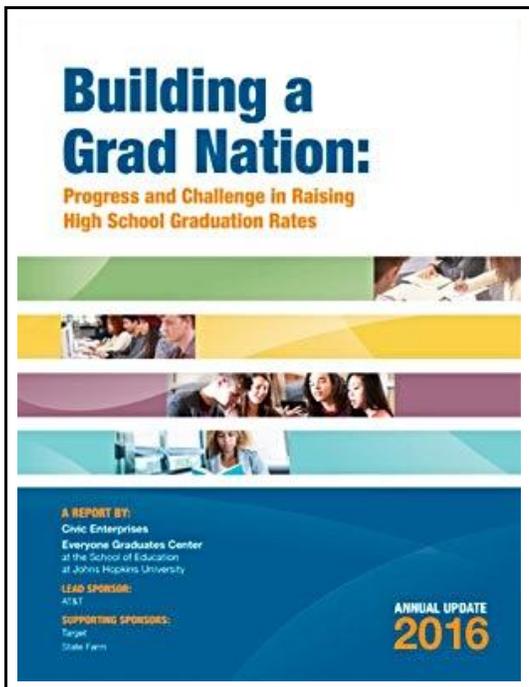




## Newsletter Issue #14, May 23, 2016

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## INCREASING COLLEGE/JOB READINESS By Improving High School Graduation

Today's high school dropout is tomorrow's adult literacy student. So the work being done by [America's Promise Alliance](#) (APA) is important for adult education planners. ***2016 Building a Grad Nation*** is a comprehensive analysis of progress being made toward APA's goal of achieving a 90% on-time high school graduation rate in the U.S. by 2020. It is the seventh in a

series of annual reports and discusses both progress and challenges to be met.

America's Promise Alliance (APA) is a 7-year old collaboration currently made up of some 360 national partners (new members are welcome). Its founding chair is Gen. Colin Powell (Ret.); Alma Powell is its chair. APA carries out several programs. Grad Nation is just one, designed to improve on-time high school completion rates and increase postsecondary enrollment and success. It does this through a variety of services throughout the schooling years, targeted on elementary, middle school, and high school students and offered in collaboration with various of its partner organizations. Its work for high school students focuses on schools across the country with lower graduation rates. It customizes programs and services to local need based in part on advice given by leaders, parents, and students who attend its *Community Summits*. (Nearly two dozen Summits are planned for the fall of 2016--see [HERE](#) for dates and locations.)

APA's ***2016 Building a Grad Nation*** report was issued on May 9th. It was produced by APA together with Civic Enterprises, the Everyone Graduate Center at Johns Hopkins University, and the Alliance for Excellent Education. AT&T is lead sponsor of the report. Target and State Farm are supporting sponsors. The report reaches two broad conclusions: (1) *The nation has achieved a record high in its high school graduation rate, climbing gradually since 2002 to a national average of 82.3% in 2014 (although graduation rates are not currently increasing at a rate sufficient to achieve its 2020 goal).* (2) *Graduate rates vary unevenly across subgroups in the population, with minorities, disabled youth, ESL learners, and students from low-income homes graduating at lower rates.* However, both Black and Hispanic/Latino groups consistently exceed the national rate of improvement.

- Graduation rates by income: Nationally, about 75% of low-income students graduate on time (compared to 89% of those who are "non-low-income." The gap between these two categories ranges from a high of 25.6% in South Dakota to a low of 4% in Indiana. Fifteen states graduate less than 70% of their low-income students.
- Graduation rates by subgroup: In 2014, 72.5% of African American students graduated on time. The gap between White and African American students was 14.7%. 76.3% of Hispanic/Latino students graduated in 2014, with a gap of 10.9%.

- Graduation rates by disability status: In 2014, students without identified disabilities graduated at the rate of 84.8%, compared with 63.1% of disabled students.
- Rates by state achievement: Twenty-nine states equal or exceed the 82.3% national average. Iowa, at 90.5% in 2014, is the highest and the first state to surpass the APA 2020 goal of 90%. New Mexico is the lowest and ranks at 68.5%. 15 states have graduation rates between 70–80%.

