NYC Organizations Addresses Critical Gaps in Services to Youth Who Drop Out

by Patricia Campbell, Ph.D., Peter Kleinbard, Vivian Vazquez, with assistance from Annie Sykes Mayer and TJ Volonis, Youth Development Institute

“In the end / You’ll be the one who’s sure to win / So keep on moving / Don’t Stop / You have a destination to be reached / You have no choice / You can do this.” – C. Dixon, student

These words of determination are by a young person who embarked on the long path to a GED and further education after dropping out of school. They are a reminder of both challenge and hope.

Why Students Drop Out

The most commonly cited reason students drop out is that they do not have the skills to keep up with the high school curriculum. Low literacy and math skills portend a poor economic outlook for these young people. Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS), an initiative conducted by the Youth Development Institute (YDI) in New York City, seeks to change this.

Through CEPS, YDI is testing a community-based organization (CBO) model to enable youth who have dropped out with low academic skills – averaging fifth grade levels in reading – to transition to the GED-level and beyond, including college. CEPS operates at eight New York City CBOs. YDI is also working with an additional eight sites, funded by New York City to serve the same population. The combined efforts will reach at least 600 young people in 2008-09.

The Program Model and Technical Assistance

Now entering its fourth year, CEPS features a highly structured approach to services and the use of work and career-related experiences to increase student engagement. Each of the four components is supported by intensive assistance and training from YDI and its educational partner, America’s Choice, Inc.

YDI works with practitioners to implement a common set of principles and practices based on research about effective programs:

- **Youth development** features infused in every aspect of the program
- **Instructional methodology and curriculum** providing explicit and detailed practices guided by an educational philosophy
- **Strategies for individual student guidance and social supports** requiring constant attention to student’s assets, obstacles and progress
- **Career development** to explore future interests and options and provide work experiences
- **Team approaches to services** requiring the full collaboration of supervisors, instructors and support staff so that all understand student progress and all push in the same direction
- **Organizational commitment** from leadership for building and sustaining the work.

This list is not a menu from which one can pick and choose. The components must be implemented together to get strong results. Learning is at the center, and all com-
**SAVE THE DATE!**

**2009 NYEC Members Forum**

Mark your calendar for the upcoming NYEC Members Forum 2009 in San Francisco, CA from March 19 – 21, 2009. The NYEC Members Forum is an exclusive members-only, peer-to-peer learning event focused on improving the work of organizations and professionals in the fields of youth development, workforce development, and education.

**Finance Project Issues Brief on Funding Mentoring Programs**

The Finance Project issued a brief entitled “Finding Resources to Support Mentoring Programs and Services for Youth.” The brief highlights strategies that leaders and stakeholders can use to finance and sustain mentoring programs and services for youth. In addition, it provides information on 25 federal funding sources that can be used to finance and sustain these programs. Read the brief at [www.financeproject.org/publications/FindingResources-MentoringPrograms.pdf](http://www.financeproject.org/publications/FindingResources-MentoringPrograms.pdf).

**Aspen Institute Releases Youth Entrepreneurship Education Policy Guide**

The Aspen Institute’s Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group released a brief entitled “Youth Entrepreneurship Education in America: A Policymaker’s Guide.” Access the brief online at [www.nyec.org/content/documents/YouthEntrepreneurshipinAmericaYESG_report4.pdf](http://www.nyec.org/content/documents/YouthEntrepreneurshipinAmericaYESG_report4.pdf).

**Civic Enterprises Paper Examines Parent-School Engagement, Satisfaction**

Civic Enterprises released a paper entitled “One Dream, Two Realities: Perspectives of Parents on America’s High Schools.” Based on a survey and focus groups, the report examines parents’ engagement and satisfaction with their children’s high schools, by income, race/ethnicity, education, and school performance. The report suggests ways for schools and parents to work together more effectively. Read the report at [www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/onedream.pdf](http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/onedream.pdf).

**NYEC Hires Two New Staff**

In November, NYEC hired two full-time employees, Tracey Livingston, the new Administrative Assistant, and Cheryl Holley, the new Manager of Finance and Administration. NYEC is pleased to welcome these two professionals to the team.

**U.S. DOL Seeks Applicants for Young Offenders Grants**

The U.S. Department of Labor announced a $17.3 million competition through which selected localities will develop strategies to assist all their young offenders returning from correctional facilities. Applications are due by December 18, 2008. Learn more at [www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/SGA_DFA_PY0809.pdf](http://www.doleta.gov/grants/pdf/SGA_DFA_PY0809.pdf).

