SUCCESS PLANS

Promising Tools for Customizing
Student Supports and Opportunities

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OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL
EDREDESIGN
THE EDUCATION REDESIGN LAB

HARVARD
GRADUATE SCHOOL
of EDUCATION

The Education Redesign Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education is working to build a silo-breaking 21st century education engine that will drive the restoration of social mobility and ensure that all children can reach their full potential.

In 2014, Paul Reville, Francis Keppel Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and former Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, launched the Education Redesign Lab. Our mission is to give every child in the United States the opportunity to succeed in education and in life. We hope to lead a movement to create a new and more comprehensive education model. In order to overcome widespread inequity in child development and education supports, opportunities, and outcomes, we must dramatically redesign, align, and integrate our systems of development and education for all children and youth.

The Education Redesign Lab is engaging in three primary areas of work: first, supporting field work in communities through the By All Means initiative, an ambitious effort to achieve systemic and integrated improvements in services for children; second, movement building to convene leaders from policy, practice, research, and advocacy to nurture a national movement for this broader conception of education and child development and promote a children's opportunity agenda; and third, research that includes evaluating our field work and conducting original research to inform our programmatic, policy, and advocacy work.

If we personalize supports, services, and opportunities starting in early childhood, tailor instruction to meet each child's needs, braid health and social services with schools, and provide access for all to high-quality expanded learning and enrichment opportunities, then we will ensure that all children—and all means all—have a much fairer chance of succeeding in education and in life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Saeyun D. Lee is an Education Policy Consultant whose work is focused on developing and implementing initiatives to enhance access to transformative learning opportunities for children and youth across the birth through postsecondary continuum and also close persistent attainment and achievement gaps. She served as the Policy Director at the Executive Office of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and as Senior Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs at the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. Saeyun has also served as a Research and Evaluation Specialist at The Education Alliance at Brown University, worked at the Boston Annenberg Challenge to support the implementation of reform initiatives in the Boston Public Schools, and served as an Assistant Dean of Admission at Wesleyan University. She earned a Ph.D. in education leadership and policy at Teachers College, Columbia University; an Ed.M. in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education; and her undergraduate degree at Wesleyan University.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM AT THE EDUCATION REDESIGN LAB

Lynne Sacks is the Associate Director of Programs and Research at the Education Redesign Lab and leads all research activities. Lynne has over 20 years of research, nonprofit, and policy experience. Lynne worked at the Center for Equity and Excellence in Education at George Washington University and the National Center on Education and the Economy. She has conducted research for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the American Institutes for Research; she has also served as a consultant to New Profit, the Annenberg Center for School Reform, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Education, and the Commonwealth Corporation. Lynne earned her M.Ed. and Ed.D. degrees at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and her undergraduate degree at Cornell University.

Michelle Sedaca is a Research Manager at the Education Redesign Lab where she is helping to build a knowledge base of best practices and approaches to creating comprehensive, integrated systems of support for children and youth. She most recently served as a Communications Manager for the Pathways to Prosperity initiative at Jobs for the Future, overseeing its communications and marketing strategy to amplify state and regional college and career pathways efforts. Michelle also managed a variety of research and writing projects for America's Promise Alliance and Jumpstart for Young Children. Michelle earned a joint master's degree in urban policy and child development at Tufts University and her undergraduate degree in politics at Oberlin College.

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Countless studies tell a somber and all too familiar story: an unacceptable number of children and youth in the United States face systemic barriers that impede access to opportunities and essential services that they need to thrive.

Well-documented educational achievement and attainment gaps (including higher dropout rates, lower high school graduation rates, and failure to graduate on time) disproportionately affect children and youth of color and those living in poverty.[1] An alarming number of students report that they are disengaged in school,[2] and marginalized students—those who have historically been underserved in our educational institutions—are less likely than their more advantaged peers to attain postsecondary educational and other credentials[3] which are critical for success in the modern and global economy.[4]

Opportunity gaps are also expanding to such an extent that "rich kids and poor kids are now growing up in separate and unequal Americas."[5] The gap between affluent and lower-income families on spending for academic and other types of enrichment activities has significantly increased over the course of several decades, and children from lower-income families are increasingly less likely to participate in school-based extracurricular activities.[6] In addition to educational and enrichment disparities, children, youth, and families have varying and, in many cases, limited access to health services.[7]

Given these persistent opportunity and achievement gaps, traditional education reform efforts—those focused primarily on academic or in-school factors—have been necessary but not close to sufficient to prepare all children for success.

The limited success of education reform efforts to date demands that we identify and implement more effective strategies to address the multifaceted needs of our youngest citizens.

One of the critical flaws in our school systems is that their architecture is based on a factory-model logic, a one-size fits all paradigm that doesn't address the particular, complex, and varied needs of children and youth living in poverty. They don't customize interventions or otherwise account for the special circumstances, assets, and challenges faced by individual children. They ignore important developmental differences and other variations among children and youth favoring, instead, a logic that suggests equity and equality are synonymous and all children will derive what they need from identical treatment. This approach fails to work for many of our most disadvantaged students.

The limited success of education reform efforts to date demands that we identify and implement more effective strategies to address the multifaceted needs of our youngest citizens. The goal of the Education Redesign Lab is to fundamentally and dramatically redesign, align, and integrate our systems of child development and education for all children and youth. We must build new systems that are more responsive and nimble and, therefore, can provide personalized and comprehensive supports and services to all children and youth from cradle to career.

Multiple stakeholders at different levels of our education system have been harnessing promising strategies to provide personalized, integrated, and comprehensive academic and support services for children, youth, and their families. These stakeholders are also building new systems— including enhancing organizational processes and structures, developing innovative digital tools and platforms, and implementing strategic resource allocation strategies—to effectively support and sustain this work.

Personalized plans tailored to each and every young person are an especially promising strategy. The Education Redesign Lab is eager to accelerate this innovative approach and build on the efforts already underway in communities across the country. Therefore, we are partnering with local communities and school districts to support the development and implementation of Success Plans.

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These personalized plans are tools as well as processes for capturing the full range of strengths and needs of children and youth in order to connect them with tailored, seamless, and equitable services and opportunities. Conceptually, the plans represent our commitment to meet all children and youth where they are and give them what they need, inside of school and out, to be successful. Practically, Success Plans are logical tools with which to build new systems focused on *individual* needs. While personalized plans represent a promising approach, they are largely underemployed in the field of education. Hence, we need to explore and further develop these plans, implement them strategically and wisely, and use lessons learned to inform future work.

The purpose of this report is twofold: first, we articulate our vision for Success Plans and offer recommendations to stakeholders who are developing and implementing personalized plans; and second, we examine a range of personalized plans in educational and community settings across the United States.

This report begins with an overview of the emergence of personalized learning strategies and plans. Subsequently, it describes organizations and agencies that are implementing plans aligned with our vision for Success Plans and highlights innovative models and strategies related to the implementation of individualized plans and the use of digital platforms. The report analyzes the featured plans, including the identification of common elements such as the roles and responsibilities of children and youth as well as parents, family members, guardians, and other supportive adults; implementation strategies; attention to issues of equity and access; data protection and security; and challenges related to developing and implementing personalized plans. Lastly, we offer recommendations regarding the development and implementation of Success Plans and identify questions for further consideration.

This report is the first product of a research project focused on developing and implementing personalized plans for children in various settings across the United States. We have also created a companion toolkit, available on our website (www.edredesign.org) for communities interested in creating and implementing Success Plans. We hope that this report will help build our collective knowledge about personalized plans; advance ongoing efforts to provide personalized, comprehensive, and integrated support to all children and youth; and inform future research.

THE EMERGENCE OF
PERSONALIZED PLANS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Personalized plans vary; for example, some plans focus solely on academic indicators and outcomes while others may include experiential learning opportunities, college and career indicators, assessments of health and well-being, or other categories. This section describes the emergence of personalized plans and highlights several types of plans currently being implemented in educational and community settings across the United States. We also examine the impact of these plans on child and youth outcomes. Lastly, on pages 14-15, we share our vision and 10 guiding principles for Success Plans.

THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM

Required for all children and youth with disabilities who attend public schools,[8] the Individualized Education Program (IEP) established the precedent for and informed the development of individualized plans for students.[9] The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) mandates that an IEP include ongoing assessments of progress and performance, the identification of measurable annual goals, the provision of specific services to meet individual needs and enable the child or youth to advance in the general education curriculum, and participation in inclusive educational settings and district or state assessments.[10] IDEA also includes specific requirements regarding the process to develop and implement an IEP, including the initial evaluation and regular meetings to continually monitor the child's progress and the provision of services,[11] and the engagement and advocacy of parents, family members, or guardians.[12]

IEPs must also include information about a child's transition to postsecondary training, education, employment, and as appropriate, the ability to live independently.[13] The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA included additional requirements regarding the provision of services to support successful transition to postsecondary opportunities and the reporting responsibilities of local and state entities.[14] An IEP transition plan must be developed no later than when a child turns 16 and include measurable postsecondary goals that are updated annually, transition services and activities, and courses of study.[15] The IEP "must be a truly *individualized* document," and it is the "cornerstone of a quality education" for a child with a disability.[16]

INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLANS

Personalized learning strategies—characterized by student-driven and tailored instruction to match individual interests, strengths, and needs; increased student engagement and empowerment; personalized curricula and assessments; and collaborative relationships between students and teachers[17]—gained prominence during the 1990s as a national school reform initiative.[18] As part of this trend, state and national commissions supported individual or personal education plans to better support an increasingly diverse population of students, reduce dropout rates, create more personalized learning opportunities in high school, and increase college readiness.[19]

The 1996 publication of *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution* by the National Association of Secondary School Principals highlighted the importance of implementing personalized strategies.[20] This document and a subsequent publication, *Breaking Ranks II,* included recommendations for personalized planning, "a comprehensive advisory program that ensures each student has frequent and meaningful opportunities to plan and assess [their] academic and social progress,"[21] and the development of a Personal Plan for Progress for all students to allow students to "design their own methods for learning in an effort to meet high standards."[22] The Personal Plan for Progress is a "direct precursor"[23] to the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), a student-centered plan that is focused on individual learning needs and styles and also increases students' empowerment and engagement in their educational experiences by enhancing their ability to set and achieve academic and other goals.[24] According to

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Boston University Professor V. Scott Solberg and associates:

> The ILP process is the missing element in most reform and education redesign efforts because it starts with developing the self-exploration and career exploration skills needed to enable the individual to define for themselves the career and life goals they want to consider and then supports their planning efforts to pursue those goals successfully. As a result, individuals take charge of their learning and are motivated to achieve in those learning opportunities that are aligned to their goals.[25]

ILPs Implemented by State Education Agencies. States are "lead[ing] the way in adopting ILPs";[26] 44 states and the District of Columbia either require or encourage the use of ILPs for kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) students, primarily high school students but increasingly with middle and elementary school students.[27] Most state plans focus on raising high school graduation rates and students' access to postsecondary opportunities,[28] and ILPs are "increasingly understood to be the lynchpin tool for linking the twin goals of college readiness and career readiness."[29]

A 2018 report, *Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans Throughout the Lifespan: A Revised and Updated ILP How to Guide 2.0,* defines ILPs based on extensive research about state-managed plans as:

> A document/portfolio consisting of an individual's (a) course taking and postsecondary plans aligned to career goals; and (b) documentation of the range of college and career readiness skills [a student] has developed, including out-of-school learning experiences...As a process, ILPs provide individuals with personalized career development opportunities focused on developing their self-exploration, career exploration, and career planning and management skills that enables them to become aware of the relevance of academic preparation, work-based and other learning opportunities and the importance of completing a two- or four-year postsecondary credential, program or degree.[30]

The development of ILPs is prompting the implementation of professional development programs for educators, policy changes related to high school graduation requirements, and the creation or enhancement of postsecondary transition programs.[31] States are also creating online tools and systems such as "ePortfolios" and "ILP-focused"[32] curricula and activities, changing school schedules to increase time for student advising, assigning mentors to students, enhancing family engagement, and increasing students' access and exposure to career-focused experiential learning opportunities to support the use of ILPs.[33] The development of ILPs in states that have mandated their use is also driving discussions about the alignment between this tool and IEPs.[34] The ILP is considered to be complementary to an IEP due to its similarities related to goals, content, and process and the benefit of conducting ongoing assessments of growth and process rather than an annual review as required by IDEA.[35]

The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 has provided states with new opportunities to redesign learning,[36] and the federal legislation has prompted "a promising shift toward personalization."[37] Based on a review of state ESSA plans, personalized learning is embedded in vision statements, accountability systems, and strategies to support schools, educators, and students; professional development and teacher preparation programs are aligned with student-centered and personalized learning strategies; and states are focusing on the whole child.[38] The implementation of a wider range of personalized learning strategies and plans could create exciting opportunities to implement statewide policies and practices, decrease achievement and attainment gaps that disproportionately affect historically marginalized groups of students, and increase educational and other outcomes for all students.