Low-graduation-rate schools are defined currently as those enrolling 100 or more students and graduating 67% or less of them. There are 2,397 such schools spread across the American landscape, and in 2014 they collectively enrolled 1.23 million students. While the number of low-graduation-rate schools has declined in recent years, they still predominate in some states. Of the 2,397 schools in operation, 1,000 are *large* low-graduation-rate high schools (they enroll 300+ students); in 2014 they enrolled 924,000 of the national student enrollment. In these large schools, 65% were from low-income families, and 63% were Black or Hispanic/Latino.

Alternative, charter, and virtual schools together make up only 14% of American high schools and enroll only 8% of high school students. But they make up 52% of low-graduation-rate high schools nationwide and account for 20% of the non-graduate pool. Moreover, according to Grad Nation, "regular district high schools account for 41% of low-graduation-rate high schools" and account for the majority of students who do not graduate on time.

The Grad Nation report addresses the validity of its graduation rate data, an important matter when considering the reliability of its college and job readiness indicators. It points out that during the time its programs have been in operation states have also been increasing graduation requirements and exams, and graduation rates have risen consistently even though it has become harder to graduate. In addition, ACT and SAT scores have not decreased during this time, and nearly twice as many students are taking "rigorous" preparatory courses.

*2016 Building a Grad Nation* (91 pages plus an executive summary) is clarified by a companion document titled *2016 Building a Grad Nation Data Brief*. Together they provide a wide range of specific findings, an abundance of

maps, charts, and tables, progress reports on all of the states, and detailed reports on population subgroup achievements.

**Six principle recommendations** are given in the Grad Nation report:

- (1) In implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which requires evidence based interventions, *"set clear definitions and give graduation rates the weight they deserve."* It should be clearer what schools need to do to be accountable for graduating "traditionally underserved students."
- (2) *Consistency should be developed in federal graduation rate guidelines so that all states calculate and report on graduations in the same way.*
- (3) ESSA requires that states "intervene in high schools graduating 67% or less of their students." To support that requirement, *evidence-based plans to improve low-graduation-rate high schools should be created and implemented.*
- (4) Grad Nation has found that, on average, if reporting were done in terms of 5-year and 6-year graduation rates, data about overall graduation rates would be more accurate. It thus recommends that *state and federal agencies should require reporting of extended-year graduation rates.*
- (5) Alternative, charter, and virtual schools make up a relatively small percentage of high schools, but they make up more than half of the nation's low-graduation-rate high schools. It is recommended that *states be required to support and improve these schools and include them in the statewide accountability and improvement systems required under ESSA.*
- (6) *Real pathways should be provided to engage students who have gone off track to graduation.*

In a few months APA will follow [2016 Building a Grad Nation](#) with an in-depth report focused exclusively on the relationship between high school and college and career readiness. To access the set of reports discussed above, [CLICK HERE](#). Contact Daria Hall at [DariaH@AmericasPromise.org](mailto:DariaH@AmericasPromise.org) for further information.

~A Message from NCAL's President ~

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## NEWS IN BRIEF



**The Important Role of Public Libraries.** Public libraries have long been involved in the nation's adult education and literacy affairs. In the 1970s, under the leadership of then Executive Director Robert Wedgeworth of the American Library Association, the ALA was a leader in establishing the adult literacy movement of that era, a movement that has continued on to the present time in various forms with the continual involvement of local and state public libraries. Today, according to recent NCAL communications with the ALA, public libraries across the country are still providing instructional services in adult education and even workforce skills to beginning readers, and they typically offer referral services, curricular and other materials, and in-kind space to local providing groups. Programs at the [Brooklyn Public Library](#) and the [Queens Public Library](#) are cases in point. A few others are

