



# America Forward on Higher Education

---

## *Innovation, Flexibility, and Data-Driven Results*

**America Forward** is the nonpartisan policy initiative of New Profit, a pioneering national venture philanthropy fund that seeks to break down barriers between all people and opportunity in America. To date, New Profit has invested over \$150 million in scaling innovative organizations' impact.

**The America Forward Coalition** is comprised of more than 70 social innovation organizations that champion innovative, effective, and efficient solutions to our country's most pressing social problems. Our Coalition members are achieving measurable outcomes in more than 14,500 communities nationwide, touching the lives of 8 million Americans each year, and driving progress in education, workforce development, early learning, poverty alleviation, public health, Pay for Success, social innovation, national service, and criminal justice reform. Together, we have leveraged \$1.5 billion for social innovation and have driven millions of federal resources toward programs that are achieving measurable results for those who need them most.

We believe that innovative policy approaches that foster innovation, reward results, and catalyze cross-sector partnerships can transform these local results into national change and propel all of America forward.

### **Why We Care**

Far too many students from under resourced populations, including students from low-income backgrounds or those living with a disability, continue to face significant barriers to accessing and succeeding in programs of post-secondary education<sup>1</sup>. Empowering these students to succeed in post-secondary education and beyond will require reimagining our higher education system by aligning it with workforce development and national service to create clear pathways into the workforce; providing relevant information and individualized, continuous support – beginning in the K-12 system and continuing through completion/graduation – to help students and families navigate post-secondary education and the transition to the workforce; and, embracing new strategies that provide stronger linkages between post-secondary education and career, and which reduce the unsustainable financial burden too often shouldered by students.

Existing barriers to post-secondary education – including financial concerns, lack of comprehensive support and accommodations, and misaligned requirements – often represent insurmountable obstacles for students. In a job market increasingly predicated on the attainment of an Associate's or Bachelor's degree, barriers that prevent enrollment or persistence in post-secondary education effectively bar the door to the middle class and exacerbate the cycle of poverty. Without better

---

<sup>1</sup> America Forward defines post-secondary education to include both two and four year education opportunities and the institutions associated with those opportunities, i.e. community colleges, vocational and technical institutions, and four year colleges/universities.

information, effective supports that help ensure persistence, new financial aid policies that reduce or even eliminate student debt, and credentials that are aligned with workforce needs, millions of Americans will continue to be trapped in a system that limits economic mobility and perpetuates existing social inequities.

The negative consequences of continuing to undercut such tremendous human capital are irrefutable. Even at a time when an estimated three million U.S. jobs sit vacant<sup>i</sup> and many employers say that a shortage of qualified workers is their biggest obstacle to growth,<sup>ii</sup> there are more than six million young people, ages 16 to 24, who are not in school or working. If left unaddressed, this group, known collectively as “opportunity youth,” will cost taxpayers \$93 billion annually and \$1.6 trillion over their lifetimes in lost revenues and increased social services.<sup>iii</sup> The disconnect between vacant jobs and the available workforce is evidence of the fundamental “opportunity gap” that exists between the evolving American economy – where, by 2018, 60 percent of jobs will require at least an Associate’s degree<sup>iv</sup> – and the inadequate education and workforce development systems we currently have in place, especially for under resourced students. Addressing this misalignment is critical to both jump-starting our national economy and unleashing individual potential.

Beyond the economic imperative of reforming our higher education system, fundamental changes are necessary to ensure equity, especially for students from minority communities or low-income backgrounds. According to the Lumina Foundation, “while the overall degree attainment rate is 45.3 percent, rates are much lower for African-Americans (34.2% percent), Hispanics (26.9 percent), and Native Americans. ... Low-income individuals and working adults also have limited post-secondary opportunities compared to other Americans.”<sup>v</sup> In addition to limiting economic potential, limited opportunities for post-secondary attainment also negatively impact the lives of individuals in areas like health care and community engagement. Failure to increase post-secondary attainment among under resourced students will not only limit individual and collective economic progress, but will further exacerbate the opportunity gap in America.

## Who We Are

Every day we are doing the hard work of moving America forward. Some of us help students from under resourced communities or with learning disabilities prosper in early childhood, elementary and high school, enabling them to graduate ready for college and career. Some of us help families through crisis periods and enable youth leaving foster care to live independently. Others offer “opportunity youth” the chance to gain the education and training they need to find their path to college and the workforce. Some of us help students persist in post-secondary programs by providing the extra supports they need. Others offer “bridge building jobs” that provide work experience accompanied by supports that help workers transition to future opportunities. And many of us provide critical supports, inspire and motivate those we serve, improve access to other providers, and help people navigate the often confusing education, job training, and workforce systems.