PERSONAL OPPORTUNITY PLANS AND THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT SERVICES

Research about brain development has yielded sobering data about the potentially devastating impact of poverty, discrimination, violence, and other factors on children's growth, achievement, and lifelong success; prolonged periods of adversity can result in increased risk for physical and health problems, prevent the development of foundational capacities and skills, and affect social and economic mobility.[39] However, research about mitigating such impact is resulting in the identification of effective strategies for building core life skills and providing promising interventions and support services to children and youth.[40]

Both individual- and community-level interventions are necessary to mitigate the effects of "poverty, violence, discrimination, and other threats to well-being"[41] on children, youth, and families, and building partnerships among educational institutions and community partners is essential to this work.[42] According to the *Partnerships, Not Pushouts* guide, which was produced by a collaboration among 10 organizations:

> Both equity and economics demand a different path in education. The urgency to meet new college-and-career-ready standards has never been greater, given the record number of children living in poverty and a rapidly changing student population with unique needs. *It is critically important for educators, parents, community members, and policymakers to come together to establish a new "supports-and opportunity-based" vision for education reform that promotes policy change built around the needs and strengths of students and families* [italics in original].[43]

Increased recognition within the field of education of the importance of addressing non-academic needs has resulted in the expansion of integrated student support (ISS) initiatives that provide comprehensive services to children, youth, and their families. There are five elements of ISS models that support the delivery of services: 1) community partnerships; 2) student support coordination; 3) integration into school settings; 4) needs assessment; and 5) data tracking. ISS models are based on child development theories, including focusing on the whole child, recognizing the social

determinants of health, providing personalized and child-centered support services, and acknowledging the impact of individual, family, school, and community factors on academic success.[44]

ISS models are being implemented in schools in every state in the nation, and there is increasing integration of these models with multi-tiered systems of support and positive behavioral interventions and support.[45] In addition, schools are "mov[ing] from an ad hoc application of integrated supports to more systematization."[46] ESSA has also created new opportunities to implement ISS models, as schools and districts can incorporate these models into Title I programs for schools with high percentages of children from lower-income families and Title VI programs to support health and safety.[47] Since many of these models are being implemented in communities that serve children and youth in lower-income communities and children/youth of color, they can potentially improve outcomes for those most in need of assistance.[48]

A strategy for addressing the needs of children and youth and also promoting collaboration among educators and community partners is the development and implementation of Personal Opportunity Plans (POPs), student-centered and student-directed plans that are implemented in K-12 schools and include elements of ILPs such as goal setting based on interests and strengths, student engagement and participation in the pursuit of learning experiences, ongoing assessment and review of data, and collaboration among students, educators, and and parents, family members, and guardians.[49] POPs "affirm the unique characteristics of each individual person,"[50] recognize the impact of these characteristics on students' decisions and plans, and include multiple types of learning experiences and goals.[51] These plans are aligned with principles of youth development, reflect and value all types of learning and developmental experiences, and are based on an "inclusive perspective about students' future aspirations."[52] Most importantly, in addition to academic and postsecondary components, POPs focus on the whole child; assess the physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth; and monitor the results of academic, behavioral, and mental health interventions.[53]

A POP process utilizes flexible and adaptive approaches and also promotes collaboration among students, educators, and parents, family members, and guardians; in addition, the process is based on schools' commitment to educational equity.[54] POPs are similar to ILPs and other types of personalized plans—but given their unique characteristics, POPs have "an even greater potential to become meaningful and empowering experiences for the entire range of learners."[55]

EMERGING EVIDENCE

There is a growing body of research about the impact of personalized plans. During the early years of implementing ILPs, researchers asserted that there were limited findings with regard to their impact[56] and identified potential outcomes for students.[57] Subsequent studies of ILPs managed by state education agencies indicate that students, educators, and family members perceive that ILPs create more personalized learning environments and stronger relationships among these groups, increase engagement in planning and the pursuit of learning opportunities, and increase enrollment in rigorous courses.[58] Many school counselors indicate that ILPs contribute to successful student outcomes.[59] Studies also suggest that students with disabilities are pursuing regular education diplomas as opposed to alternative diplomas[60] and that ILPs increase cross-sector and cross-departmental collaboration.[61]

Studies of POPs coupled with personalized learning and the provision of support services demonstrate several benefits. Findings suggest that these plans increase attendance, grades, graduation rates, percentages of students applying to and enrolling in institutions of higher education, and percentages of students who complete postsecondary degrees or certificates.[62] An analysis of cost-benefit studies of ISS models identified a return on investment of between $3 and $14 for every dollar invested.[63] Studies of ISS models have also shown positive impact on academic outcomes, but additional research is needed to assess their impact on non-academic outcomes and their relationship to academic achievement and success.[64]

Data and findings focused solely or primarily on the impact of IEPs is somewhat limited. However, research suggests that IDEA has significantly improved outcomes of students with disabilities. A report published by the U.S. Department of Education, *Thirty-five Years of Progress in Educating Children with Disabilities through IDEA,* described the significant impact of the federal legislation on multiple outcomes:

- A greater number of young children with disabilities are identified at earlier ages, resulting in the provision of intervention and support services that prevent or reduce the need for additional services in the future.

- A greater number of children with disabilities are attending neighborhood schools (95 percent based on 2008 data) and are being educated in general education classrooms for at least a portion of the school day.

- Students with disabilities are reaching higher levels of academic achievement as measured by the increase in the percentage of students who achieved at or above the basic level of proficiency (22 percent in 2000 to 35 percent in 2009).

- A greater number of students with disabilities are graduating from high school and enrolling in postsecondary programs.

- A greater number of young adults with disabilities are employed.[65]

As a result of IDEA, "the nation has moved from paying little attention to the special needs of individuals with disabilities to merely accommodating these individuals' basic needs and then eventually to providing programs and services for all children with disabilities and their families."[66] A "national infrastructure of supports"[67] has also been developed for millions of children and youth with disabilities as well as their nondisabled peers. IDEA has also fostered culturally relevant instructional, assessment, and intervention practices for a diverse population of children and youth with disabilities.[68] Despite these

achievements, the implementation of programs for students with disabilities has been critiqued for highly bureaucratic processes, uneven and often inequitable implementation, and high costs.[69]

Personalized learning strategies have the potential to increase educational equity and address the needs of historically underserved groups of students because they are focused on recognizing individual strengths and interests, providing differentiated services to address specific needs, and "meeting learners where they are."[70] The IEP is an "entry point"[71] for examining how and the extent to which personalized learning efforts and plans address issues of equity because it provides instructional and other services based on the individual strengths and needs of children.[72] As such, the components of and process for IEPs have implications for the provision of services to students of color, English language learners, and other groups of students.[73] POPs could benefit students

of color given the attention to academic as well as physical, social-emotional, and other needs.[74]

However, there are concerns that personalized strategies are not adequately addressing the needs of historically underserved populations. These concerns include the limited access of marginalized groups to these strategies and the possibility that educational institutions may inadvertently increase educational inequities by failing to provide appropriate academic and other services.[75] Given limited empirical research about the impact of personalized strategies on historically undeserved students[76] further study is required to better understand how and the extent to which these strategies increase both equity and access. In addition, research isolating the impact of different types of personalized plans on student and other types of outcomes could result in valuable insights about their content, structure, and effective implementation strategies.

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Success Plans will capture in- and out-of-school strengths and needs of children and youth; connect to the infrastructure that can match them with tailored services and opportunities; and seamlessly coordinate education and community resources to increase access to equitable opportunities.

OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS PLANS
10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Personalized plans, coupled with integrated supports, have great promise. Success Plans are important tools and processes for anchoring ongoing work, and Individual Education Plans, Individual Learning Plans, and Personal Opportunity Plans provide important lessons for implementing new strategies and creating new systems. Our vision for Success Plans incorporates elements of these existing plans as well as effective strategies and models to date and was developed in response to several key questions identified during our research process. These questions include:

- How can personalized plans be designed and implemented to prevent the replication of historic and systemic inequities?

- What types of guidance and support do children and youth need to successfully and productively contribute to the development and implementation of personalized plans?

- How can we build a robust infrastructure to support the successful development and implementation of personalized plans?

- How can we create the conditions necessary to successfully develop and implement personalized plans? For example, how can we ensure that these plans will be regarded as essential tools and processes as opposed to compliance tasks?

- How can we develop both effective and efficient processes for developing and implementing personalized plans?

Many institutions and organizations that challenge traditional assumptions and practices related to supporting children and youth, such as the Harlem Children's Zone, Summit Learning, and LEAP Innovations, also informed our vision for this important work. The Harlem Children's Zone is a pioneer in providing coordinated and comprehensive services to children and families from birth through college.[77] It develops and implements individualized action plans for students enrolled in after-school programs; these plans include information about students' strengths, interests, and needs and are used to match students with personalized support services.[78] Summit Learning is driving a personalized approach to learning and teaching focused on students' passions and interests, which is currently implemented in over 380 schools across the U.S., in addition to its network of schools In Washington and California.[79] LEAP Innovations is a leader in promoting the implementation of personalized learning strategies that empower and engage learners and focus on learners' strengths and needs.[80]

Our vision for Success Plans embodies several overarching concepts: these plans will capture in- and out-of-school strengths and needs of children and youth; connect to the infrastructure that can match them with tailored services and opportunities; and seamlessly coordinate education and community resourcesto increase access to equitable opportunities. Success Plans will promote the development and implementation of proactive, comprehensive, and systemic strategies to recognize, accommodate, and address the needs and strengths of children and youth.

Based on our research and the Education Redesign Lab's own theory of action, we have identified 10 guiding principles that define the concept of Success Plans. Effective Success Plans should be:

1 **PERSONALIZED:** Celebrate each child's assets and use a customized approach to identify individual strengths, interests, and needs.

2 **COMPREHENSIVE:** Offer a wide array of academic, health, and other support services to meet the needs of children and youth from cradle to career.

3 **STUDENT-CENTERED:** Empower children and youth to discover and pursue their academic and non-academic strengths and interests, set short- and long-term goals, and identify needs.

4 **EQUITABLE:** Target systemic gaps that disproportionately affect marginalized students and ensure that the development and implementation of Success Plans will increase access to essential supports and opportunities.

5 **ACTIONABLE:** Establish clear strategies and processes for identifying and delivering supports and services to each child and youth both in and out of school.

6 **RELATIONSHIP-DRIVEN:** Allocate appropriate staffing to jointly develop and implement the plans with students by fostering mutually respectful relationships, in addition to involving parents, families, and other adults in the process.

7 **CROSS-SECTOR:** Provide coordinated, comprehensive services by establishing collaborative relationships with partner organizations across multiple sectors.

8 **INFORMATION-DRIVEN:** Utilize feedback and data from multiple sources, including students, families, and a diverse set of agencies, to regularly assess impact on multiple outcomes and enhance the quality of services provided.

9 **SECURE:** Use digital platforms that meet high standards of data security and protect student and family privacy.

10 **SUSTAINABLE:** Identify long-term funding sources and create organizational structures to ensure consistent implementation over time.

Engaging in this work will require a substantial change in mindset on the part of educators, parents and family members, community partners, and other key stakeholders, as we need to think and work differently than we have in the past. Embracing a personalized approach is critical for helping ensure more children and youth can thrive and that we can maximize their potential to be lifelong learners, active citizens, and meaningful contributors to their communities. We hope that Success Plans will help to accelerate this essential work.

In order to examine different types of personalized plans being implemented in various educational settings and contexts, we conducted document analyses and interviews with representatives from institutions and organizations that are currently developing and implementing these plans (the Appendix on page 73 contains the list of interviewees). These institutions and organizations were identified based on our research as well as referrals from our partners. All interviews were conducted using an interview protocol and additional questions were sent to the interviewees by email. Staff members at the Education Redesign Lab also participated in online demonstrations of several digital platforms conducted by interviewees and/or their colleagues.

Our approach to conducting research and producing this report involved reviewing a select number of plans to better understand their development and implementation. We explored key topics, including the rationale for developing plans, how indicators are chosen and included in the plans, multiple dimensions of developing and implementing the plans, and digital tools and platforms that have been created or adapted to support the use of these plans.

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD
COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

This section profiles the work of four entities—City Connects, Communities In Schools, the Colorado Department of Education, and the National Center for Youth Law—which are developing and implementing comprehensive plans aligned with our vision for Success Plans. For each entity, we describe the primary components of the models, provide an overview of the plans and the processes by which they are utilized, and discuss governance and management structures, digital tools and platforms, equity and access, associated costs, and their impact on different outcomes (as information and data are available).

CITY CONNECTS
TAILORED STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN[81]

City Connects, based at the Center for Optimized Student Support at the Lynch School of Education at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, is a robust partnership among Boston College (BC), school districts, and community agencies. Its mission is to implement systemic strategies to leverage the strengths of children; address their academic, social and emotional, and physical needs; and provide them with individualized and comprehensive prevention, intervention, and enrichment services in schools and communities.

An initial partnership between BC and the Boston Public Schools (BPS) in the 1990s launched the City Connects model in BPS schools in 2001, and it is currently being implemented in 90 public, Catholic, and charter schools in Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Ohio. Approximately 90 percent of the students in these schools are from low-income families, 20 percent are English language learners, and 19 percent receive special education services.

CORE COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

The work of City Connects is grounded in developmental science research, and its model was designed to operationalize principles of effective practice for addressing the host of factors that impede learning. Based on the developmental trajectories of children, the range and intensity of children's needs, the importance of recognizing both strengths and needs, and the influence of families and environments on development, City Connects develops support services for students that are customized, comprehensive, coordinated, and continuous.

Tailored Student Support Plan. This plan is the anchor for the City Connects model. In each school, a City Connects Coordinator (who is trained as a school counselor or social worker, may be an existing or new staff member, and is required to operate in accordance with practices described in the *City Connects Practice Manual)* works with classroom teachers to conduct reviews of all students.

The Coordinator is responsible for developing and implementing tailored support plans for each student. First, the Coordinator meets individually with each classroom teacher to conduct a Whole Class Review (WCR), a semi-structured interview designed to identify the strengths and needs of each student across academic, social, emotional, behavioral, health, and family domains. Indicators of strengths and needs include academic data provided by the teacher, observational data, and information from other professionals such as the school nurse. Based on these interviews, the Coordinator considers available school- and/or community-based prevention, early intervention, crisis intervention, and enrichment services and establishes connections between service providers and children and their families. Using a proprietary database (described on page 20) to find providers and track the delivery of services, the Coordinator monitors these services to ensure that they are addressing the specific needs of children and their families.

The WCR results in a general grouping of students—Tier 1 (strengths and minimal risk), Tier 2a or 2b (strengths and mild to moderate risk), or Tier 3 (strengths to severe risk)—and students who are identified as having intensive needs receive an Individual Student Review (ISR). The Coordinator and a student support team (which can include school psychologists, teachers, administrators, nurses, and representatives from community agencies) conduct the ISR to develop specific and measurable goals as well as strategies for the student.

The Coordinator uses a Student Interest Inventory to collect information about students' particular areas of interest. The identification of these interests informs the development of the tailored support plans and enables the Coordinator to connect students to relevant enrichment programs. The Coordinator has multiple opportunities over the course of the school day to connect informally with students and learn about their experiences related to receiving support services and engaging in enrichment activities. In addition to working collaboratively with school staff members and representatives of community-based entities, the Coordinator works in consultation with family members to develop and implement the student support plans. New plans for students are developed on an annual basis, but they can be reviewed and revised over the course of the year if the current plan is not effective.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The City Connects model operates in accordance with a tight-loose management approach in which all schools are required to implement core components of the model but local entities have the flexibility to implement strategies that reflect the context and particular needs of the student populations being served. Required components include the designation of a Program Manager and Coordinators; the Program Manager (ideally a district employee but could also be a City Connects employee) is responsible for implementing the model, serving as an advocate, and supervising and providing professional development to the Coordinators. In addition, City Connects leverages the existing school support infrastructure in schools and districts to implement the student support plans.

DIGITAL TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

City Connects developed a proprietary online database, the Student Support Information System (SSIS), to facilitate the implementation of the student support plans, maintain both individual and school records, monitor the provision of prevention and enrichment, early intervention, and intensive/crisis intervention services, and collect data to assess the impact of services on multiple outcomes. SSIS enables the collection of data on the student support plans, service referrals, and the school-and community-based providers that deliver services. The database also creates dashboards and provides prompts to Coordinators to monitor and adjust the support plans on an ongoing basis. This database has systematized the referral process; hence, a Coordinator can effectively and efficiently serve up to 400 students.

In order to protect student confidentiality and data, access is differentiated by user; only the Coordinators have access to individual student information and they can only access data about students enrolled in the schools in which they work. All Coordinators are required to participate in annual training about the protection of confidential information and data. Program Managers have access to aggregated data from the schools of the Coordinators that they supervise, and they utilize the data to monitor progress and offer support to the Coordinators.