**U.S. DOL Seeks Applicants for YouthBuild Grants**


**AYPF Paper Posits New Student Assessment Model**

The American Youth Policy Forum released a paper entitled “A New Model of Student Assessment for the 21st Century.” This experience-based report explores how standardized instructional time, semester grading, and Carnegie units influence many students to underperform and prevent failing students from getting back on track to graduation. The new assessment system based upon individual student mastery consistently produced higher levels of learning, high school graduation, and college attendance. Read the paper at [www.aypf.org/documents/ANewModelofStudentAssessmentforth21stCentury.pdf](http://www.aypf.org/documents/ANewModelofStudentAssessmentforth21stCentury.pdf).

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, from 1**

ate Appropriations Committee. Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) will replace him as Senate Appropriations Committee chair in the 111th Congress.

The 111th Congress will look very different from the 110th, with the Democrats having made significant electoral gains. In the Senate, the Democrats gained 7 seats, with 2 seats still undecided – the races between Sens. Norm Coleman (R) and Al Franken (D) in Minnesota and the race between Sens. Saxby Chambliss (R) and Jim Martin (D) in Georgia – for a total of 56 seats. With the inclusion of Sens. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Joe Lieberman, who are registered Independents but will caucus with the Democrats, the Senate Democratic Caucus will total 58 members. In the House, Democrats gained at least 19 seats, and potentially more pending the final results of a number of close races. This brings Democrats to a total of at least 255 seats in the House.

**Budget and Appropriations**

Congressional Democrats are working to complete a 2008 omnibus spending bill by the beginning of January so the new Congress and President-Elect Barack Obama can quickly move on to other priorities. Three of the twelve total spending bills were cleared before Congress recessed in October. The other nine were temporarily funded through a continuing resolution that expires on March 6. The Democrats’ spending plan for the twelve appropriations bills totaled $24.5 billion more than the Administration’s request. Congressional insiders expect an omnibus bill to include appropriations similar to the amounts proposed by Democrats earlier in 2008. The Senate Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations bill passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee on June 26, 2008 included a $6 million increase for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Activities ($930.5 million total).

Congressional insiders expect that an economic stimulus package will be a top priority for the 111th Congress. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Byrd posted the full language of his proposal for a stimulus on the committee website on November 18. The proposal includes $300 milli-

**Members wishing to make announcements in YouthNotes may contact Eric Cline at ec@nyec.org.**

See LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, 3
很多低收入家庭没有与主流金融服务相连。大约2200万美国家庭没有支票或储蓄账户。相反，他们依赖于各种高成本的金融服务提供商，如信用卡公司、典当行、租金支付者和税务准备员。依赖高成本的金融服务提供商削弱了低收入家庭的储蓄和购买能力。虽然方便，这些服务通常会收取显著更高的费用和利率，比传统银行要高得多，而且有时候会失败，无法偿还。这些无序贷款可能导致更高的违约利率，信用评分降低，并可能在债务周期内陷入债务。

州和地方领导人可以采取各种策略来改善对低收入家庭的金融服务。这些策略包括：
- 链接公共福利和银行服务；
- 鼓励银行扩大服务，为未银行化的低收入家庭提供服务；
- 刺激私营部门创新，以提高对，并参与主流金融服务。

通过改善主流金融服务，州和地方政府可以改善低收入家庭的金融安全和成功。对可负担性储蓄和支票账户的访问，可以为低收入家庭奠定基础，为低收入家庭积累资产。已银行化家庭比不银行化家庭更财务上更稳定，更可能拥有自己的资产。


NYEC WELCOMES A NEW MEMBER!

Children's Aid Society
New York, NY
www.childrensaidssociety.org

NATIONAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COALITION

Howard Knoll, Chair, Board of Directors
Mala B. Thakur, Executive Director
Nancy Martin, Director, Capacity Building Initiatives
GeMar Neloms, Director, Professional Development
Cheryl Holley, Manager of Finance and Administration
Eric Cline, Member Services Coordinator
Jonathan Larsen, Policy Associate
Christina Weeter, Policy Associate
Tracey Livingston, Administrative Assistant

The National Youth Employment Coalition is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Institute for Educational Leadership, Lumina Foundation for Education, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, William Penn Foundation, Public Welfare Foundation, fees for service, and membership dues.

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ponents are designed to support student academic mastery and enjoyment of learning. YDI assists sites to meet CEPS goals by building site capacity through monthly training, technical assistance, coaching and leadership network meetings. Based on need, these are provided, to entire site-based teams and on an as-needed basis, to subsets of staff and across sites to those in similar roles.