We hold ourselves to high standards. We measure our results. And our success tells us that it is possible to forge a pathway from poverty to economic success. But it will take hard work, investment, and significant reforms.

## What We Believe

America Forward is committed to education reform because we believe the work of closing the opportunity gap starts with ensuring that, beginning early in life, every child has a clear path to college and career success, and the support to get there. Today, however, too many K-12 schools, institutions of higher education (IHEs)<sup>2</sup>, and communities lack the resources – both in terms of funding and human capital – to establish consistent, aligned systems of support for under resourced students, and a lack of consistent focus on evidence and outcomes undercuts the ability to make informed investments. In addition, competing systems make it difficult for students and families to understand what skills and knowledge are essential to succeed in post-secondary education and the workforce.

Improving post-secondary outcomes for under resourced students begins in the K-12 system. Too often, high poverty communities especially lack the resources to adequately educate and guide students. Addressing this challenge begins with improving preparation and support programs for aspiring teachers and school leaders, so that they have the ability to address the unique needs of under resourced students and effectively guide them through rigorous curricula. This curricula, in turn, must provide all students with access to quality post-secondary preparatory coursework; without high school courses that adequately prepare them for post-secondary work, too many students – disproportionately under resourced students – must take on high-cost, remedial courses before they ever have access to post-secondary level courses that put them on a path to graduation. Learning experiences that are linked to post-secondary and career options are another important factor in helping young people make good choices about the opportunities afforded by post-secondary education. The K-12 system needs to incorporate hands-on learning experiences, including in partnership with higher education, volunteer, and national service organizations.

Even for those students who do successfully graduate from high school, however, success in post-secondary education and beyond is by no means a given. Even before they enroll, the challenges of navigating the admissions process, selecting an institution, preparing for the admissions tests, and securing financial aid put many students at a disadvantage, a deficit made worse for many under resourced students by a feeling that they will be out of place in a post-secondary education setting or are not prepared academically. Research shows that low-income and first-generation college students, especially, often make choices during the application and decision process that are unlikely to lead to the best outcomes, a result of lacking access to reliable information and guidance. This speaks to the importance of ensuring that students and their families have access to intensive college and career counseling – including help applying for financial aid and scholarships, preparing for admissions testing, and selecting a post-secondary institution– as well as to supports that help prepare them for the post-secondary experience mentally and emotionally. Nonprofit partners can be a valuable part of this effort, offering schools a cost-effective way to provide one-on-one services to students likely to struggle with the application process.

Once they are enrolled, under resourced students face a whole new host of challenges. Financial aid is one important factor – 47 percent of today’s higher education students are supporting themselves and struggling financially – and students from under resourced groups remain far more likely than their peers to accrue substantial debt and/or drop out prior to degree completion<sup>vi</sup> – but it is not the whole story. Many students need additional practical supports, like access to transportation or personal

---

<sup>2</sup> Defined as colleges, universities, institutions of technology, vocational schools, and community colleges

technology. For students with disabilities, access to accommodations can be an enormous issue upon entering higher education; consider that only 17 percent of young adults with disabilities receive accommodations and support in college, compared with 94 percent in high school.<sup>vii</sup> Other students may need more traditional academic supports to help them deal with the increased rigor of post-secondary coursework. Many students continue to struggle with feelings that they are out of place in college and do not have support systems to help them cope when experiencing academic and other challenges. And for the increasing number of non-traditional students, the difference between success and non-completion may be access to tax credits or childcare; 26 percent of today's higher education students are also raising children.

Finally, post-graduation, students still face challenges in translating the skills and knowledge they have gained into stable employment that pays a living wage. For instance, fully one-third of the \$150 billion in assistance the Higher Education Act (HEA) provides to eligible students each year follows those students into workforce credentialing offerings at accredited and certified post-secondary programs. This is a reflection of the reality that two-thirds of U.S. jobs now require at least some post-secondary education or training, and that workers and job seekers today face a very challenging national economy and a continuously changing job market. In addition to financial support, however, students also need exposure to skills and experiences that help bridge the gap between college and career. With this in mind, post-secondary institutions should be intentional about creating, or partnering with existing organization to provide, hands-on, out-of-classroom learning experiences that allow students to explore different fields and create tangible linkages between post-secondary work and potential career pathways.