COST

The cost per school is based on many components and can vary depending on several factors (including the number of schools in a district, the student support configuration of the district, and the capacity of the district).

EQUITY AND ACCESS

The grounding principles of the City Connects model—"every student, every teacher, with the goal of providing the right supports at the right time"[82] —demonstrate how issues of equity and access are addressed. Given that "all kids are likely to come to school with some kind of need and all come with strengths,"[83] rather than identifying particular populations in schools, the City Connects model requires the development and implementation of student support plans for *each and every child.* The City Connects Coordinator, working in productive collaboration with school staff members, parents and family members, and community representatives, serves as an essential "hub of student support"[84] to ensure that children and families have access to appropriate and necessary services.

City Connects also works "through a culturally sensitive lens."[85] The relationships among Coordinators, students, and their families are based on openness to differences across individuals and cultures, and Coordinators are sensitive to cultural preferences and their impact on the provision of support services. Cultural sensitivity is also a focus of the continued professional growth of the Coordinators, and relevant professional development is delivered during biweekly sessions.

The City Connects model requires the development and implementation of student support plans for *each and every child.*

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

The City Connects model is having a substantial impact on the discourse of school professionals about their students and needs. According to evaluations of the model and in particular, anonymous surveys with teachers, the development of the student support plans is fostering the development of empathy and understanding on the part of teachers; as a result, their beliefs and attitudes toward children and their relationships with their children are changing. Principals are speaking differently about how to identify community partners and provide support services as well as describing the benefits of collaborating with families.

In addition, rigorous quantitative analyses of longitudinal data (across both samples of students and sites) demonstrate that the model is having positive impact. Select findings are as follows:

- Students enrolled in City Connects schools outperform their peers in comparison schools on several measures of academic achievement, including higher scores in reading, writing, and mathematics by the end of fifth grade.

- The achievement gap in reading has been eliminated between English language learners in City Connects schools and students proficient in English in comparison schools.

- Achievement gaps have been narrowed between students who are immigrants and students who are English proficient.

- Elementary school students in City Connects schools outperformed their peers in comparison schools on statewide test scores in grades six, seven, and eight.

- Students enrolled in City Connects schools (who had lower reading and math scores at the start of implementation than comparison students) demonstrated greater improvement in report card scores and matched the performance of their peers in reading and mathematics in the fifth and fourth grades respectively.

Students enrolled in City Connects schools also had lower retention rates than comparable students in comparison schools, elementary school students enrolled in City Connects schools had lower rates of chronic absenteeism in middle and high school than students in comparison schools, and students previously enrolled in City Connects schools (from kindergarten through the fifth grade) dropped out of high school at approximately half the rate of students in comparison schools.

These findings illustrate the power of the City Connects model and the necessity of providing customized, comprehensive, coordinated, and continuous services to children and families. The model customizes support at both the individual and school levels by assessing students' strengths and needs and delivering differentiated services. It prioritizes comprehensive assessments of students across multiple domains and facilitates coordination between schools and key partners in communities. Lastly, embedding the model in schools and conducting an ongoing review of student support plans promotes the continuous provision of services.

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS
INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT PLAN[86]

Communities In Schools (CIS), based in Arlington, VA, is a national network of independent nonprofit affiliates that "collaborates to surround students with a community of support"[87] and its mission is to "build relationships that empower students to stay in school and succeed in life."[88] CIS was established in New York City in the 1970s and the network currently serves approximately 1.5 million students in 2,300 urban, suburban, and rural K-12 schools (mostly public with some charter and alternative schools) across 25 states. Each year, roughly 10 percent of the total students served (or 150,000 students) are case managed by a CIS Site Coordinator; approximately 93 percent of these students qualify for free and reduced-price lunches and 85 percent represent students of color.

CORE COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

The foundation of the CIS model is the provision of integrated student supports by collaborative partnerships among the following entities: a CIS affiliate; a school-based Site Coordinator hired and trained by the affiliate; and partners, including schools, business, and community agencies. The CIS affiliate conducts an initial assessment of community needs, assets, and resources and partners with school district leaders to identify how best to leverage the CIS model.

Site Coordinator. The Site Coordinator, who oftentimes has experience in social work, establishes a school support team or works with an existing team to review school-wide demographic, academic achievement, mobility, attendance, school climate, and other types of data. The team also examines community factors such as educational attainment data and crime and employment rates, collects additional data through surveys, interviews, and focus groups with students, teachers, and parents, and reviews school improvement plans. Analyzing multiple types of data results in the identification of broad school-wide gaps and needs and the development of a school support plan that includes school-wide goals. This plan also contains extensive information about the types of tiered services needed across 10 categories of support (academic assistance, basic needs, behavioral interventions, college and career preparation, community and service learning, enrichment, family engagement, life skills, mental health, and physical health). The goals for providing support services differ by type of school and school needs. The goals for elementary schools often focus on attendance, parent engagement, and social and emotional development. Middle school goals address behavior and social and emotional development and high school goals focus on persistence, completion, and college and career readiness. Tier 1 services are available to all students enrolled in the school to address school-level risk factors, Tier 2 services are targeted programs available to groups of students with common needs, and Tier 3 services are often more intensive and designed to address individual students' needs.

Individual Support Plan. Students needing Tier 2 and 3 services participate in CIS case management and the CIS Site Coordinator works with the school support team to examine individual student data, including early warning indicators; feedback from teachers, counselors, or other school staff members; whether the student is receiving social services; and parent and family data. Different assessments and tools are also utilized to assess a range of factors, including social and emotional development; competencies and skills such as self-regulation, motivation, and engagement; and level of connectivity and relationships with others. The purpose of this assessment is to identify needs, but equally importantly, the student's assets and strengths. This assessment results in the development of an individual support plan that includes different types of goals with measurable targets and metrics, identifies support services aligned with the 10 categories of support, and includes information about frequency and dosage of supports.

The Site Coordinator is responsible for implementing core elements of the CIS model: 1) needs assessment; 2) planning and goal setting; 3) service delivery; 4) monitoring and adjustment; and 5) end-of-year evaluation. The Coordinator reports to school leaders, support school teams, and the leaders of the CIS affiliate about activities and progress during every grading period at a minimum. The Coordinator also serves as the single point of contact for community agencies and other entities to ensure that services are

provided efficiently and without duplication, and collaborates with school staff members to embed the CIS model in the work of the school.

The CIS Site Coordinator and the student support team conduct regular reviews with students to monitor progress regarding achieving their individual goals and adjust the plans and services as necessary. Informal reviews are conducted monthly or sometimes weekly if necessary and formal assessments include a quarterly data review and the end-of-year evaluation.

Case-managed students work with Site Coordinators to identify at least one required goal related to attendance, behavior, or course performance as well as other goals related to academic development, social and emotional development, and college and career readiness. During the regular reviews, students have the opportunity to reflect on progress toward goals and their experiences with and impact of intervention and support services. Students can also contribute to adjusting their plans based on life changes that may be hindering or helping their situation. In addition, parents, family members, and guardians may be involved in developing and implementing individual plans, especially for students enrolled in elementary and middle schools.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The CIS model operates in accordance with a tight-loose management approach. CIS is a federated network that does not govern its affiliates; while certain implementation procedures (including the process for establishing affiliates and standard training for Site Coordinators) are required, the affiliates have autonomy with regard to hiring or staffing and providing additional training opportunities.

DIGITAL TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

CIS affiliates have access to a new comprehensive online data management system licensed by CIS. While the former data system primarily served as a compliance tool, this system (which has been piloted for two years) enables users to implement the core components of the CIS approach. In addition to serving as a platform for storing different types of data entered by the Site Coordinator, it includes work flows for users to create both school and individual assessments and plans, monitor progress, and facilitate other core components of the CIS model. The system also houses multiple years of data for all students so that users can track progress and establish baseline metrics for upcoming years. Site Coordinators have access to an online, searchable database of evidence-based interventions and providers so that users can find services by population, risk factors, or outcomes. An online resource center is also available with templates for every aspect of the CIS approach so that users can, if they choose, use printed documents to support their work.

Data-sharing agreements with the CIS affiliates and schools or districts are established (and differ across sites based on how data is managed and transferred) and for case-managed students, their parents or guardians are required to provide consent. In order to further protect student data, the CIS data system has different levels of access and usability; for example, some users can only view data while others can both view and edit data and other types of information.

CIS is building a new feature (to be piloted during the spring of 2019 and available to the network during the 2019-2020 academic year) to allow students to access their plans and dashboards, monitor progress in real time, complete assessments, and schedule meetings with the

Site Coordinators. CIS will develop a similar portal for parents, family members, and guardians to enable them to access information about students' plans, the provision of support and intervention services, and progress toward stated goals. The portal will also enable them to request meetings with Site Coordinators.

CIS is developing a new algorithm-based feature, based on multiple years of student data, that will enable the system to automatically recommend services for the approximately 150,000 students in case management. These services will be identified based on similar assets and needs and the use of algorithms will remove biases and other factors that may influence the identification and provision of services.

COST

The affiliates do not pay dues or fees for the data platform or online training and the cost of implementing the CIS model varies by school, with an average cost of $85,000 per school per year.

The salary for the full-time Site Coordinator is based on geography and salary levels in the region; in some cases, multiple staff members will work in schools to share case management responsibilities so there is variance regarding the financial model for hiring and retaining site-based Coordinators and other staff members.

EQUITY AND ACCESS

CIS addresses issues of equity and access in several ways. The majority of the population served by CIS are students who are underserved, and CIS and its partners provide necessary supports and services to prepare students for success. CIS also promotes equity and access by addressing issues related to discipline, trauma, and poverty. Lastly, CIS provides professional development and training opportunities related to fostering relationships, restorative justice, and addressing issues of diversity and inclusion. In essence, addressing issues of equity and access is "the nature of why [CIS] exist[s]."[89]

COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

CIS is "inside schools and in students' lives" and creates opportunities for students to thrive and succeed.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Ongoing and independent evaluations of the CIS model, including student- and school-level analyses, present several promising findings:

- After three years of implementing the CIS model, elementary schools demonstrated improvement in the average daily attendance rate of students and improvement in standardized test scores for English Language Arts, and the gains in attendance were greater at CIS schools than those that are not implementing the model.

- After three years of implementing the CIS model, high schools demonstrated improvement in four-year cohort graduation rates equal to an average of an additional 55 graduates per school, a decrease in annual dropout rates equal to the prevention of an average of 35 dropouts per school, and improvement in standardized test scores in English Language Arts.

- Case-managed students were more connected to support services and achieved better academic outcomes than their peers, and these students reported higher levels of participation in meetings with school adults to discuss academic issues, their goals, and how to address life-changing events.

- Case management has a positive effect on students' attitudes about school and their relationships with adults and peers.

An economic assessment of the CIS model revealed that an investment of $1.00 in CIS yields $11.60 of economic benefit; in addition, CIS students will collectively increase their disposable income by $63 million per year, and social savings from reductions in risk factors such as unemployment and crime totals $154.5 million.

The CIS model offers "inclusive support"[90] by embedding Site Coordinators in schools and fostering robust partnerships between schools and community partners. CIS is "inside schools and in students' lives"[91] and creates opportunities for students to thrive and succeed.

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL READINESS PLAN[92]

In 1988, the Colorado General Assembly authorized the establishment of the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) to serve four- and five-year-old children who needed assistance with their language development. The Assembly expanded CPP in 1992 to include children "who lack overall learning readiness due to significant individual and family risk factors" and those served by social service agencies.[93] In 2013, the Assembly created Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement (ECARE) slots or positions and increased state funding to offer half- or full-day preschool or full-day kindergarten programs, and added 5,000 positions in 2014. According to the Colorado Department of Education:

> School readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content.[94]

CPP can serve up to 29,360 eligible children per year; eligibility is determined by age and the presence of specific risk factors, including eligibility for free or reduced-price meals; drug, alcohol, or other forms of abuse in the family; homelessness or mobility of the family; limited social skills and language development on the part of the child; and a child's placement in foster care. Approximately 80 percent of children enrolled in CPP are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, approximately 40 percent are in need of assistance with language development, and approximately 30 percent require assistance with developing social skills.

CORE COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

School District Participation and Implementation. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) administers CPP and school districts participate on a voluntary basis by submitting applications to the state agency; 175 out of 179 districts are currently participating in the program. CDE criteria for selecting districts include demographic data, test scores of children in kindergarten and primary school grades, district performance data, and dropout and graduation rates. School districts are also required to demonstrate the capacity to successfully operate high-quality early education programs, effectively partner with families, and

provide family support services in collaboration with community partners (such as Head Start and private preschool programs). Based on the total number of positions available (as determined by the Colorado General Assembly), each participating district receives an allocation of CPP and ECARE positions. School districts are required to establish a District Advisory Council that is responsible for administering CPP; core responsibilities include identifying qualified community providers, providing high-quality programs through a mixed-delivery system, and implementing processes for determining child eligibility. In addition, districts are required to identify a CPP Coordinator who is an early educator with teaching experience and/or has a graduate degree in early childhood education or child development; this individual is usually a district employee and serves as a liaison to the CDE and the district, supporting the work of the Council, managing the eligibility and enrollment process, and supporting parents/family members and providers.

Colorado state statutes require all school districts to provide kindergarten programs that comply with the state's Early Learning and Development Guidelines and Colorado Academic Standards.

Individual School Readiness Plan. As required by state statutes, all children enrolled in CPP must have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that identifies progress and needs related to language, cognition, gross and fine motor skills, social skills, and self-esteem. The plan also includes goals, identifies strategic supports that may be needed, and provides transition strategies to kindergarten.

In 2008, the Colorado General Assembly passed the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) to revise the state's preschool through high school standards and assessment system,

By ensuring that these children have access to high-quality early education programs that will boost their levels of school readiness, Colorado is proactively addressing issues of educational inequity.

increase students' college and career readiness, and establish a more aligned preschool through postsecondary education system. The bill included specific provisions related to defining school readiness and adopting new assessments to evaluate readiness. It also required that all children enrolled in publicly funded preschool and kindergarten programs must have an Individual School Readiness (ISR) plan that is based on an ongoing assessment of progress across developmental and academic domains. CAP4K builds on the CPP statute and the ISR plan "is the same as an ILP."[95]

Preschool ISR Plan. The preschool ISR is intended to serve as a "useful tool for teachers to use in planning for children and in working with families rather than a static document stored in a file rarely referenced."[96] Components of the preschool ISR tool and process are as follows:

- Parents and family members should be deeply engaged in the development and implementation of ISRs. Information and feedback should be collected from a family interview and the written preschool application that includes information about interests, family background and culture, and developmental or other concerns.

- The ISR should be developed early in the school year.