Supervisors are key to CEPS implementation, but many do not have educational backgrounds. YDI works with them to develop ways to support instructors including joint lesson planning and team teaching. An important emphasis from building capacity among the CBOs is the need for instructors to receive substantial training on the curriculum and on working with out-of-school youth prior to and early in the program cycle. New instructors particularly benefit from becoming comfortable with the instructional program early on and by having a number of lesson plans prepared.

**Remaking a Program**

In one site’s second year, three times as many students were served than were previously, almost half of whom went on to GED programs. Over the same time, student literacy gains went from a slight decrease to a large increase (2.4 GEs) with math scores increasing as well. This past year, the site more fully implemented the CEPS model, adding a student “buddy system” and increasing the time the primary person spent working with students. They added a new, enthusiastic instructor, with a special education background, began doing more and more streamlined case conferencing, and were using student data more effectively.

As the model has evolved and sites have matured, there has been significant progress in organizational capacity, with many integrating CEPS practices more fully into their entire operations. GED attainment, which was not a focus early on, has, now that there is greater site capacity, become a goal. At the same time, program experience has sharpened YDI’s knowledge of key challenges that may not be addressed through CEPS, given limited resources. One example is identifying and serving students with severe learning disabilities, something that is being addressed through support of advocacy.

**Evaluation**

CEPS, working with the external evaluators and site staff, has incorporated the lessons learned to sharpen the elements and practices of the model. In 2006-07, the external evaluation found five of the six sites then in operation moved closer to fully implementing the CEPS model. Youth development and student support components achieved levels that were adequate or better. The biggest challenges and most significant changes for sites were in the use of the primary person approach and in the use of case or student conferencing, where staff meet formally and regularly to learn about and support participating youth.

The evaluation for 2007-08 concluded that the CEPS model was working. Over 400 students were served, and 241 of who stayed in CEPS long enough to take the Test of Adult Basic Skills (TABE) more than once. Almost a third (32 percent) of those who took the TABE more than once went on to GED programs. Overall, students had an average literacy gain of 1.5 grade equivalents (GEs). Between 2006-07 and 2007-08, CEPS almost tripled the number of students remaining in the program (from 85 to 241) while keeping comparable academic gains. For both years, CEPS student literacy gains were significantly greater than the gains for students in five other pre-GED programs not associated with CEPS.

CEPS student math gains stayed at 0.9 GEs both years while the number of students taking the math tests tripled. Math gains remain lower than literacy gains, most likely because math is less emphasized in terms of instructional time and technical assistance.

CEPS serves both female and male students and appears to be equally effective with them. No gender differences were found in retention rates. Neither were there significant gender differences found in their pre- and post-test literacy and math scores.

The support and technical assistance CEPS staff provided, combined with previous site experience implementing the model allowed sites to effectively scale up their efforts. Experienced sites had much higher student retention rates than the new sites with no significant differences in increases in literacy and math skills. Across CEPS sites, there was a strong relationship between site changes improving their implementation of the CEPS model and improved student outcomes. As sites refine their use of case conferencing and primary person, retention rates improve. When this happens in conjunction with the hiring of stronger instructors, instructional gains increase as well. YDI’s three years of experience with CEPS lead us to believe in the power of models, good technical assistance and evaluation that’s deeply connected to work.

CEPS has been able to almost triple the number of students being served but these numbers do not begin to address the enormous numbers of students who need such services. The population in need of such programs continues to be far greater than can be served by CEPS. More than 60 percent of students who drop out enter high school with low literacy levels. This makes them ineligible for most GED and Workforce Investment Act programs. Finding students for the programs is not a problem, finding programs for the students is.

**Making Math Work**

At one site, between its second and third year, about 30 students took the TABE literacy test more than once and continued to have strong gains (about 1.8 GEs). Over the same time period, almost 70 percent more students took the TABE math test more than once, and the math gain almost tripled (0.6 GEs vs. 1.7 GEs). The site had kept the same literacy instructor and used the primary person system and case conferencing. However, they hired a new math instructor with strong math skills and much experience.

**Addressing Critical Gaps in Services to Youth Who Drop Out**

This article is based on a report by the Youth Development Institute entitled “Addressing Critical Gaps in Services to Youth Who Drop Out” by Patricia Campbell, Ph.D., Peter Kleinbard, Vivian Vazquez, with assistance from Annie Sykes Moyer and TJ Volonis. For more information contact Justine Beaton at jbeaton@ydinstitute.org. For related papers and other YDI materials go to www.ydinstitute.org.