As part of this effort, federal policies must embrace innovation, promote competency, and reassert a focus on outcomes that reflect the needs of the full spectrum of today's students, not just first-time, full-time students, as well as the demands of today's economy. Such a shift in our mindset regarding higher education is critical if we are to reduce the number of students who are unable to complete their post-secondary program, who are buried under unsustainable debt, or who graduate, but are unprepared for the rigors of the global economy. To meet these challenges requires new strategies to make post-secondary education more responsive to the needs of all students.

Through the work of our member organizations, America Forward has learned that, in order to address these various challenges, the work must be done at an individual student level. As part of that effort, we have learned the power of leveraging effective partnerships to create person-centered, flexible systems of support that are able to respond to the changing needs of under resourced students. Now, our goal is to apply the lessons we have learned more broadly to the post-secondary education and workforce systems.

## **Policy Proposals**

**Providing actionable information for students and families on post-secondary outcomes, financial aid, and available support services and accommodations**

Many under resourced students and their families struggle to make informed decisions on where to attend college, often due to uncertainty over how to pay for college, how likely they will be to graduate and move into a successful career, or what specific accommodations may be available to students. Today, information on costs, outcomes, supports and accommodations at different institutions is oftentimes either not reported, or presented in a disjointed manner that makes cross-institution comparisons difficult and adds to confusion. To address this problem, new federal policies should:

- Require information about college program costs and outcomes by individual institutions to be publicly posted, including data on persistence and graduation rates among students, including under resourced students, and the average financial aid-packages students, including Pell-eligible students;
- Establish a common format for financial information published by post-secondary institutions to make it easier for students and families to understand;
- Create a simpler process for aid application that gives prospective students and families information about post-secondary benefits afforded to them;
- Develop strategies to ensure that students and families have relevant information about financial aid packages prior to admission decisions deadlines, including early decision deadlines;
- Require IHEs to publicly provide information on what types of services and supports are available for students, including students with disabilities, and how students and their families may access these resources; and,
- Provide students receiving Title IV aid for career education credentialing with information that shows both the demand for certain workforce skills and also regional job opportunity assistance options through the federal workforce development system and other assistance programs.

### **Targeting federal funding to develop and scale-up innovations that increase access, persistence, and completion in post-secondary education**

Innovation coupled with a focus on results is essential to maximizing higher education attainment for under resourced students. Today, a wide range of new approaches are emerging to support under resourced students through the college application process, provide integrated supports post-enrollment, accelerate time to completion strategies, and form tangible connections with career opportunities, among others. Pay for Success and innovation fund approaches could accelerate adoption of these innovations, as could reforms in numerous federal aid, workforce development, and other education programs. In response to ongoing innovation, the Federal Government should:

- Create a Pay for Success incentive fund to structure Pay for Success projects and contracts, fund feasibility work, evaluation, and contribute to success payments. Following the creation of the incentive fund, we recommend the Federal Government promote and support numerous demonstrations, replications, and scaling of innovative financing models for Pay for Success.
- Create a Pay for Success Pell grant premium paid to accredited and certified post-secondary providers that achieve specified retention, completion, and job outcomes among Pell-eligible students such as the one quarter Pell grant premium proposed and paid for in Sen. Wyden’s “PARTNERSHIPS” Act;
-

- Incentivize states to transition to performance-based funding models for public higher education, which award funding at least partly based on persistence, graduation and other factors, rather than enrollment, while continuing institutional Pell bonuses to prevent exclusionary changes in enrollment practices;
- Set aside at least 50 percent of current funding for existing HEA authorized college access programming to establish a competitive grant fund, the College Access and Success Innovation Fund, open to any organization without preference to those that have received federal funding in the past, which reflects a tiered evidence structure that directs the largest grants to organizations that have demonstrated a solution to meet the needs of a previously under resourced community, while still making funding available to develop new approaches;
- Establish data systems that track participants in college access programs and provide information on program effectiveness by program participant profile and dosage;
- Conduct an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation of college access practices to generate evidence about which practices are most likely to get young people into and through post-secondary education; and,
- Allow the awarding of Title IV student aid to credits earned through innovative, evidence-based innovative approaches like competency-based models, approved dual enrollment and early college high schools, Portfolio Assessment and other Prior Learning Assessment tools, which focus on subject mastery rather than traditional measures of seat-time.

