

INVESTING EARLY

**Characteristics and Best Practices of Early
Intervention Programs in Selected U.S. States**

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**Prepared for the conference on *Access to
Postsecondary Education In Canada: Facts and Gaps*,
Ottawa, April 5-6, 2002**

Context

- ❑ In the U.S., gaps in enrollment rates persist despite investment in financial aid
- ❑ Many factors influence enrollment: financial and non-financial
- ❑ Early intervention programs target at-risk students early in their educational paths

Context

- ❑ **Services:** counseling/awareness, academic enrichment, parent involvement, personal enrichment, mentoring, scholarships
- ❑ Programs may be sponsored by federal govt, states, not-for-profit organizations, colleges/universities, other entities
- ❑ State programs increasing: less than 10 in 1990, about 20 in 1994, even more today
–NEISP/GEAR UP

Methods

- ❑ Initial review of programs in 50 states
- ❑ Focus on a dozen state “leaders”
 - 17 programs
 - Established 1995 or earlier
 - Targeted; support services, financial incentives, or combination
- ❑ Examine both design characteristics and evidence of outcomes (if available)

Programs Reviewed

- CA: Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID); College Readiness Program (CRP); California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP)
- FL: College Reach Out Program (CROP)
- GA: Post-Secondary Readiness Enrichment Program (PREP)
- IN: 21st Century Scholars
- MN: Get Ready!
- NJ: College Bound Grant Program

Programs Reviewed

- NY: Liberty Partnership Program; Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP)
- OK: Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP); GEAR UP (incl. OHLAP-Plus)
- RI: Children's Crusade
- VT: Vermont Student Assistance Corp Outreach Programs
- WA: GEAR UP Scholar's Project
- WI: Early Identification Program; Minority Precollege Scholarship Program

Preliminary Findings: Characteristics

□ General program approach

- Support services; financial incentives; combination
- Most common services: counseling and academic enrichment
- Other services: parent activities, mentoring, personal/social integration, scholarships

Preliminary Findings: Characteristics

□ How program is targeted

- Middle school and/or high school
- Cohort of students vs. grade level(s)
- Number of students served
- Eligibility criteria: low-income status, first-generation, minority, drop-out risk, academic requirements, pledge/contract

Preliminary Findings: Characteristics

□ Locus of administration/implementation

- State oversight: dept of ed, financial aid agencies, governing boards, legislatures
- Administration: state agency itself, or delegated to colleges/universities, consortia, non-profit organizations
- Wide variation in funding structures

Preliminary Findings: Best Practices

Limitations of evaluations/outcomes data

- ✓ In some cases, lack of evaluations
- ✓ Failure to keep appropriate records
- ✓ Difficulty in disentangling components
- ✓ Few attempts to link cost and benefits
- ✓ True comparison groups, especially random assignment
- ✓ Cannot compare across programs

Preliminary Findings: Best Practices

□ Program structure/services

- Combine multiple components
- Tutoring/mentoring/academic enrichment
- Trade-off between extensiveness of services and size of program

Preliminary Findings: Best Practices

□ Targeting of students

- Timing of program activities: early, and relevant to grade
- Ongoing contact and continuity of support: throughout year and over time

Preliminary Findings: Best Practices

□ Program administration

- Involvement of higher education institutions
- Create partnerships with elementary/secondary schools, community organizations, etc.
- Coordinate efforts with other initiatives in the state

Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation

www.millenniumscholarships.ca/en/main.html

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www.ihep.org