listed [HERE](#). The ALA itself maintains an active program in adult literacy through its Office of Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (ODLOS); adult new readers and non-readers are a main focus. One ongoing ALA activity is its [Literacy Clearinghouse of Resources](#) in adult literacy, adolescent literacy, digital literacy, early childhood and family literacy, and information literacy. (Note: ALA staff told NCAL that outdated data about the nature and scale of low adult literacy is in the process of being updated to reflect PIAAC findings.) The ALA has also been operating an [American Dream program of grants to libraries](#), with funding from Dollar General Corporation. Many of its 160+ participating libraries have adult literacy programs, as do the libraries featured in its [Literacy for All](#) toolkit, which was launched in 2012. Another ALA program, carried out by its YALSA division, offers a variety of youth and adult summer reading and related programs. YALSA recently issued a position paper titled [Adopting A Summer Learning Approach for Increased Impact](#). Finally, through the IMLS [Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant program](#) (IMLS=Institute for Museum & Library Services), *ODLOS is in a partnership with Proliteracy* in which they are developing accessible training resources based on the recommendations of the [Adult Literacy Through Libraries Action Agenda](#). The effort is being assisted by three public libraries and an advisory committee of adult literacy leaders. An online course is expected to result from this work and will launch early in 2017. Contact Kristin Lahurd, ALA Literacy Officer, for more information at [klahurd@ala.org](mailto:klahurd@ala.org).



**The National Celebration of Reading event of The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy** will be held at the Library of Congress on Thursday, June 9th. Readings will be given by several bestselling authors including Laura Bush and Jenna Bush Hager, David Balducci, A.J. Jacobs, and Jon Meachum. The event will also commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the signing of the National Literacy Act in July 1991 by then President George Bush. (To see the statement issued by President Bush at the signing, click [HERE](#).) In a pre-conference event on June 8th, the Foundation will also sponsor a first-ever general literacy forum in which invitees can discuss and offer ideas on ways to expand service to the millions of unserved adults in need of adult basic skills services. The event is described by the Foundation as "imagineering" solutions to advance adult literacy and education for the next 25 years through "technology, funding innovations, policy, and workforce." Among those expected to be on that day's agenda are former First Lady

Barbara Bush, Laura Bush Koch, the Hon. Lamar Alexander, Marcus Shingle (CEO of XPRIZE), Johan Uvin, David Rubenstein, and a panel moderated by the Foundation's president Liza McFadden. Some 200 or so attendees are expected at the event. The pre-conference is by invitation only (NCAL will attend and will report in a subsequent newsletter on the day's discussion.). For more information on the Celebration of Reading event, click [HERE](#). Those interested in considering sponsorship of a table or tickets for the Reading event can get information [HERE](#).



**Challenging Demographic Shifts in the U.S.** U.S. immigrants currently make up 13.2 percent of the nation's population, four times as much as in 1960. (Get report [HERE](#).) Nearly six out of every ten Hispanics in the U.S., some 59%, are "millennials or younger." (Get report [HERE](#).) *[Ed. Note: Millennials are those born from the mid-70s through the early 90s, mostly children of baby boomers. They are generally more technology and internet savvy than their parents and are the first generation to have grown up with digital technology as a normal feature of their everyday lives.]* Until about 2005, Republicans and Democrats held similar views about the importance of immigrants to America, but today 78% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents think that immigrants strengthen our country while only 35% of Republicans do. (Get report [HERE](#).) These and other trends, developments, and attitudes about the American population are reported in a series of new publications from the [Pew Research Center](#). The work of the Pew Research Center is frequently reported in the NCAL newsletter and is a central activity of the Pew Charitable Trusts.



**The Barbara Bush Foundation Adult Literacy XPRIZE program**, presented by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, is a worldwide competition to develop mobile software to increase adult literacy skills. Team registration for the competition is no longer open, but XPRIZE advised NCAL on May 9th that it has "launched a matching platform that will allow educators, practitioners, and researchers to join, mentor, or support competing teams." To consider working with an XPRIZE team, review eligibility and application procedures [HERE](#).



In a remarkable instance of federal cooperation, **12 federal agencies**

**have joined in a commitment to promote career pathways and align related policies and technical assistance.** On April 28th, they issued a joint letter about the commitment and their intent to help state and local areas streamline programs and services to better serve individuals. This federal partnership had its beginnings in 2012 when the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and HHS joined forces in the [Skills Working Group](#) to promote career pathways, alignment, basic skills for low-skilled adults and youth, industry-recognized credentials, and solid work skills. The expanded partnership of 12 also involves the White House National Economic Council and the Office of Management and Budget. The group's [April 28th letter](#) lists and provides links to numerous resources already developed in the partnership. Further information about the initiative is available from departmental websites and from [THIS LINK](#).