### **Investing in effective partners that provide critical expertise and capacity**

Effective partnerships between IHEs and high-quality community partners and intermediary organizations at the local, state, and national level are essential to providing supports for under resourced students as they progress through their post-secondary careers. Too often, however, such partnerships do not receive adequate support to expand their services, even when students are in desperate need of the resources they provide. New federal policies should intentionally harness the power of effective partnerships to increase post-secondary access and improve outcomes among under resourced students. America Forward urges federal policymakers to:

- Incentivize IHEs that participate in the Title IV program to partner with nonprofit entities to provide supports and services (or strengthen those already in place) to ensure that students, especially low-income, students with disabilities, and first generation college students persist and complete their program of study for a degree or certificate;
- Through federal legislation, explicitly clarify the potential role of intermediary organizations, which can connect IHEs to a range of nonprofit and for-profit partners, other IHEs, and community-based organizations;
- Ensure that IHEs work with qualified community partners to train higher education faculty on course designs that are accessible to the range of learners on college campuses, and enable faculty and staff to respond effectively to requests for support and accommodation from students with learning differences; and,
- Provide greater flexibility for Title IV IHEs to engage in partnerships with nonprofit entities focused on both the academic and non-academic barriers students can face during their higher education careers including practical barriers like child care, transportation, and housing support.

### **Establishing new forms of accreditation and expanding certification options for students that map skills and experience with job placement**

In order to improve post-secondary outcomes for students it is critical that IHEs and post-secondary providers recognize the realities facing today's students and consider the core competencies sought by employers in that context. As part of this effort, it is important that post-secondary providers and employers work together to create innovative credentialing and certification programs that reward the development of certain, in-demand skills that apply directly to areas of need in the economy. The Federal Government can take the lead in this effort to:

- Incentivize accrediting agencies to drive quality and outcomes and incentivize new accrediting agencies to foster disruptive innovation in the higher education sector by focusing on student success outcomes over inputs;
- Unlock federal student aid for students seeking the education and training at newly-accredited outcome-focused programs, including in proven certificate programs and other opportunities that lead directly to employment;
- Develop a protocol at the Office of Personnel Management for recognizing micro credentials (which recognize individual skills or practice) and credentials offered outside of traditional education institutions that takes into account their relevance, rigor and reliability.
- Create a system whereby micro credentials are accepted by the Department of Labor as evidence of learning through internships, service year programs, and other experiential learning;
- Department of Labor should also be tasked with validating that such credentialed experiential learning programs constitute "vocational education" per the determination requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and, therefore, are deemed to be FLSA compliant; and,
- Create a Civilian Service Option for returning military members to provide returning veterans with much-needed transition time, pathways to education, training for jobs, and the dignity and pride of continuing their service here at home. Local organizations, their communities, and the nation as a whole would benefit from the time and talents of dedicated men and women who have served their nation in uniform. Most importantly, these veterans would have a new option for reintegration into civilian life, one that would resonate with their commitment to service. This mission could be supported as an eligible benefit under the GI Bill, through the Department of Defense transition programs, or through Department of Labor veterans' assistance programs.

### **Recognizing the importance of well-prepared and well-supported teachers, principals, and other school leaders**

Teachers and school leaders have an outsized influence on a student's academic achievement. Because it governs teacher and school leader preparation programs, HEA plays an important role in ensuring that every student has access to highly effective teachers and school leaders. Any reauthorization of HEA should ensure that teacher preparation programs better prepare teachers to provide instruction to under resourced students and school leader preparation programs better prepare school leaders to be strong instructional leaders, talent managers, and culture builders for all students. Through the reauthorization process, federal lawmakers can support these efforts to:

- Ensure that Title II of HEA and Title II of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) work in concert with each other and reinforce the same priorities, including support for high-quality preparation programs that train educators of the caliber we need and investments in professional

development (PD) to raise expectations for current educators and develop teachers, teacher leaders, and principals to meet the same high bar as new educators to support diverse learners;