- A developmental screening should be conducted prior to enrollment to identify strengths and needs, inform the development of priorities, and identify three to five individualized goals that are aligned with specific assessment objectives.

- Three assessment checkpoints and family conferences conducted in the fall, winter, and spring will enable educators and parents/family members to continually assess and revise the ISR plan, monitor the child's progress, and identify ways in which the family can support the implementation of the ISR.

- Progress reports can be shared with families after each checkpoint.

- For preschool children with disabilities, the ISR plans must be aligned to IEPs and educators will work together to ensure that these children receive necessary services and support.

- At the end of the year, the ISR will be shared with the child's kindergarten teacher.

- The ISR may be an informal or formal document.

Kindergarten ISR Plan. CAP4K identified four areas of school readiness: 1) physical well-being and motor development; 2) social and emotional development; 3) language and comprehension development; and 4) cognition and general knowledge. In response to new reporting requirements of the Colorado State Board of Education (Board) and CDE assessment practices, mathematics and literacy have been added to the four areas of readiness. However, the bill does not include specific requirements regarding the content of ISRs and districts have flexibility regarding both content and design. Therefore, CDE has issued several recommendations:

- ISRs should include strengths and goals across academic and developmental domains.
- Families should be involved in the development of the ISRs.
- ISRs should be "living documents."
- Districts can design templates for reports generated by assessment tools.

The ISRs must be aligned to school readiness assessments approved by the Board. In 2010, school districts were provided with a menu of assessment tools and the CDE conducted a review of different types of assessment tools. In 2012, the Board approved Teaching Strategies GOLD and revised the menu of assessments in 2014 and 2017 to include the *Desired Results Developmental Profile for Kindergarten* and the *HighScope Child Observation Record for Kindergarten*. Both the preschool and kindergarten ISRs must be aligned with the menu of school readiness tools. These assessments inform the development of the ISRs and the provision of academic and other support to children, and they are not used to deny admission to or a child's progression to kindergarten or first grade.

Provision of Support Services to Children. If the preschool or kindergarten ISRs identify needs requiring the provision of support services, districts' responses are based on local policies, procedures, and practices. CDE requires the submission of district plans for providing support services to CPP-enrolled children and their families in collaboration with community-based partners.

DIGITAL TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

CDE has not developed a separate digital platform to support the development and implementation of ISRs. The agency collects child-level data and reports aggregate outcome data, and school districts use local data to inform planning, instructional, and evaluation activities.

COST

CAP4K did not result in the allocation of additional state funding to conduct school readiness assessments. CDE allocated federal funding from Colorado's Race to the Top award to provide technical assistance and training to school districts until the grant program ended in December 2017. CDE is not currently collecting data about local costs related to the development and use of ISRs.

EQUITY AND ACCESS

CPP assists young children who need additional support. By ensuring that these children have access to high-quality early education programs that will boost their levels of school readiness, Colorado is proactively addressing issues of educational inequity. The CDE guidance document for the preschool ISRs refers to family cultural factors and giving families different ways of providing information about children's needs and strengths. In addition, the CDE is conducting outreach to specific populations to ensure that services are being provided.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

An analysis of data for the 2016-2017 academic year yielded positive findings about the impact of CPP on different outcomes:

- Based on observational assessment data collected during the fall and the spring, the majority of four-year-olds met or exceeded expectations and, on average, demonstrated significant gains in social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics domains over the course of the school year.

- Analyses of disaggregated data to assess whether children met age expectations (as measured by meeting 80 percent of objectives per domain) revealed that the majority of female children met expectations across all areas, the majority of male children met expectations across all areas except mathematics, and the average growth from fall to spring was consistent.

- Children for whom English is not their first language met expectations in all areas except mathematics and demonstrated greater average growth across all domains than their peers for whom English is their primary language.

- Across different racial/ethnic groups, the majority of children met or exceeded expectations across almost of the domains, but there are disparities among different groups of children (particularly between African American children and their White or Hispanic peers) regarding overall growth.

CDE is not collecting data specifically to assess the impact of the ISR on different outcomes; however, the agency is implementing accountability mechanisms for assessing the development and use of ISRs, including visits with regional specialists who support CPP and review of ISR information and data provided by districts on an annual basis. Based on initial data, the implementation of ISRs is starting to change the work of early educators, as they are using new information and data to examine their instructional strategies and decisions and also children's developmental and academic goals.

CDE and its partners have established a comprehensive framework for increasing school readiness and building a healthy foundation for learning and well-being. The ISR is tightly aligned with child assessment strategies and multiple developmental domains, and this tool and process are enabling educators, parents and family members, and community providers to identify strengths, needs, and opportunities for children across Colorado.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH LAW
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN[97]

Founded in 1970, the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) is a nonprofit law firm based in Oakland, California, that advocates for the provision of high-quality and comprehensive support services to vulnerable children. Its mission is to transform multiple public systems (including education, public and behavioral health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and workforce development) by leading litigation, research, public awareness, policy development, and technical assistance campaigns. NCYL serves as an advocate and resource to youth, parents and caregivers, advocates, and child-serving professionals, and its successful campaigns across multiple sectors have resulted in the provision of services to millions of children.

Educational campaigns focus on defending the civil rights of students across the nation, ensuring that lower-income children receive necessary educational services, and providing comprehensive services to children in foster care and on probation. NCYL launched the FosterEd campaign to improve the educational outcomes and well-being of children and youth involved in child welfare and justice systems. Demonstration sites were established in Arizona, California, Indiana, and New Mexico, and current sites are operating in multiple counties in Arizona and California.

CORE COMPONENTS OF THE MODEL

Priorities and Goals. Cross-sector cooperation and partnerships among leaders from child welfare, education, mental health, probation, and judicial agencies is essential to the FosterEd model; these leaders are charged with building conditions—at scale—to increase child and youth engagement in their learning and empower them to pursue future opportunities. They also enhance the investment and advocacy of parents, family members, mentors, and other adults; develop a shared vision to increase equitable opportunities and outcomes for all children and youth; and increase collaboration among professionals who are working with children and youth. FosterEd "is in the business of system change" and is creating demonstration sites, pursuing a policy agenda, utilizing research and technology, and promoting communities of learning.[98]

Support Structure. FosterEd demonstration sites create robust support structures to provide comprehensive support to children and youth, promote student-centered engagement, and give children and youth "voice and choice."[99]

- **Education Liaisons** are embedded in local child welfare and education agencies and work individually with students to set educational goals, partner with students to identify and maximize family and community resources, and address educational issues and barriers.

- **Education teams** may include parents, family members, and caregivers; school personnel; Education Liaisons; mental health professionals and social workers; probation officers; holders of education rights for the child or youth; higher education support mentors; and friends, coaches, mentors, and other caring adults. Each individual has specific responsibilities, and the "well-coordinated" teams are actively engaged in the lives of children and youth; they proactively address early warning signs related to academic progress, discipline, and attendance and utilize asset-based and trauma-informed strategies.[100] One or more individuals are identified to serve as active "education champions" for "system-involved scholars."[101]

The core of the individual plan is the identification of student-driven goals, milestones and actions, and obstacles to success.

Individualized Plans. Education Liaisons are responsible for developing individualized plans for students that include information about progress and identified needs across multiple domains. These plans include measures related to academic outcomes, student engagement, empowerment, and other dimensions of social-emotional learning as well as information about the provision of support services. The core of the individual plan is the identification of student-driven goals, milestones and actions, and obstacles to success. These goals are informed by students' educational experiences and also reflect their voices and objectives for the future; they are developed in consultation with students and their education team members, and students and team members may take responsibility for executing specific action items that are associated with particular goals. Education Liaisons work with their students to review progress on an ongoing basis.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The FosterEd governance structure varies by demonstration site but typically includes a state-level director, program managers or Education Liaison supervisors, and a team of Liaisons; NCYL administrators oversee and support work across sites and also convene state and/or local leadership teams or advisory boards (comprising representatives from partner agencies and organizations) to guide the work.

DIGITAL TOOLS AND PLATFORMS

In order to support the development and implementation of these plans and increase collaboration and data sharing across agencies and demonstration sites, NCYL and FosterEd created an open source digital platform, EdTeam Connect (ETC), in 2016. This web-based case management platform houses four types of data: 1) biographical information; 2) education data (including enrollment, attendance, special education, transcripts, and test scores); 3) programmatic (including case type, case status and placement, program level, and members of educational support team); and 4) academic and other goals. Multiple years of data are available for each student to retain the "historical component" which is especially important for students with high levels of mobility.[102]

ETC provides easy access to education and programmatic data, supports student-centered education planning, promotes and supports connections with students, and enables the sharing of information and data among educational support team members in real time. Activities related to implementing the individualized plans are documented in ETC; for example, information about meetings with the students or among members of the education team can be uploaded to the platform. Reports on different types of data can also be produced to demonstrate student progress and growth.

Most FosterEd sites are currently using ETC as an internal tool to facilitate and track the Education Liaisons' work with students. However, FosterEd administrators (in consultation with relevant partners at school districts and child welfare agencies) can also opt to allow students (when age-appropriate) and education team members serving the student to access the student's ETC page with consent from parents, guardians, and court-appointed education rights holders or the student if age 18 or older. The primary users are Education Liaisons, who enter and have access to their students' data. Members of students' education teams can be added to the platform, but their levels of access are different and more limited than that of the Education Liaison. The Liaison can easily access detailed data and related documents about students' progress toward current and future goals, required actions, and the provision of various types of services (including the identification of all partners). Each jurisdiction determines the ways in which data can be entered and the design of particular sites.

FosterEd is exploring the development of additional features, including dashboards that can be customized by stakeholder and that can capture data on students' progress and highlight early warning signs. Other potential features are real-time program data to better track students' outcomes, college and career planning tools, a mobile application and text messaging to facilitate data access, and a resource bank to increase access to information about different types of resources.

ETC is governed by Terms of Service, a Privacy Policy, and an Acceptable Use Policy. FosterEd also uses a combination of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with partners and individual consent forms signed by parents, guardians, or court-appointed education rights holders (or students if age 18 or older) to allow for appropriate and effective data collection and sharing. Each MOU reflects specific needs and requirements of partner organizations, the scope of the partnership, and the jurisdiction in which the site is operating.

COST

After an initial three to five-year period of philanthropic investment, public agencies assume responsibility for operating the FosterEd model; sustaining the work costs approximately $450,000 to $500,000 per year per site (with variance given different staffing patterns) for salaries, benefits, and other costs associated with ongoing technology investment and data collection. Specific costs associated with the operation of ETC include internal staff time, an annual technical support budget, and an annual development budget.

EQUITY AND ACCESS

Increasing equity and access are at the heart of the FosterEd model, and the goal of this campaign is to reduce educational attainment, achievement, and opportunity gaps for system-involved children and youth, especially those of color who are disproportionately represented in the child welfare and justice systems.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

NCYL commissioned independent studies of the first years of implementation in demonstration sites and select findings are as follows:

- A 2013 study of FosterEd in Indiana during the early implementation stage indicated that students' unmet needs were identified and subsequently addressed by an Education Liaison, and these Liaisons and family case managers had positive perceptions about the usefulness and impact of FosterEd.

- Evaluations of demonstration sites in Arizona and California in years two and one of implementation respectively revealed that students had identified hundreds of educational goals related to school enrollment, securing academic credits, and increasing reading and math proficiency and over 50 percent of the goals were achieved.

- Arizona and California evaluations showed increased school attendance for a majority of students.

- In California, the proportion of students earning a 3.0 grade point average or better more than doubled following the students' participation in FosterEd and the proportion earning below a 2.0 was reduced by approximately half.

Asset-based and personalized strategies coupled with the delivery of differentiated and comprehensive services is enhancing the ability of FosterEd partners to increase educational and other outcomes for system-involved scholars. NCYL is also influencing the development and implementation of policies that affect system-involved youth. The organization jointly led an effort to include provisions in ESSA to protect and better support children and youth in foster care, including requirements for reducing mobility related to school enrollment, expanding collaboration among local and state agencies, and increasing data disaggregation and sharing.

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD
OTHER TYPES OF PERSONALIZED PLANS

This section features nine organizations and agencies—Big Picture Learning, LRNG, the Arizona Department of Education, Treehouse, One Degree, Say Yes to Education, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Youth Policy Institute, and Social Solutions—that are leveraging various types of personalized plans to support children and youth. These plans focus on different categories and illustrate a wide array of approaches that can further inform the broader field. For each entity, we briefly describe each model, including specific strategies and impact to date (as information and data are available).

BIG PICTURE LEARNING
INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLAN[103]

Big Picture Learning (BPL), based in Providence, Rhode Island, is a network of hundreds of urban and rural high schools with 65 sites in 26 states across the U.S. and additional sites in 10 countries. BPL was established in 1995 with one mission—to put students directly at the center of their own learning. The current mission is to "activate the potential of schools, systems, and education through student-driven real-world learning."[104]

The experiences of all BPL students are guided by the development and implementation of individualized learning plans that enable them to identify and pursue their interests and passions. Core components of these plans include academic work and progress, a variety of assessments of student exhibitions and other types of work, information about internships and other experiential learning opportunities, postsecondary interests and action items,

and referrals for social and other services as needed. In order to identify "transformative"[105] learning experiences, advisors may utilize a range of tools, including interest inventories, personality tests, and career exploration assessments, to match students with appropriate internships and other types of learning opportunities. Students are not pushed into particular career or other pathways, and advisors work with students, parents/guardians, and community mentors (individuals who supervise internships and other experiences) to explore all types of learning opportunities and also evaluate and implement the individual learning plans. BPL schools implement different types of strategies to provide social and other services to students; in some cases, schools work closely with social workers and therapists, and many schools have established relationships with community partners to ensure that students have access to a range of programs and services.

Foundation of the Work. "Ten Distinguishers" serve as the foundation of the BPL approach, focused on personalized learning and individualized support, exploration of interests through experiential learning opportunities and student-driven projects, authentic assessment, postsecondary planning, parent and family engagement, and building a culture of collaboration and joint leadership in schools. An advisory structure in which an advisor and group of 15 students stay together for four years is "the core of the BPL experience."[106] This mentorship and support structure, the focus on student autonomy and empowerment, and proactive parental engagement results in the establishment of a "self-teaching community of learners."[107]

Focus on Equity and Access. BPL is "explicitly committed to equity for all students, especially underserved urban students"[108] as powerfully demonstrated by the following statement of the organization's core values:

> We exist in an era in which populations of peoples and students who have rarely, if ever, enjoyed equitable opportunities find themselves further marginalized and demeaned. This adverse change in our nation's climate threatens the sanctity of the spaces in which students who desire honesty, respect, and authenticity seek refuge.
>
> To those students and to all who possess an infallible curiosity for learning and truth, we offer this:
>
> We stand with you to lend strength in times of weakness. Courage in times of fear. Unity in times of division. Big Picture Learning in times of small-minded thinking.
>
> We remain awake. We remain alert. We remain hopeful. We remain fearless.[109]

Big Picture Learning stands for "foster[ing] learning spaces which create the wake in which students can freely, and with courage, pursue their passions and interests."

