Reyna, Policy Analyst, National Governors Association, Center for Best Practices; and Sarah Hooker, Program Associate, AYPF. *Stay tuned for further information on how to register for this virtual event.*

## **ESEA REAUTHORIZATION**

### **Recommendations of the American Youth Policy Forum on the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

AYPF has submitted comments to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pension on the ESEA Reauthorization. AYPF's recommendations for the reauthorization of ESEA are set forth by suggesting Goals, Principles, and Strategies for the Act, which are primarily focused on secondary schools. AYPF's comments are focused on issues that directly affect youth in their day-to-day learning, and AYPF seeks to represent the student perspective and build supportive environments, cultures, and policies that help youth thrive. For a full copy of the recommendations click on the above link.

## **AYPF PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES**

### **New Policy Brief: Challenges, Assets, and Innovations: Considerations for Secondary Education in Rural Communities**

Summarizes the lessons learned during a February 2010 AYPF study mission that brought federal policy leaders to North Carolina to examine how rural education systems are providing high quality instruction and improving the readiness of young people for life beyond high school. Participants learned about how federal and state policies and funding streams affect rural school districts; the unique challenges of providing high quality instruction in rural settings; and innovative approaches to providing comprehensive education in rural communities. The brief outlines the key issues affecting rural education nationwide and discusses how current federal policy priorities affect rural education.

*Briefs and trip reports are available online at <http://www.aypf.org/events>.  
Publications are available online at <http://www.aypf.org/publications>*

## **RECOMMENDED READING AND RESOURCES**

*Check these out – recommended reading from the AYPF staff*

### **Cost Perceptions and College-going for Low-income Students**: National College Access Network and Pathways to College

This Research to Practice brief is the first in a series from the National College Access Network and Pathways to College Network seeking to bridge the gap between scholarly research and effective practice. This brief, Cost Perceptions and College-Going for Low-Income Students, highlights how inaccurate information, cultural predispositions and loan aversion contributes to the enrollment behavior of low-income students and ultimately, dictates the likelihood of their

degree attainment.

**Turning Around, Transforming, and Continuously Improving Schools: Federal Proposals are Still Based on a Two- Rather than a Three- Component Blueprint:** School Mental Health

Project/Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA Dept. of Psychology

Discusses school turnaround models to illustrate the dilemma confronting efforts to enable equity of opportunity. Then, the analysis focuses on current priorities as reflected in the Race to the Top and School Improvement grant proposals and the U.S. Department of Education's Blueprint for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Findings highlight ongoing marginalization of practices (e.g., student and learning supports) to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students. The analyses highlight the need for federal school improvement policy to shift from a two- to a three-component framework. The intent is to provide a unifying concept and umbrella under which all resources currently expended for student and learning supports are woven together. To illustrate the point, the third component is defined as focused on addressing barriers to learning and teaching, designated as an enabling or learning supports component. It is stressed that the three-component framework does nothing to detract from the fact that a strong academic program is the foundation from which all other school-based interventions must flow.

The report concludes that only by unifying student and learning supports will it be feasible to develop a comprehensive system to directly address many of the complex factors interfering with schools accomplishing their mission. And only by developing such a system will it be feasible to facilitate the emergence of a school environment that fosters successful, safe, and healthy students and staff. It is emphasized that school climate is an emergent quality that stems from how schools provide and coalesce on a daily basis components dedicated not only to instruction and management/governance, but to learning supports as well.

*The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional development organization based in Washington, DC, provides learning opportunities for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working on youth and education issues at the national, state, and local levels.*

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