- Fund partnerships among high-performing principal preparation programs (including IHEs or nonprofit organizations) and high-need LEAs to create model principal preparation programs. Further improve Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grants program by allowing partnerships to focus the underlying programs on teacher leaders and principals in addition to teachers. Add an assurance that programs are training principals to meet the needs of the district(s) or state based on a needs assessment. Finally, require partnerships to report on key measures of effectiveness, fostering continuous program improvement, incentivizing districts to ensure local conditions support program graduates' effectiveness on the job, and encouraging deep collaboration between prep programs and district partners;
- Reduce the overall number of reporting requirements in Title II of HEA and focus them on critical outcome measures. For all principal preparation programs, we recommend collecting methodologically sound data on admissions rates, licensure rates, placement rates, and leadership effectiveness;
- Pilot an outcomes-based accreditation approach for teacher, teacher leader, and principal preparation programs—including those based at IHEs, LEAs, and nonprofit organizations. Outcomes to consider include the percentage of program graduates rated effective or above; the percentage of graduates who, as principals, improved school climate over two years; and, the percentage of graduates who, as principals, improved measures of teacher effectiveness and student achievement in their schools. This pilot approach would allow certain programs to move in this direction without confronting the broader challenges of capacity, readiness, and data quality; and,
- Pilot an accreditation approach for teacher, teacher leader, principal, and other school leader preparation programs—including those based at IHEs, LEAs, and nonprofit organizations—that takes into account outcomes in addition to other important measures related to program inputs (e.g., admissions rate), processes (e.g., residency or internship hours required), and outputs (e.g., placement rate of graduates into relevant positions). Outcomes to consider for principal preparation programs include: the percentage of program graduates rated effective or above on an evaluation that takes into account multiple measures of leadership effectiveness, the percentage of graduates who, as principals, improved school climate over two years, and the percentage of graduates who, as principals, improved measures of teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and other student outcomes in their schools. This pilot approach would allow certain programs to move in this direction without confronting the broader challenges of capacity, readiness, and data quality. Moreover, the pilot would provide valuable information for the field on how to implement an outcomes-based accreditation process at scale in the future;
- To demonstrate diversity, teacher preparation programs should report inputs and outcomes in a transparent way, with data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and Pell Grant recipient status.

### **Increasing access to experiences that directly link classroom learning and credentials with careers**

Increasing relevant, meaningful opportunities for students to explore careers in their fields of interest will lead to improved completion rates and increased employment after graduation. It is critical that federal policy encourage IHEs – including in partnership with nonprofits, community organizations, and businesses – to focus on providing hands-on learning experiences that get students out of the classroom and enable them to apply what they are learning to real-world challenges, creating strong linkages



between classroom knowledge and career-focused applications. In pursuit of this goal, the Federal Government should:

- Launch a “power skills” grand challenge. Power skills are defined as leadership, grit, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork, etc., and are highly valued by employers. The Federal Government should use a portion of existing workforce funding to build on progress already made in the field to define and measure these skills and accelerate change through a grand challenge, including incentivizing IHEs to expand evidence-based, out-of-classroom experiences that develop such skills, and sparking a market for job seekers and employees to grow their power skills competencies; and,
- Require that, in addition to on-campus opportunities, at least 50 percent of Work Study grants support extra-mural internships, service-learning, career related work experience, and service year opportunities for eligible students, including Pell recipients, which provide opportunities for students to link learning to experience; enable students to gain college-level learning through their service; and, provide human capital to help other students access and persist in higher education.

### **Focusing on and emphasizing public reporting of outcomes in federal higher education policy**

Federal higher education programs have long been focused on access, rather than on whether students are achieving the skills and knowledge they need to obtain and retain employment. Higher education needs to be refocused on prioritizing both access and outcomes. This can be accomplished in several ways.

- Continue to pursue statutory and regulatory changes in the HEA that require accredited and certified post-secondary institutions offering workforce credentialing programs to ensure affordable student access, persistence, and completion at school, and placement and retention in careers for which they were trained, at wages enabling them to repay education loans. Such policies should be aimed at all providers, whether they are for-profit, nonprofit, or public;
- Require the collection and reporting of college enrollment and employment rates for students leaving high school, disaggregated by the high school they graduated from;
- Prioritize a portion of federal student aid funding on outcomes through Pay for Success initiatives designed to boost funding for colleges and universities, and programs operated outside of the traditional higher education system, that deliver on student success outcomes, such as a certain percentage of students achieving a degree, credential, or securing employment;
- Upgrade the Department of Education’s existing College Navigator website to provide information on outcomes;
- Update the Department of Education’s existing list of Department-wide discretionary grant priorities to include a priority for models that are cost-effective and have a credible evidence base;
- Ensure that required data on teacher preparation programs, specifically, reflects program quality. The evaluation measures for teacher preparation programs should be meaningful ones, rather than a laundry list, and should include both inputs and outcomes to measure the quality of such programs, including teacher performance, the number of recent graduates employed, including the number in high-needs schools, and satisfaction survey outcomes; and,

- Subject to appropriate privacy protections, the Federal Government should amend law, regulations, and access protocols to permit federal, state, and local workforce and education agencies, state and local workforce boards, nonprofit workforce development organizations, social enterprises, and post-secondary institutions certified by the Department of Education for participation in Title IV of the HEA to have access to the National Directory of New Hires and to Unemployment Insurance Wage Records.