Flexible Governance. BPL does not own or operate its schools and there are "no financial or management obligations" on the part of these institutions.[110] The organization does not provide additional fiscal resources; the majority of BPL schools are district schools that operate with the same level of funding as other institutions.

Internship Management System. BPL has developed ImBlaze with input and feedback from BPL principals and coaches to support the development and use of real-world and interest-based internship opportunities as key elements of the individualized learning plans. Students use this online platform to search for opportunities based on their interests or goals, provide attendance data, and share their thoughts with their mentors and educators on an ongoing basis. These mentors can use the platform to monitor matches between students and internships, and school staff members can monitor the learning experience, assess the impact of internship opportunities, and establish accountability and compliance measures. BPL has the capacity to assess the quality and impact of internship opportunities across its network of schools and assess the relationship between these opportunities and career trajectories over time. There is an initial adoption and implementation fee as well as an annual subscription rate that is based on the number of users; BPL assists schools with securing different types of funding to cover the cost.

The organization is partnering with research organizations to assess student outcomes. A longitudinal study of graduates of BPL schools revealed that students are empowered to identify and pursue their interests, they develop strong relationships with both adults and peers, and they actively participate in activities related to personal learning goals. In addition to increasing student engagement and social capital, the BPL model increases students' expectations with regard to pursuing higher education, and BPL graduates attend postsecondary institutions at higher percentages than their demographic peers.

BPL stands for "foster[ing] learning spaces which create the wake in which students can freely, and with courage, pursue their passions and interests."[111] The organization will implement its approach across a growing number of schools and engage in efforts to enhance current educational paradigms and fundamentally change and improve how systems can put students at the center of their own learning.

OTHER TYPES OF PERSONALIZED PLANS

LRNG
INDIVIDUALIZED PLAYLIST[112]

LRNG, based in Chicago, Illinois, is a national effort that "networks learning opportunities throughout entire cities."[113] Its mission is to fundamentally rethink and reshape learning opportunities and structures and empower youth to succeed in the connected age. In 2015, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation provided funding for the establishment of Collective Shift, a nonprofit organization focused on expanding digital learning opportunities, and LRNG was the first large-scale project to be initiated by the organization. LRNG has connected over 500 organizations to create 14 networks across the United States; these networks serve 58,000 young people between the ages of 13 and 24.

LRNG has built a new infrastructure for learning: connected networks of learning opportunities among organizations, institutions, and businesses create "learning landscapes" in cities.[114] These "learning ecosystems"[115] enable young people to pursue their passions, access knowledge and expertise, and empower them to "codesign their future[s]."[116] Structured learning experiences connected to students' interests and career opportunities are designed to foster strong relationships to peers and mentors, and cities are provided with a "civic minded, diverse workforce with relevant skills and experiences."[117]

- **In-House Digital Platform.** The foundation of the LRNG model is a digital platform utilized by students, educators, educational institutions, employers, and organizations to build and maintain learning ecosystems across cities. Different entities can present information about a wealth of learning experiences on the platform, and students can access information about local and national opportunities from any device. Data-sharing agreements enable multiple partners to share information, co-create content, and build pathways to different types of opportunities, and these agreements are tailored to local users and contexts. LRNG continues to enhance the platform and its tools; in particular, it is working to enhance planning features, integrate planning tools with students' portfolios, and increase opportunities for users to reflect on the work and share feedback.

- **Individualized Playlists.** With the support of mentors and teachers, students participate in and complete individualized "playlists," groups of Learning Experiences (XPs) and related resources organized around themes or interests, that enable them to develop knowledge and build skills that they can in turn apply in both academic and career settings. The XPs include different types of learning opportunities that are "designed to be flexible, remixable, and motivational."[118] Students can also earn digital badges that demonstrate knowledge gained and skills developed; issued by educational institutions, employers, and other entities, these badges enable students to access additional opportunities and scholarships. The badges are publicly shareable and can be shared on social media and career networking sites.

- **Increasing Equity and Access.** LRNG is focused on closing the equity gap by primarily supporting young people in underserved communities. In many cases, these youth lack access to information about transformative learning opportunities and community resources. LRNG is "intentionally design[ing] experiences in a more structured way to create support around low-income kids" and build networks to provide young people with social capital.[119]

These "learning ecosystems" enable young people to pursue their passions, access knowledge and expertise, and empower them to "codesign their future[s]."

○ **Autonomous Governance.** LRNG networks operate as "autonomous entities within the LRNG ecosystem."[120] The national organization supports local efforts to build partnerships and pathways and also provides content and services to enable the networks to achieve strategic goals. The LRNG model is funded with both philanthropic and corporate support. Rather than charge a fee per student, all LRNG members are required to pay an annual fee of $4,400 for access to the digital platform, a library of content, tools to support the creation of content, data about the activities of learners, and access to the LRNG community of practice.

○ **Content Development and Review.** LRNG has created a custom content development system that allows creators to build engaging digital learning experiences that utilize videos, images, audio clips, documents, and other types of media. LRNG has also produced a template that guides the creation of digital media and XPs and ensures that youth have access to engaging and interesting experiences. LRNG encourages all creators to share their content on a national scale to democratize learning and increase students' access to opportunities despite geographic, economic, or institutional barriers; content is assessed and reviewed by LRNG, national partners, or local partners.

The LRNG model has been implemented for three years. Short-term efforts to assess impact focus on behavioral changes, the relationship between digital badges and students taking advantage of opportunities, and career skills. Long-term outcomes include educational attainment as measured by college matriculation, reductions in dropout rates and involvement in the juvenile justice system, and successful employment.

LRNG is redefining not only what students learn, but when and how they learn. The organization is also developing a new infrastructure for matching students to learning experiences, identifying new providers of these experiences, creating new roles and responsibilities for educators and their partners, and establishing new digital tools for managing learning ecosystems across communities. In October 2018, LRNG merged with Southern New Hampshire University.

OTHER TYPES OF PERSONALIZED PLANS

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATION AND CAREER ACTION PLAN[121]

Approximately 70 percent of jobs in Arizona will require postsecondary credentials—but only 78 percent of high school students graduate on time, only 46.5 percent of these graduates are qualified to enroll in the state's public institutions of higher education, and 60 percent of first-year students at community colleges are required to enroll in developmental education courses. In response to growing concerns about high school students' levels of preparedness to successfully pursue postsecondary educational and career opportunities and based on extensive research about effective practices for increasing educational achievement and attainment, the Arizona State Board of Education approved the use of an Education and Career Action Plan (ECAP) in 2008 for all students in grades 9 through 12 (effective for the high school graduating class of 2013). The ECAP is a personalized tool and process that enables students to align coursework and extracurricular activities to career pathways that reflect their interests, skills, and values; increases their awareness and knowledge about career options; and builds their awareness of resources related to college and career readiness.

The ECAP allows all students to upload, monitor, and update the following types of data:

- **Academic information,** including coursework related to interests and skills, postsecondary goals, progress toward meeting graduation and other requirements, and intervention and support services

- **Career information,** including interests and goals, participation in career and technical education courses and/or experiential learning opportunities, information about workforce demands and projections in Arizona, and the knowledge and skills needed to successfully pursue employment opportunities

- **Postsecondary information,** including admissions requirements at different types of institutions, submission of college and financial aid applications, and résumés

- **Information about all types of extracurricular activities**

The ECAP portfolio, maintained online or in hard copy, is reviewed and updated at least annually. Online portfolios are housed in a state database, the Arizona Career Information System. The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) provides access to

this system to all schools without cost, and students can maintain their portfolio throughout high school and beyond. Given concerns about protecting student privacy and confidentiality, the ECAPs do not include information or data about the provision of social services to students.

The ECAP is a collaborative and engaging process that is intended to be integrated into "all facets of the school experience."[122] Core elements of this process include an adult mentor (such as a school counselor, teacher, community member, or coach) who guides the development of the plan and provides ongoing support; active engagement by parents, family members, or guardians, who are required to sign the plan to indicate their agreement and approval; and continuous reflection on the part of students to enhance their ability to make informed decisions and pursue different pathways. Strong leadership on the part of principals plus whole-school ownership of the process are also essential elements of the work.

The ECAP process strengthens student motivation, empowerment, and career literacy, which enables them to set specific goals and make informed decisions, and also increases positive communication between students and their parents,

The ECAP process strengthens student motivation, empowerment, and career literacy, which enables them to set specific goals and make informed decisions.

family members, or guardians. School benefits include student enrollment in more rigorous courses, improved student achievement, and a larger number of students meeting graduation and postsecondary requirements.

○ **Strategic, Multi-Year Implementation Plan.** Educators in schools initiated ECAP planning in 2008 and 2009 and processes for grades 9 through 12 were developed from 2010 to 2012. By the 2012-2013 academic year, schools were expected to have completed four years of ECAP activities for all high school students, and ADE required the submission of implementation plans and sample plans for high school seniors. Over the course of several years, ADE administrators devised a detailed plan to support local implementation and address the following issues related to the development and use of ECAPs: 1) the importance of "changing the culture in the state," building new relationships with key stakeholders, and increasing awareness of the purpose, importance, and goals of the ECAP initiative; 2) aligning the components of the ECAP plan and process with state improvement and reform efforts; 3) engaging multiple stakeholders

and establishing a planning committee to guide implementation efforts; and 4) building an online system and creating guidance materials.[123] ADE administrators have also established an advisory committee to guide the ongoing implementation of the model and are increasing collaboration with education, business, and community partners.

○ **Local Autonomy and Flexibility.** ADE balances statewide and local priorities by giving local educators the flexibility to design and implement ECAP tools and processes that are unique to schools and districts, but also meet state requirements related to content. For example, educators can create tailored plans, develop lessons and activities, and alter school schedules to support advising sessions.

○ **Comprehensive and Detailed Guidance Documents.** ADE has developed an impressive array of informational and guidance documents related to the ECAP tool and process, including the following: 1) an Administrative Toolkit that presents detailed recommendations related to every aspect of implementation, including developing school leadership teams, developing strategic action plans, refining

professional roles and responsibilities, adjusting school schedules and calendars, aligning ECAP with school and district curricula, and enhancing collaboration among key stakeholders; 2) a sample ECAP plan; 3) an Accountability Rubric to assess the depth and quality of activities related to implementation, curriculum, documentation, and the involvement of parents, family members, or guardians; 4) an Implementation Flowchart that presents a suggested sequence of action items; and 5) an Implementation Site Assessment to assess the effectiveness of work related to the ECAP plan and process (including allocating necessary technology and other resources), communications and messaging, and assessing impact. ADE has also identified Exemplar Schools that are implementing innovative strategies and have demonstrated significant improvements. Lastly, ADE is expanding the ECAP initiative to include elementary and middle school students and has developed additional materials to support the initial phase of work.

- **Progress without Additional State Funding.** Current efforts to address educational funding issues in Arizona focus on increasing teacher pay, reducing the counselor-student ratio, and addressing other staffing concerns. As a result, Arizona has not allocated additional funding to support the implementation of the ECAP initiative. However, the work is progressing, as demonstrated by the efforts of exemplar schools and the fact that approximately 90 percent of schools are meeting a baseline accountability requirement to submit ECAP plans to ADE. Schools and districts are allocating different types of funding, such as federal Carl Perkins funding to improve career and technical education

programs, and working with community funders and partners such as AmeriCorps to add staff members and build additional capacity to support the work. ADE offers workshops, training programs for school counselors and other mentors, and access to the online AzCIS system at no cost. ADE is also continuing to develop guidance materials to support local educators and stakeholders.

- **Increasing Alignment and Coherence.** Since the inception of the ECAP initiative, ADE administrators have been aligning the tool and process to other statewide strategies to ensure that "a quality ECAP is tied to everything."[124] The ECAP process builds on existing efforts to promote the identification of career goals and pathways, and college and career readiness measures are included in the state's new school accountability system, which awards points to schools across multiple indicators. The ECAP is also aligned with but does not replace other types of individual plans, including IEPs and Programs of Study for students enrolled in career and technical education programs (the ADE has produced a crosswalk document describing the relationship between ECAPs and IEPs). Lastly, the state recently revised certification requirements for professional development to include activities related to college and career readiness.

As the work continues to expand and evolve, ADE and its partners will address implementation challenges, including staff turnover and sustaining the work, improving the ratio of counselors to students, increasing coherence within the state education agency, and collecting different types of data to assess the impact of ECAP on multiple outcomes.

OTHER TYPES OF PERSONALIZED PLANS

TREEHOUSE
INDIVIDUALIZED GRADUATION AND POSTSECONDARY PLAN[125]

Treehouse, based in Seattle, WA, is a nonprofit organization founded in 1988 by a group of social workers who "grew tired of seeing the deprivation often faced by children in foster care" and decided to provide additional support services.[126] Its mission is to facilitate these students' access to the opportunities and support necessary to pursue goals and successfully transition to adulthood, and its long-term goal is to ensure that youth in foster care will graduate from high school at the same rate as their peers across Washington state.

Treehouse provides "intentional, individualized support"[127] to address the particular needs of youth in foster care and offers academic support plus integrated and research-based social services to more than 7,500 youth per year throughout Washington. The organization works in partnership with foster parents, social workers, teachers, school counselors, and mentors to provide educational planning, monitoring, and coaching and support services to youth to remove barriers to school success and address individual developmental needs. The Educational Advocacy program, implemented in partnership with the state Department of Children, Youth, and Families, serves youth in foster care from kindergarten through 12th grade, and the Graduation Success program serves middle and high school students in select counties.

All students participating in the Graduation Success program work with Education Specialists to develop individualized graduation and postsecondary plans. In addition to identifying goals and action items, students become more engaged and empowered and also learn how to access academic and other resources.

○ **Adaptation of an Existing Model.** The foundation of the Graduation Success program and the individualized plans is the Check & Connect model that was developed by the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota. Check & Connect is a student engagement and intervention model designed to assist students at risk of dropping out of school. Core elements of this model include the establishment of a trusting relationship between students and mentors; frequent and continuous assessment of multiple types of data and indicators of disengagement; the development of personalized and tailored interventions that address students' needs and reflect home, school, and other factors; and ongoing collaboration with parents and family members. This model was not designed to be used with youth in foster care; therefore, Treehouse added elements to better reflect the needs of this population, particularly issues related to greater instability and inconsistency, and incorporated person-centered planning strategies.

