



Tabletop Session Summary

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Out-of-School Programs Help Teens Transition to Careers

Presenters: Aaron Anderson, [Boys and Girls Club of America](#); Shon Dorsey, [Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County, Fort Worth](#); Dr. S. Sean Madison, [Tarrant County College, Fort Worth](#)

This tabletop discussion examined summer and out-of-school programs that offer opportunities for career exploration and work-based learning.

Session Highlights

- » Boys & Girls Clubs serve 4.3 million young people in a typical year and provide safe places for them to learn and grow. Clubs look different in each community. There are school based sites, and sites on military installations around the world. Some clubs serve rural areas, while others serve urban areas. As a federated organization, local clubs take the Boys & Girls Clubs' framework and standards and use them to meet the distinct needs of their local community. Therefore, workforce readiness will look different in different communities.
- » Out of every ten young people between the ages of 16 and 24, three are neither working nor in school. The Boys & Girls Clubs' workforce readiness strategy is centered on young people and encourages them to explore their interests and passions, develop their skills, and apply their knowledge in real-world work experiences.
- » Between the ages of 6 and 18, there is a focus on essential skill development and career exploration. Essential skills include communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. Career exploration includes career assessments, career planning, and field trips. From 13 to 18, employability skills (e.g., resume writing and interview preparation) and certifications are emphasized. Finally, between 16-18, attention is given to work-based learning. Opportunities may include service learning, paid internships, job shadowing, and part-time jobs.
- » The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County served more than 36,000 students last year. In terms of impact, 98 percent of their members are on track to graduate from high school, 92 percent of members (grades 5-12) are on grade level for their age, and 85 percent are projected to complete postsecondary education. Their workforce development programs have included Boys & Girls Clubs of America curricula (e.g., Career Launch and Money Matters), grant programs (e.g., Talent Search and Upward Bound), and privately funded programs (e.g., Fidelity Investments Internship Program). Partnerships, including with local community colleges and universities, are integral to this work.
- » A partnership between the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County and Tarrant County College, for example, creates a stronger pipeline to college for youth. In addition, each Tarrant County College campus has one or more Early College High School programs, which provide high school students the opportunity to gain a high school diploma and 60 college credit hours. Tarrant County College is also developing pathways to technology for students interested in technical careers.



Shared Resources

- » [Boys and Girls Club of Greater Tarrant County](#)
- » [Perkins Collaborative Resource Network](#)
- » [Perkins Collaborative Resource Network - Employability Skills](#)
- » [Perkins Collaborative Resource Network - State Profiles](#)
- » [Perkins Collaborative Resource Network - Work-Based Learning](#)
- » [Work Based Learning Toolkit](#)

Questions and Answers on Out-of-School Programs Help Teens Transition to Careers

Are there lessons you would offer to those who are looking to do this work in their own community?

When thinking about a partnership, it is essential to know what your pipeline looks like. Think about the journey for a young person as they move through your partnership and how each party fits in. This helps to identify what's missing. Also, involve the ideas of young people because it's easy to talk about ideas without incorporating those whom the program is intended to benefit.

Employers also need to be taken into consideration because they are a critical component of this type of partnership. Even with employers who are excited about lending their resources and staff to support these efforts, they need continual support and guidance to connect with teens and to make these efforts valuable for teens as well as employers.

What are some recommendations for community colleges and other higher education settings as they think of developing transition support programs on their campuses?

Organizations should have a clear understanding and purpose for partnering as it relates to working with prospective college students. A partnership takes time, and both parties need a common goal. It is also important to know how organizations intend to work together and what type of leadership is needed to sustain the partnership. It's equally important to know who is going to make the decisions that move an agenda forward.

How do you communicate, collaborate, and connect with high school staff (administrators, counselors, teachers, etc.) to share student experiences that could be helpful to extend into their high school experience?

The Boys and Girls Club is recognizable in communities, so there are long standing relationships and community support that facilitate this information sharing. Typically, young people who come to the Boys and Girls Clubs are from low-income households and have some academic challenges. The aim is to have a close relationship to district leadership to provide support that contributes to learning goals in the classroom and vice versa.

How does the community college communicate with young people about building connections between their academic lives and their career interests?

Tarrant Community College is redesigning its first-year experience for students. To align students' interests with a possible career pathway, the college takes students through career interest inventories and has conversations to gauge what they know and to discuss their current skillset. They then try to match students with a career pathway, so that students don't spend a lot of time trying to figure out what they aspire to be. The college also tries to determine what additional academic supports are needed for each student to achieve their goals.



How does the Boys and Girls Club talk to young people about building connections between their academic lives and their career interests?

When talking to district partners, the Boys and Girls Club has asked how they can support learning to prevent learning regression and have been encouraged to focus on the social-emotional needs of students. A lot of social emotional work is needed before career planning, college preparedness, and exploring different career pathways. Honest conversations are critical so that students know that there is an authentic interest in them beyond the pursuit of college.

What is your perspective on workforce development locally and nationally? How do you stay current and engaged with changing workforce needs in your community?

From the perspective of someone on a workforce readiness team, recognition around alternative pathways is crucial. High school then college is not the path for everyone. Some people may need to join the workforce for financial reasons to support basic needs, and then think about other opportunities. In these instances, things to consider are how to get credit for work-based experiences. Paid internships and apprenticeships help to put dollars into the hands of young people, their families, and communities. It's also necessary to be attentive to the needs of employer partners, which seem to be changing rapidly.