### **Reforming student aid programs to reduce debt burden**

Federal student aid has been primarily focused on access to, rather than completion of, higher education credentials and degrees. Federal student aid programs should include incentives for IHEs to be more focused on individual attainment of degree and certification programs. As part of this effort, financial aid should be flexible enough to meet unique needs that may arise throughout a student's term, including being able to draw down student aid regardless of current award year limitations to account for anticipated and unanticipated costs of textbooks, transportation, housing, and childcare. Examples of this approach could include:

- Restructure Campus Based aid programs under the HEA to partially allocate funds based on degree and certificate attainment;
- Ensure loan-forgiveness programs for those entering teaching, especially in high-poverty schools, are generous, simple, and accessible. Teachers in low-income schools need student loan help that covers the first year a teacher enters the classroom, not five to ten years later;
- Provide accelerated loan forgiveness (such as three-years of credit for each year of full-time service) or enhanced grant aid to students who complete a service year.
- Revive the Academic Competitive Grant and base it on a student's demonstrated ability to stay on track to completion in the normal period of time;
- Restore the year-round Summer Pell Grant Program authority to allow students to accelerate their studies and provide support to early college high school and related programs for low-income and disadvantaged students earlier without taking on additional debt;
- Offer lower interest rates on student loans when students select education and training at such high performing post-secondary institutions in industry sectors and skills that are identified as in demand locally; and,
- Ensuring student aid is available to students with disabilities who are enrolled but may not take a full course load.

### **Expanding participation in Service Year Programs**

Service year programs benefit communities while providing participants with opportunities for personal growth, as well as with tangible, transferable skills that are valued by employers. As we seek innovative strategies to help ease the transition between post-secondary education and the workforce, federal policies should promote the role of service year programs as an effective and mutually beneficial bridge to the full time workforce or, if the service year takes place before college, as a bridge to college. Federal policies should:

- IHEs should be incentivized to develop a system to award credit for college-level learning gained through a service year or other experience;

- Incentivize pathways to entrepreneurship for young people with a service background. The next Administration should announce a new competitive entrepreneurship program. This program would be open to young people who have served at least one year through a service year program. One thousand young people would be selected annually based on their past community engagement and the ‘Big Bet’ they detail in their application; and,
- Provide deferment or forbearance for certified service year programs. AmeriCorps members may receive deferment and are specifically eligible for forbearance of their direct student loans. This benefit should be extended to individuals participating in all service year programs that are certified to conform to requirements essentially similar to AmeriCorps, including privately funded service programs. Service year programs move in and out of AmeriCorps funding streams, or have AmeriCorps funding at one site but not another. This change would help to equalize benefits for corps members regardless of the federal funding status of their programs and would make it possible for more individuals to serve.

---

<sup>i</sup> Sullivan, Brian, “Need Work? US Has 3.2 Million Unfilled Job Openings,” CNBC, <http://www.cnn.com/id/44838614>

<sup>ii</sup> High Growth Entrepreneurs Plan to Continue Growing,” Kauffman Foundation, <http://www.kauffman.org/newsroom/high-growth-entrepreneurs-plan-to-continue-growing.aspx>

<sup>iii</sup> C.R Belfield, H.M. Levin and R. Rosen. “Economic Value of Opportunity Youth,” January 2012, [www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/econ\\_value\\_opportunity\\_youth.pdf](http://www.civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/econ_value_opportunity_youth.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Anthony Carnevale, Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl, "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018," Georgetown

<sup>v</sup> Lumina Foundation’s Today’s Student website. <https://www.luminafoundation.org/todays-student-statistics>

<sup>vi</sup> Rapidly Rising Student Debt Harms Low-Income Students, US News and World Report, 2012, <http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/student-loan-ranger/2012/01/04/rapidly-rising-student-debt-harms-low-income-students>

<sup>vii</sup> Cortiella, Candace and Horowitz, Sheldon H. The State of Learning Disabilities: Facts, Trends and Emerging Issues. New York: National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014