○ **Multiple Tools and Support Services.** The identification of goals and activities to achieve students' goals is an essential element of the individualized graduation and postsecondary plans, and Treehouse utilizes different types

Treehouse utilizes different types of goal mapping tools and questionnaires to identify students' interests and identify barriers to success.

of goal mapping tools and questionnaires to identify students' interests and identify barriers to success. Treehouse specialists also incorporate trauma-informed strategies to provide holistic support to their students. If a student demonstrates a need for non-academic support, the organization works in collaboration with caregivers and community partners to ensure that the student will have access to necessary services.

○ **In-House Database.** Treehouse has built an in-house, online database to collect multiple types of data for the individualized plans. A core feature of this database is the creation of dashboards and reports to assess growth and progress and monitor data quality. Treehouse develops data-sharing agreements and Memoranda of Understanding with school districts and other entities to regulate the presentation of students' individual data, protect confidentiality and privacy, and

determine levels of access for users. The organization works closely with social workers and students to secure consent for data collection, sharing, and management.

○ **Proactively Addressing Issues of Equity and Access.** Students of color are disproportionately represented in the population of youth in foster care, and educational attainment and achievement gaps persist between these youth and their peers. Treehouse is aggressively addressing issues of equity and inclusion, as demonstrated by the implementation of a racial equity initiative and the use of students' feedback to inform the work.

As the work expands and evolves, Treehouse will continue to address multiple challenges "with fierce optimism"[128] and assess and enhance its services to better address systemic barriers to student achievement and success.

OTHER TYPES OF PERSONALIZED PLANS

ONE DEGREE
MY PLAN TOOL[129]

Founded in 2012, One Degree is a technology-driven nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, California, that has built an online community resource platform to significantly increase families' access to essential social services and resources. Its mission is to leverage technology to "empower people to create a path out of poverty for themselves and for their communities."[130]

The One Degree platform and related mobile applications were designed to address persistent issues related to the provision of social services: first, information, access, and decision-making gaps that prevent low-income and at-risk individuals from learning about, navigating, and accessing social services and impede the ability of key stakeholders to understand community needs; and second, fragmentation and inefficiency related to documenting services, making referrals, and assessing impact. The in-house platform and applications (with information currently provided in English and Spanish) enable community members to conduct customized searches for resources based on type of service, location, languages spoken, and other factors; submit applications for services; and review and rate resources and share information with other users. Providers can make referrals to clients and review aggregated data about the demand and utilization of services.

The One Degree platform is available to individuals (including family members and service providers) in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County. Since its establishment in 2014, 300,000 people have used the data system, there are over 18,000 registered members (including approximately 2,400 professionals in the nonprofit and social services sectors), over 15,000 users are served each month, and information about 16,000 community resources is available. The organization is starting to collect data about the utilization of services across communities served and will collect data about the impact of these services on multiple outcomes.

The long-term goal of the organization is to serve as the "nationwide public utility" for the effective and efficient delivery of social services.

Tools and Access. One Degree provides open access to the core features of the platform and related applications. One Degree Plus (which includes additional features such as data integration with existing software, the creation of customized tools, and the production of aggregate or agency-level data) is available to providers at a cost that is differentiated by the size of the organization. Data and information are updated by in-house specialists and community volunteers on an ongoing basis, and community resources are verified every six months. The platform and related applications are compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), all data is encrypted, and differentiated access by user ensures data confidentiality and security.

Personalized Tool. A notable feature of the One Degree platform is the My Plan tool, a "portable social service portfolio," which enables users to create and maintain individualized lists of services and track their utilization over time.[131] They also receive reminders by email or text message to request information about usage. Other users (such as social workers or teachers) who have been granted access to an individual's plan can also monitor progress, document referrals, and determine whether and how the service was utilized.

One Degree has established a partnership with The Primary School (TPS) in East Palo Alto, California, an institution that operates an "integrated health and education model" and supports children and their families "from birth through the transition to high school."[132] This institution "integrates primary education and primary care" by providing education, health, and family support services.[133] The development of customized support plans is one component of the TPS model, and the My Plan tool is being used to identify children's and families' needs and link them to appropriate social services in the region.

By empowering "technology-enabled families" in lower-income communities to better access existing resources, using technology to build pathways to economic mobility, creating robust relationships with governmental and community-based agencies, and driving "culture change in local communities by empowering government, healthcare, and nonprofit agencies to make data-driven decisions about social service delivery,"[134] One Degree is fundamentally changing the processes by which comprehensive support services are delivered. The work will continue to evolve and expand, and the long-term goal of the organization is to serve as the "nationwide public utility" for the effective and efficient delivery of social services.[135]

The Say Yes Postsecondary Planning System was designed to serve as an important tool for connecting students and their families with needed services, and it houses student data for 33 indicators and 20 sub-indicators across academic, health, and social domains.

SAY YES TO EDUCATION
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT GROWTH PLAN[136]

Say Yes to Education, a nonprofit organization based in New York, works with multiple community stakeholders to fulfill an exciting promise to students; if they graduate from high school, they will receive a scholarship to a state institution or a private institution that has joined the Say Yes Higher Education Compact. Founded in 1987 at one school site in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the organization supported additional cohorts of children in select cities and then expanded its efforts to establish community-wide partnerships that are serving approximately 130,000 public school students in Syracuse and Buffalo, New York and Guilford County, North Carolina.

Say Yes to Education works in collaboration with community partners to "transform civic infrastructure," provide comprehensive and sustainable support services to students, and raise funding for scholarships.[137] Starting in kindergarten, students can access academic services (such as tutoring, after-school programs, and summer enrichment activities), receive assistance with college admissions and financial aid requirements, and access social services such as counseling and health care. The "lynchpin"[138] of the Say Yes to Education model is the Family Support Specialist who serves as the coordinator at a school site; this individual is responsible for case management and works with school support teams to provide tailored support to each student.

High school graduates attending an in-state, public institution of higher education are eligible to receive full tuition scholarships regardless of family income. Graduates who have been admitted to an institution in the Say Yes Higher Education Compact and whose annual family income is at or below $75,000 are eligible to receive full tuition scholarships. Graduates who have been admitted to a Compact institution and whose family income exceeds $75,000 are eligible to receive an annual scholarship of up to $5,000.

- **Say Yes Postsecondary Planning System.** In order to accurately assess students' needs and assess progress over the course of their educational careers, identify and address barriers to success, and collect information that will inform the provision of comprehensive support services, Say Yes to Education has developed a robust data platform, the Say Yes Postsecondary Planning System (Say Yes PPS). Say Yes PPS was designed to serve as an important tool for connecting students and their families with needed services, and it houses student data for 33 indicators and 20 sub-indicators across academic, health, and social domains. Different types of data (including school district data; student, parent, family member, guardian, and teacher survey results; and input from community providers) are uploaded to the platform, and users can produce different types of reports to assess student outcomes and the effectiveness of interventions and programs.

- **Users and Access.** The primary users are school professionals, Family Support Specialists, community providers, and platform administrators. All users are required to participate in an orientation session and sign a confidentiality agreement, and access to data is differentiated by role and responsibility. The Family Support Specialists have the highest level of access, as they are responsible for case management and coordinating the delivery of services to students. Parents, family members, and guardians can complete surveys on the platform but cannot directly access data; these users can receive printed information from Family Support Specialists upon request.

- **Individual Student Growth Plan.** This plan is an essential tool developed for each student in the community, and it captures longitudinal data for all indicators and sub-indicators across the three domains. Say Yes PPS includes several dynamic features to identify and eliminate barriers to growth and success: 1) using survey-based algorithms, the platform indicates whether a student is on- or off-track, and since data about all of the indicators is available in one place, an authorized user can immediately assess a student's status; 2) the platform identifies "red flags" or areas requiring immediate attention; 3) authorized users can upload and share detailed notes about students; 4) indicators are linked to intervention services, which enables users to easily link students to appropriate support; 5) the provision of services is documented in detail, allowing users to assess the frequency and degree of usage and also fulfill any enrollment requirements; 6) additional documents related to the provision of support services can be uploaded to the platform; 7) users can filter data by student, indicator, intervention, or program; and 8) users can easily produce aggregated and disaggregated dashboards, graphs, and reports to monitor progress and growth.

- **Data Management.** Say Yes to Education develops data-sharing agreements with school districts to manage the collection and management of student data that is uploaded to the platform on a daily basis. Additional information and data are uploaded by community providers who have been approved through an internal vetting process. Local stakeholders have the authority to determine levels and types of access for users, and they have flexibility with regard to uploading data to the platform. These decisions must comply with local and state requirements related to data privacy and confidentiality, which results in differences across communities regarding issues such as parental consent.

The rigorous and continuous use of data, coupled with the creation of specific benchmarks from kindergarten readiness to job attainment and productive citizenship, are enabling Say Yes to Education and its partners to create "culture[s] of collaborative student support"[139] and data fluency in multiple communities.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MY CAREER AND ACADEMIC PLAN[140]

In 2013, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Higher Education jointly approved the Massachusetts Definition of College and Career Readiness, which, for the first time in the state's history, presented "a set of learning competencies, intellectual capacities and experiences essential for all students to become lifelong learners; positive contributors to their families, workplaces, and communities; and successfully engaged citizens of a global 21st century."[141] In 2016, this definition was revised to recognize the importance of civic learning, and essential competencies related to civic readiness were added to the document.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) developed an initiative to support districts' efforts to implement college and career readiness strategies, the creation of an individualized plan for students. This plan, formerly called an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), is now the My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP).

Currently geared toward students in grades 9 through 12, MyCAP is a "student-directed, multi-year, dynamic tool"[142] as well as a robust process for developing academic plans, enhancing personal and social growth, and supporting career development. The tool incorporates students' "self-defined interests, needs, and goals for the attainment of postsecondary success."[143] As a process, MyCAP increases student engagement and their knowledge of academic and career opportunities; enables students to define and achieve goals; promotes communication among students, parents/family members, educators, and others; and supports school and district efforts to better respond to students' interests and needs.

The MyCAP includes three categories of information—Academic, Personal/Social Qualities and Skills, and Workplace Readiness—that are aligned with the Massachusetts Definition of College and Career Readiness. These categories are complementary and interdependent, differentiated by grade level, and include the provision of non-academic interventions and support. The MyCAP tool and process is implemented by school districts on a voluntary basis.

The ideal process is collaborative, involving students, parents, family members, and guardians, other influential adults, and school and district staff members; continuous, requiring ongoing conversations and effort; and aligned with school, district, and state college and career readiness initiatives. ILPs were initially piloted in six districts, and ESE has incorporated the MyCAP into a College and Career Advising Professional Development Series; educators from 57 districts and 83 schools are currently participating in this series.

> MyCAP is a "student-directed, multi-year, dynamic tool" as well as a robust process for developing academic plans, enhancing personal and social growth, and supporting career development.

○ **Student Engagement and Empowerment.** Students should drive the development of MyCAPs and they have significant levels of responsibility and agency regarding the ILP process. In addition to developing and maintaining ILPs with the support of an advisor and other key adults, students can designate which individuals can access confidential information and to what degree. Schools must "be open to empowering students and giving them voice," and students must learn how to hold themselves accountable for their work.[144]

○ **Alignment and Coherence.** The MyCAP initiative is aligned with statewide goals and initiatives, including the completion of the MassCore program of study (a rigorous progression of high school courses); increasing student attendance, engagement, and high school graduation rates; and the creation of career pathways to match labor market needs across the state. The MyCAP tool is also aligned with different types of individualized plans for students, including Transition Planning for students 14 years of age and older who have IEPs and also Education Proficiency Plans and Individual Student Success Plans for students who are not reaching specific levels of proficiency on state assessments.

○ **Local Autonomy and Flexibility.** School/district educators have the flexibility to adapt the MyCAP tool and process to reflect local contexts and needs. In addition to having autonomy regarding both the tool and the process, schools and districts can utilize different digital platforms to collect, manage, and analyze data.

As ESE continues to refine and expand the MyCAP initiative, ESE staff members will work in collaboration with local and community partners to address the following issues: 1) creating the conditions and structured settings within which the tool and process can be implemented effectively and with fidelity; 2) balancing statewide priorities with local autonomy; 3) developing valuable resources for local educators and their partners; 4) building the capacity of teachers, counselors, administrators, and others to successfully support students; and 5) identifying appropriate indicators and collecting data to assess the impact of MyCAP on student and other outcomes.

OTHER TYPES OF PERSONALIZED PLANS

The organization is implementing a new initiative to develop and implement individualized service plans for 320 students enrolled in Promise Neighborhood elementary, middle, and high schools.

YOUTH POLICY INSTITUTE
INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICE PLAN[145]

Youth Policy Institute (YPI), a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, California, has served as a leader in education and community empowerment for 35 years. Established in 1983 to implement anti-poverty, community action strategies, its mission is to transform Los Angeles neighborhoods and support students from cradle to career by ensuring that families have access to high-quality schools and wraparound education and technology services. The organization provides direct education and comprehensive support to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty in high-need communities, and approximately 112,000 youth and adults participate at 138 program sites across Los Angeles.

Core services include early childhood education programs and parenting classes; academic tutoring, mentoring, art and music classes, college preparation, and gang prevention programs; and transportation, financial literacy, workforce development, computer literacy, and adult education services for families. YPI operates five district and charter schools that promote the use of technology and project-based learning and also partners with 114 other schools. The organization also serves as the lead implementation partner for the Los Angeles Promise Zone initiative and has received multiple federal grants (including Promise and Choice Neighborhood funding) to support community revitalization efforts. YPI uses several cradle-to-career performance measures (including kindergarten readiness, reading and mathematics proficiency by third and eighth grades respectively, graduation rates, postsecondary educational attainment, and employment rates) to measure impact and progress.

- **Individualized Service Plans.** The organization is implementing a new initiative to develop and implement individualized service plans for 320 students enrolled in Promise Neighborhood elementary, middle, and high schools. This initial cohort of students (identified based on criteria related to academic achievement, attendance, and behavioral or other concerns as well as referrals from school professionals) is working with Students and Family Success Coaches (a caseload of 40 students per Coach) to develop strength- and asset-based plans to set short- and long-term academic and other goals; identify challenges related to academic achievement, attendance, behavior, and other factors; assess social and emotional well-being, student motivation and engagement; track growth and progress; and document the provision of social services. The organization has created a four-level acuity of need scale to differentiate needs and provide tailored support. Referrals for social services are made internally to connect students and their families to YPI programs, and external referrals connect these individuals to community providers.

- **Partnership with Salesforce to Build Data Platform.** YPI is partnering with Salesforce, a customer relationship management platform, to build a new information and data management platform for the organization.

  Salesforce was chosen for its software's flexible and customizable features as well as its capacity to provide ongoing technical support, and the two organizations have been working together to build a common language related to data collection, analysis, and management. The platform is being developed in stages. In order to increase coherence and efficiency regarding the implementation of initiatives, the platform houses information about school-based programs and will serve as the central system for managing grants. Given the alignment and overlap across multiple programs and initiatives, the platform will enable YPI staff members to better coordinate efforts across sites. In order to manage student

and family data, the platform will have the capability to enter, manage, and analyze data about different indicators and outcomes; serve as a hub for referrals; document the usage and impact of services provided; and track participation in and impact of YPI programs.

The new data platform is being used to support the development of the individualized service plans. Each plan is a virtual file folder in the platform, and YPI staff members (who are responsible for entering attendance and other types of data for their respective programs) are using the new system to conduct assessments and initial analyses.

The cost of using the data platform varies based on the type of user and the degree of access. YPI currently has two levels of access for staff members, and the license fees are $250 and $425. These fees are paid on an annual basis, and YPI pays a monthly fee to receive technical support.

- **Data Management and Protection.** Different users have differential levels of access to data; for example, YPI staff members with programmatic responsibilities have access to different types of data than those who have other responsibilities. At school sites, with the exception of individual case notes for students, all users can review site-based data, including services provided. YPI requires the completion of consent forms by parents or guardians to release student data. At this time, students and parents, family members, and guardians do not have access to the platform.
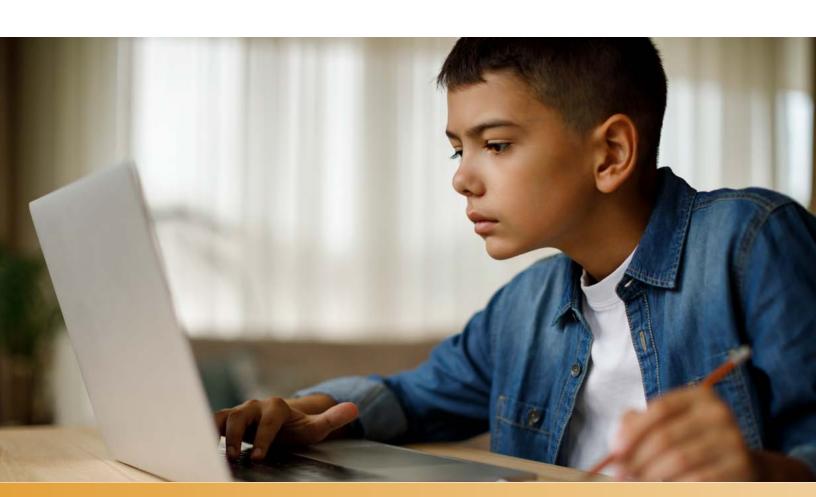
  YPI and Salesforce are developing new parameters and requirements related to protecting data privacy and confidentiality. Existing Memoranda of Understanding with community partners do not address the collection and management of individual-level data; therefore, YPI and its partners will redefine responsibilities related to data sharing and management.

OTHER TYPES OF PERSONALIZED PLANS

○ **Continuous Professional Development.** YPI also offers different types of professional development opportunities to users to increase their capacity to effectively and efficiently use the platform. In addition to an intensive initial training program that provides information about the primary mechanics of the data system, weekly office hours, videos and webinars, and other types of resources are available to all users who need additional support. In order to provide ongoing support "over the life of a user," YPI will develop regular training programs and continue to evaluate users' needs.[146]

YPI has engaged in a deliberative and strategic process to build the data platform. In order to accurately identify the needs of the organization and its partners as well as create essential features and functions, YPI staff members conducted internal and external interviews with colleagues and stakeholders, and ongoing feedback is being used to inform continuous efforts to enhance usability and improve effectiveness. In addition to working with Salesforce to address technical issues, YPI is partnering with Cloud for Good, an organization that provides consulting and implementation support for Salesforce platforms, to further develop and customize the platform. The process of developing the platform has taken more time than expected, given the complications related to collecting and sharing data, deciding which types of data should be housed in the platform, protecting privacy and confidentiality, and creating tools that will enhance coherence, alignment, and efficiency.

SOCIAL SOLUTIONS AND APRICOT 360 SOFTWARE
INDIVIDUAL STUDENT RECORD[147]

Social Solutions, based in Austin, Texas, was founded by caseworkers in 2000 to empower nonprofit and public sector organizations with "resources and tools that help them measure and accelerate the progress they bring to the world."[148] Social Solutions provides software for organizations in health and human services, child and family services, workforce services, and other areas, and provides differentiated data, project management, and implementation services to its partners.

In 2018, the Ballmer Group, a philanthropic entity that supports efforts to improve economic mobility for children and families, announced a $59 million, five-year commitment to Social Solutions to both enhance the development of the organization's Apricot 360 software and also democratize case management tools and enable organizations to measure success, improve service delivery, and increase their impact. The Apricot 360 case management software has several key features: 1) aggregate report building that enables organizations to utilize multiple metrics to inform decisions; 2) data sharing and management for multiple programs and organizations using one platform; 3) customized intake forms to increase organizational efficiency; and 4) advanced and predictive analytics to better assess individuals' needs and enhance the quality of both individual- and aggregate-level services. The cost to nonprofit organizations varies depending on the size of the organization and is based on a per user license fee.

- **Individual Student Records.** The Apricot software enables the creation of individual student records that include demographic information and family information; student enrollment in academic and other programs; information about students' goals, interests, strengths, and needs; and progress to date. Local entities have the flexibility to create tailored records for students, and individual and aggregated reports can be generated to identify gaps related to progress.

- **Integration of School/District Data and Nonprofit Data.** The partnership between Social Solutions and the Ballmer Group is supporting an initiative to integrate third-party data sources such as housing information, employment data, justice system data, and school information system data with nonprofit service data to enable early warning, needs assessment, and referrals to organizations in real-time and without additional data entry. Social Solutions will integrate existing student data in a data warehouse for educational institutions and nonprofit partners, and users will be able to access holistic data, monitor students' progress, track the provision of services, and identify effective organizations. With support from the Ballmer Group, Social Solutions is awarding matching grants to qualified nonprofit organizations using the software to provide support for K-12 students; the matching grants will give the recipients access to the Apricot 360 software, with Social Solutions covering 50 percent of the licensing costs. In November 2018, matching grants were awarded to two organizations in San Antonio, Texas, and additional matching grants will be awarded as more qualified nonprofit organizations purchase the Apricot 360 software.

OTHER TYPES OF PERSONALIZED PLANS

Social Solutions is providing its partners with a powerful mechanism for integrating and sharing data across multiple sectors and partners, using data to inform decisions about the provision of support services, and maximizing the impact of nonprofit and public service organizations.

○ **Referrals and the Provision of Support Services.** The Apricot 360 software has tools that enable users to make referrals to programs within an organization as well as those provided by external organizations, monitor and track referrals, and accept or decline such referrals. Services to students are provided by educational support organizations that are partnering with schools and districts.

○ **Robust Data Security Standards.** Social Solutions is implementing multiple strategies to secure data. The organization is compliant with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), HIPAA, Federal Risk and Authorization Management Program, and National Institute of Standards and Technology standards. Apricot 360 also requires unique user account names and passwords, data is housed in one of three locations, and data is protected using encryption and other technologies.

Social Solutions is providing its partners with a powerful mechanism for integrating and sharing data across multiple sectors and partners, using data to inform decisions about the provision of support services, and maximizing the impact of nonprofit and public service organizations.

ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH
FINDINGS

This section presents a set of core issues and insights resulting from our review of different types of personalized plans. Our findings are organized into the following categories: 1) school-based implementation with organizational and community support; 2) youth empowerment and engagement; 3) engagement of parents, family members, guardians, and other supportive adults; 4) local autonomy and flexibility; 5) attention to issues of equity and access; 6) variance with regard to making referrals and providing comprehensive support services; 7) differentiated access to data and proactive data agreements; 8) lack of policy infrastructure; 9) opportunities for additional research; and 10) challenges related to developing and implementing personalized plans.

SCHOOL-BASED IMPLEMENTATION WITH **ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

For the majority of plans examined for this research project, the work of developing and implementing personalized plans occurs at schools. A core element of school-based models is a school-based coordinator who is either an existing staff member or an individual hired by an external organization or state education agency. This individual is primarily responsible for managing the process of developing and implementing plans; providing individualized and tailored support to students; serving as the liaison to parents, family members, and guardians; and coordinating the provision of comprehensive support services. Existing school-based support teams, which include teachers, counselors, social workers, and community representatives, also contribute to providing both school- and community-based support to children and youth.

External organizations provide a range of services to support schools and districts, including initial training and ongoing professional development for coordinators, technical assistance related to implementing system-level strategies, and access to and technical support for digital tools and platforms. These organizations also create professional learning opportunities and mechanisms for sharing information about effective practices. In a limited number of cases, external organizations allocate fiscal resources to support local use of personalized plans. While there is variance with regard to the school-based implementation models, schools are the home for personalized plans; the school infrastructure is "perhaps not ideal but the best we have."[149]

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND ENGAGEMENT **IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT-CENTERED, STUDENT-DRIVEN PLANS**

For most of the plans that were examined, there is a strong emphasis on increasing youth involvement in the use of personalized plans—but simply participating in the development and implementation of these plans is not sufficient. For some organizations, youth are expected to drive the process of identifying academic, career, and other interests; setting short- and long-term goals; monitoring progress and identifying barriers to success; and maximizing school and community resources. Many organizations are implementing strategies to build youth empowerment and their confidence to take ownership over their learning experiences and pathways; for example, exposure to a wide range of learning opportunities, including experiential and career-focused programs, are increasing postsecondary options. In addition, organizations such as the PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education and Resilience based in Belmont, Massachusetts and Say Yes to Education have created student surveys to capture self-reported information about interests, skills, and goals.

Interviewees emphasized the importance of enabling children and youth to discover both passion and a sense of purpose,[150] enhancing ownership but also accountability for progress and growth,[151] increasing the relevance of learning opportunities, and aligning such opportunities to well-defined pathways to postsecondary and lifelong success.

ENGAGEMENT OF **PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS, GUARDIANS, AND OTHER SUPPORTIVE ADULTS**

While there is variance with regard to the level of involvement of these adults, organizations are implementing different types of strategies to raise the level of overall support for children and youth, strengthen relationships between children/youth and adults and also between supportive adults, and build integrated networks of support for students. The IEP model requires parents, family members, and guardians to actively participate in developing these individualized plans for children and youth with disabilities; and organizations that are implementing different types of personalized plans have established similar expectations for adults in the communities in which they work.

LOCAL **AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY**

Organizations are utilizing a tight-loose model to implement personalized plans whereby system-level requirements regarding their content, structure, and development are coupled with significant levels of local autonomy and flexibility to adapt both tools and processes to reflect community contexts. State education agencies in states with high levels of local control must operate within specific parameters, and external organizations that are managing networks of schools, districts, or communities are opting to implement this governance model. While there are benefits to the tight-loose model, such as respecting the need for local differentiation and providing flexibility to those responsible for implementing personalized plans, challenges include balancing system-level with local priorities and implementing system-wide accountability strategies to ensure fidelity of implementation and assess systemic impact.

ATTENTION TO ISSUES OF **EQUITY AND ACCESS**

The impact of personalized plans on increasing equity and access especially for historically marginalized groups of students was a central theme of this research. For a majority of the organizations, focusing on specific populations in specific communities is the basis of equity and access work. Given educational attainment, achievement, and opportunity gaps plus significant disparities related to health and other indicators, many organizations are targeting their efforts on children and youth who are the most vulnerable and most in need of assistance. Interviewees emphasized the ways in which increasing equity and access are central to their models and strategies; for example, at Communities In Schools, this work is "why we exist"[152] and at Treehouse, "equity is one of the words that is in every single conversation that we have."[153] As described on page 44, Treehouse is also engaging in efforts to build the capacity of staff members to address issues of equity and access.

In some communities, the use of personalized plans is changing educators' perceptions of and reducing biases about children and youth because the process of developing plans is providing these professionals with more comprehensive and nuanced information about the factors that influence academic achievement, attendance, and

other outcomes. One interesting strategy for examining equity is being implemented in the Somerville Public Schools and other districts in Massachusetts. The Student Insights digital platform houses different types of academic and demographic data, produces dashboards to identify students in need of additional support, and allows educators to upload detailed notes about students' strengths, weaknesses, and progress.[154] A notable feature of this platform is a class distribution tool that allows educators to use a diversity index to assess class composition and the distribution of students; this tool has enabled educators to examine equity and access issues from a different perspective.[155]

As noted in the Introduction, additional research would help to better understand the impact of personalized learning models and personalized plans on historically undeserved and marginalized students. The work that is being undertaken by multiple organizations presents exciting opportunities to gather information and data about advancing equity and access agendas.

VARIANCE WITH REGARD TO **MAKING REFERRALS AND PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES**

Common elements related to referrals and comprehensive support services include the establishment of partnerships with community-based agencies, local (either school or community) coordinators who serve as primary liaisons to these agencies, and features of digital platforms that allow users to make internal referrals to programs or external referrals to community-based agencies. However, several interviewees described both variance and limited control given the existence of local processes and requirements for providing services to children and youth. Interviewees also reported difficulties related to sharing information and data with community and state entities, further complicating efforts to track and assess the impact of services on multiple outcomes.

DIFFERENTIATED ACCESS TO
DATA AND PROACTIVE DATA AGREEMENTS

Organizations have either built in-house digital platforms or adapted existing platforms to support the use of personalized plans. These platforms vary regarding the number and type of features, but common components include differentiated access to data by multiple users; the identification of short- or long-term academic, personal, career, or other goals; the creation of dashboards to easily monitor students' progress; analytical tools to aggregate or disaggregate data by different factors; and the ability to upload additional information about the provision of support services.

Most platforms protect privacy and data by setting specific parameters for accessing data. In addition to granting differentiated access by user, the majority of organizations and their local partners are operating in accordance with Memoranda of Understanding that describe specific responsibilities of different entities related to data sharing and management as well as building and maintaining the technical infrastructure for digital tools and platforms. Local and state laws plus federal requirements per FERPA and HIPAA determine the parameters. As a result, organizations working across multiple communities must be nimble and flexible to support platforms and users. In some cases, local entities require consent forms for parents, family members, or guardians to further protect privacy and confidentiality.

The continuous collection of robust data about children and youth is at the heart of the development and implementation of personalized plans. Increased access to data has a significant impact on personalized plans both as a tool and a process and from goal setting to the provision of comprehensive support services. However, three issues require further exploration: 1) maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of student data; 2) ensuring that increased access to information and data will not deepen biases, further marginalize, and penalize particular groups of students; and 3) ensuring that multiple stakeholders will be able to increase their capacity to effectively use data.

LACK OF POLICY INFRASTRUCTURE

While the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the existence of state regulations and statutes mandating the use of personalized plans are influencing the development and implementation of personalized plans, few interviewees spoke about the importance of the policy infrastructure for this work. In fact, one interviewee candidly described existing policies "as an inadequate set of guidelines that sometimes presents obstacles that can be challenging to work around in order to best serve students, families, educators, and communities."[156] Several organizations such as Big Picture Learning, One Degree, and the National Center for Youth Law are promoting systemic policy and other reforms. Multiple stakeholders may need to engage in discussions about building an expansive and comprehensive policy infrastructure to better support this work.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH**

There is variance among the entities described in this report related to assessing the impact of models and personalized plans on different outcomes. Entities that have been implementing strategies for multiple years and across different sites have had the opportunity to engage in longitudinal assessments of impact whereas other entities are developing initial strategies or have not yet developed mechanisms for assessing impact.

When we initiated our research, we were interested in learning more about the impact of different types of personalized plans on multiple outcomes, and our findings have yielded several areas that would benefit from additional research:

- **There are opportunities to conduct additional research about the content and structure of plans and their related processes.** Our research identified multiple studies that assess the impact of holistic models on different outcomes, which has resulted in valuable findings about the impact of both personalized and comprehensive approaches. Multiple studies have also utilized qualitative techniques to assess the attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of different stakeholders. As additional entities develop and implement personalized plans, researchers could build on efforts to date to explore the impact of personalized approaches on larger groups of children, youth, families, and communities.

- **Researchers could address the desirability and the feasibility of isolating the impact of personalized plans on multiple outcomes.** Our research indicates that there are opportunities to better understand how the content, structure, and processes of personalized plans have direct impact on academic, social-emotional, attainment, well-being, and other factors. However, given that these plans are components of holistic models and related to other components, it is possible to argue that it is neither feasible nor desirable to isolate the impact of plans. With that said, additional research about personalized plans as tools and processes could yield important findings.

- **As noted in the Introduction, researchers could conduct additional research about the impact of personalized plans on subgroups of students.** Disaggregated and longitudinal data on the impact of personalized plans on academic achievement and attainment; social, emotional, and physical well-being; and postsecondary success (among other outcomes) could inform ongoing efforts to increase equity and access, address systemic and disproportionate discrimination, and create the conditions necessary to ensure that historically underserved children and youth can truly benefit from the development and implementation of these plans.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO
DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PERSONALIZED PLANS

We have identified the following challenges related to developing and implementing personalized plans.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF PLANS

- **Transitioning from a "pathology-based"**[157] **to an asset-based approach** to identify the abilities, passions, skills, and goals of children and youth and also respect the influence of cultural, linguistic, and other factors

IMPLEMENTATION

- **Enhancing the skills of educators, community partners, and other stakeholders** to execute new professional responsibilities and establish different relationships with students, parents, family members, and guardians

- **Establishing sufficient time** to advise children and youth, establish productive relationships among different stakeholders, provide continuous professional development to educators and other professionals, and successfully implement each stage of the personalized plan process

- **Enhancing organizational or agency coherence** to improve intra-organizational communication and alignment and better support the efforts of local partners

- **Increasing buy-in and support** from key stakeholders

- **Establishing collaborative and productive relationships** among the education, social services, and other sectors

- **Managing additional work and aligning personalized plans to local and state initiatives**

- **Mitigating the effects of leadership and staff turnover** to better sustain the work

- **Allocating sufficient human, fiscal, and other resources** to implement models effectively and with fidelity

- **Conducting robust assessments** of the impact of personalized plans and the provision of comprehensive support services on multiple outcomes

INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Altering or creating school, district, and community structures** to support and sustain the work

- **Building digital tools and platforms** that add value to the work and also maintain privacy and confidentiality

- **Scaling effective strategies and models** to expand access to academic and other services and also increase sustainability

The development and implementation of personalized plans is complicated and convoluted work that requires new ways of thinking and working. Our analysis and findings have informed our vision for Success Plans and will influence our approach to implementing new strategies. We present recommendations for personalized plans in the following section of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our review of research about personalized plans, exploration of examples from the field, and knowledge about innovative models and strategies, we offer the following recommendations for all stakeholders who are developing and implementing comprehensive and personalized plans for children and youth.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF PLANS

- **Develop Targeted and Strategic Plans:** Identify both strengths and specific needs to address and develop a personalized plan that includes indicators and domains, relevant and robust data, and appropriate instruments to directly address the issues.

- **Align Plans with Local, District, and State Educational and Other Priorities:** Include academic and other indicators related to statewide education accountability systems and health, well-being, and out-of-school factors.

IMPLEMENTATION

○ **Empower All Children and Youth.** Establish developmentally appropriate, capacity-building ways in which all children and youth can participate in and actively contribute to the development and implementation of personalized plans.

○ **Empower Parents, Family Members, and Guardians.** Create multiple opportunities for parents, family members, and guardians to advocate for their children and to participate in the development and implementation of personalized plans.

○ **Embed Equity and Access in Every Aspect of the Work.** Ensure that personalized plans are strength-based and celebrate the racial/ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and other backgrounds of children and youth; establish high expectations for all children and youth; accommodate multiple styles of learning and development; proactively provide consistent advising, support, and mentoring services; and include indicators and utilize instruments that are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

Ensure that parents, family members, and guardians have access to informational and other documents in multiple languages; provide both print and online access to these materials; and celebrate the racial/ethnic, linguistic, and other backgrounds of these adults.

Provide ongoing professional learning and development opportunities to educators, community providers, and others engaged in this work to increase their cultural competency and proactively address unintended biases.
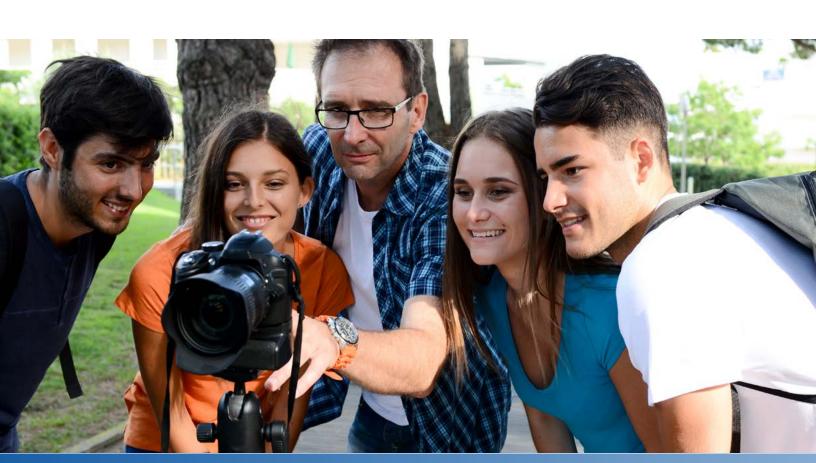
Ensure that governance and management structures at school, district, and community levels include a diverse group of representatives and maximize their perspectives and expertise.

Conduct analyses of disaggregated data to monitor the impact of plans and services provided on multiple outcomes.

○ **Establish Networks of Support.** Build on existing support structures in schools, districts, and communities to create formal networks that include all adults who are committed to supporting children and youth.

○ **Designate Community, District, and/or School Coordinators.** Identify individuals, either existing or new staff members as resources permit, who will be responsible for coordinating processes for developing and implementing personalized plans (school coordinators, similar to existing models for personalized plans, could serve as the primary mentor to children and youth, and district coordinators could be responsible for managing partnerships with community providers and ensuring that services are delivered consistently and efficiently).

○ **Create a Cross-Sector Governance/Management Structure.** Utilize an existing structure or create a new structure (such as a children's cabinet) that includes representatives from the education, social services, and other sectors who can address issues across the birth through postsecondary continuum; identify specific roles and responsibilities for each member; and on an ongoing basis, identify specific action items that must be executed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

○ **Establish Sufficient Time to Support Every Aspect of the Work.** Allocate time for every aspect of the development and implementation of plans, including sufficient time to advise and mentor students, enable collaboration among members of student support teams, provide professional development for educators and their partners, hold cross-sector meetings, upload and manage data, and engage parents, family members, and guardians.

○ **Develop Mechanisms for Ongoing and Productive Communication Among Key Stakeholders.** Institutionalize processes to disseminate information (in multiple languages, if necessary) on an ongoing basis, provide opportunities for stakeholders to share constructive feedback, identify issues or concerns related to the development and implementation of the plans, share information about best practices, and celebrate progress and successes to date.

○ **Establish or Enhance Processes for Referrals and the Provision of Support Services.** Conduct a gap analysis, assess existing models for delivering services (such as multi-tiered systems of support), and refine or establish new strategies.

○ **Foster Positive and Collaborative Cultures.** Cultivate home, school, and community cultures that embrace the use of comprehensive plans, integrate them into every aspect of the work, and ensure that plans will serve as essential tools and processes for supporting children and youth.

INFRASTRUCTURE

○ **Build Individual, Collective, and Organizational Capacity.** Create a new mindset for providing personalized and comprehensive support by enhancing the knowledge and skills of all individuals who are contributing to the development and implementation of personalized plans; establishing strategies for increasing the ability of these individuals to work collaboratively, productively, and effectively (for example, by creating professional and learning networks); and refining or establishing organizational processes and structures to increase organizational alignment, coherence, communication, and efficiency.

○ **Secure Support of Key Stakeholders.** Develop communication materials, tailored to different stakeholders and reflective of their needs, that provide detailed information about personalized plans to build public demand for plans while addressing key concerns about data security and extending the scope and purpose of schools.

○ **Develop a Robust Data Collection System.** Build on or refine existing mechanisms to collect data and information about personalized plans on an ongoing basis, monitor the impact of personalized plans on in- and out-of-school outcomes, assess impact on historically undeserved and marginalized children and youth, monitor fidelity of implementation, and continually assess the efficiency and effectiveness of all partner organizations.

○ **Use Digital Tools that Adhere to Strict Data Security Practices.** Identify priorities and needs related to data collection, management, analysis, and protection during the early stages of work; utilize and build on existing data systems (as appropriate) to build a technology infrastructure; proactively create Memoranda of Understanding or other agreements among appropriate parties; and create clear processes and protocols for data use and sharing to ensure the security and confidentiality of student data.

○ **Institutionalize the Work.** Create formal governance and organizational structures, policies (as appropriate given the context), and processes to alleviate disruptions related to staff and leadership turnover, political change, and resource allocation issues; support the development and implementation of plans; and sustain the work over time.

○ **Develop a Sustainability Plan.** Identify short- and long-term goals and develop a strategic plan during the early stage of implementation; identify potential issues related to the allocation of fiscal and other resources; and develop a sequence of action items to maintain the work.

The movement to implement personalized learning approaches and personalized plans is creating a growing body of knowledge, resources, and lessons learned. Our final recommendation is to build on the successes to date, learn from practices that have not achieved desired results, and utilize all types of existing resources to support the successful development and implementation of these plans.

QUESTIONS
FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

**We will continue to conduct research about personalized plans and
have identified several questions for further consideration.**

- How can we increase public demand for and interest in this work?

- How can communities maximize fiscal, human, and other resources?

- Which professional development and other needs must be addressed to
  support the implementation of personalized, comprehensive, and universal
  approaches?

- How can we ensure that attention to equity and access is embedded
  in every aspect of this work?

- What conditions need to be established to effectively develop and
  implement personalized plans and what types of policies, strategies,
  and systems need to be created to sustain this work?

- How can we ensure that the development and implementation of
  comprehensive plans will positively impact the outcomes and experiences
  of historically marginalized children and youth?

CONCLUSION

The Education Redesign Lab conducted research and developed this report to explore existing strategies, models, and digital tools that facilitate the development and implementation of personalized plans for children and youth as well as identify promising approaches that can inform the field. Our findings reinforce our overarching theory of action and our vision for Success Plans. Personalized plans coupled with the provision of comprehensive support services have the potential to reshape the education and social landscape. If we truly want to reduce—if not eliminate—persistent achievement and opportunity gaps and improve a wide range of outcomes for all children and youth, we must think, work, and act differently. We believe that Success Plans are a powerful lever for changing our practice in education.

We look forward to learning from and working with allies and partners to foster the increased use of personalized plans and address the challenges associated with their development and implementation. By doing so, we will continue to fulfill our collective commitment to reduce educational, support, and opportunity disparities. The Education Redesign Lab is committed to leveraging all available resources and expertise to attain this mission while building ample community and political will to ensure that all children and youth—and all means all—are prepared for lifelong success and have the opportunity to thrive.

APPENDIX: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

The following individuals participated in interviews conducted from May through October 2018.

Arizona Department of Education
James Buchanan, Education Program Specialist, Effective Teachers and Leaders
Kay Schreiber, College and Career Ready Contact

Barr Foundation
Maryann Corsello, Director, Quality and Analytics
Hannah Scherer, Chief of Staff and Director of Educator Engagement

Big Picture Learning
Andrew Frishman, Co-Executive Director

City Connects
Mary Walsh, Executive Director

Colorado Department of Education
Heidi Mccaslin, Preschool Director

Communities In Schools
Heather Clawson, Executive Vice President, Research, Learning and Accreditation

Harlem Children's Zone
Betina Jean-Louis, Senior Managing Director, Research and Evaluation
Marquitta Speller, Senior Managing Director, College and Career Programs

Harlem Children's Zone, Promise Academy Charter Schools
Susan Rydz, Deputy, Special Projects

Highlander Institute
Maeve Murray, Program Manager

LEAP Innovations
Emily Bader, Senior Director, Marketing Communications
Beth Herbert, Chief of Staff
Amy Huang, Senior Director, Programs
Jake Williams, Manager, Data and Research

LRNG by Collective Shift
Connie Yowell, Chief Executive Officer

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Lisa Harney, Dropout Prevention and Recovery Specialist

National Center for Youth Law
Jesse Hahnel, Executive Director
Andrew Moffett, Project Manager, FosterEd

One Degree
Rey Faustino, Chief Executive Officer, Founder, and Board Member

Overgrad
Ryan Hoch, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer

The PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education and Resilience
Gil Noam, Director
Bailey Triggs, Senior Manager, Communications and Knowledge Management

ReSchool Colorado
Amy Anderson, Executive Director

Say Yes to Education | Weiss Institute
Gene Chasin, President and Chief Operating Officer
Nadia Del Valle, Weiss Institute Fellow

Social Solutions
Kristin Nimsger, Chief Executive Officer
Ashley Strain, Product Owner
Alexis Zotalis, Director, Education Solutions

Somerville Public Schools
Uri Harel, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator

Summit Public Schools
Amy Sandoz, Director of Diploma

Transcend Education
Jeff Wetzler, Co-Founder

Treehouse
Alison Crow, former Associate Director, Collaborative Analytics and Innovation

Turnaround for Children
Gabe Friedman, Director, Strategic Initiatives

Youth Policy Institute
Elyce Martinez, Assistant Director, Research and Evaluation
Jesse Noonan, Chief Academic Officer
Tara Watford, Senior Director, Research and Evaluation

END**NOTES**

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Harvard Graduate School of Education
50 Church Street, 4th floor, Cambridge, MA 02138
edredesign@gse.harvard.edu
www.edredesign.org