### **Finalists Are Chosen in the Reach Higher Career App**

**Challenge.** On May 11th, First Lady Michelle Obama and the U.S. Department of Education announced five finalists in their Reach Higher Career App prize competition to promote mobile app solutions that will help students navigate education and career pathways. The finalists are [Future Plans](#) of the Pinellas Education Foundation, [Hats & Ladders](#) of THiNKZONE, [Inform Journeys](#), [MARI](#), and [Overgrade](#). Selections were made by a panel of external judges. Each finalist will be awarded \$25,000 and each is now preparing for a Demonstration Day of their refined app solution in which further prizes will be awarded during the summer. A final grand prize winner will be announced by fall and receive \$100,000. Other prizes are being provided by IBM and Microsoft. Further information about the program, its schedule of activities, and its five finalists and judges is available at the [Reach Higher Challenge website](#).



### **[The Effective Apprenticeships to Rebuild National Skills Act](#)**

(EARNs) was introduced in Congress on May 18th by Senators Patty Murray and Orrin Hatch, with cosponsorship from Senators Tim Kaine, Tim Scott, Al Franken, and Susan Collins. EARNs is a comprehensive update and strengthening of existing apprenticeship legislation. It would authorize \$100 million in federal funds to increase access to apprenticeships through competitive grants and other means. Educational entities included in Title II of WIOA and in the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act are

among those eligible to apply for support under the EARN Act. An excellent analysis of the bill by the National Skills Coalition includes [a summary of the bill's main provisions](#), but those working with apprenticeship programs should read the entire bill, S.2945 (full and summary text for the bill is in progress now and will be available very soon at [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov)). Health care is one of many occupational areas embraced by the legislation. Leaders in adult education, workforce skills development, and health care for low-skilled adults may want to encourage their senators and other elected officials to support this bill and apprenticeships in general.



**The U.S. Department of Education is taking a proactive role in removing barriers that block those with criminal records from pursuing a college education.** The Department has put out a new guide, [\*Beyond the Box: Increasing Access to Higher Education for Justice-Involved Individuals\*](#). This 51-page guide aims to give people with criminal backgrounds a second chance and seeks to enlist the help of postsecondary education. *"Too many Americans are denied opportunities to lead fulfilling and productive lives because of a past arrest or conviction – including opportunities to access a quality education,"* noted Attorney General Loretta Lynch in commending Education for its commitment. The guide aims to encourage colleges and universities to modify their assessment and admissions practices so that more former offenders are admitted to college, for their own benefit and that of their families and communities. [\*Beyond the Box\*](#) is accompanied by [a fact sheet](#) explaining briefly what the Department wants to achieve, what motivates its commitment in this area, and how colleges and universities can help through better admission policies and strategies for ensuring success. It also provides links to other Department criminal reentry programs. Currently, according to [\*Beyond the Box\*](#), some 66 percent of postsecondary institutions in America collect criminal justice information for all prospective students. In one institution studied (the large State University of New York system), nearly two-thirds of people with a felony record stopped the application process when they were asked about criminal justice involvement. Research suggests that postsecondary enrollments of students with a criminal justice background contribute no more to campus crime or campus safety problem than other enrollees.



A recent blog of the U.S. Department of Labor, [What's in Store for the](#)

[Class of 2016](#), reports that in 2015 the college enrollment rate of female high school graduates was higher than that of men (72.6% vs 65.8%). Asian high school graduate rates far exceeded the rates for White, Hispanic, and African-American (84.6% contrasted to 69.2, 67.1, and 62.7% respectively). Interestingly, some 91.6% of high school graduates who enrolled in college were full-time students, even though nearly a third of them also held a job. Of 2015 students who did not enroll in college, more than half found jobs. But 13% of 2015 graduates were neither enrolled in college or employed as of last fall. The blog posting, which is based on Bureau of Labor Statistics data, is accompanied by a short set of readers' comments; interested readers may add comments if they wish.



The **Annie E. Casey Foundation** pursues its parental incarceration work through a program called **Kids Count**. In April 2016 Casey issued a new 15-page Kids Count report, [A Shared Sentence](#), which tells of the high toll that parental incarceration takes on children, families, and communities. Among other sobering facts reported are that, by conservative estimate, more than 5.1 million kids in America today have had a parent incarcerated at some point in their lives. In 2011–2012, Kentucky had the greatest number of such incarcerations (at 13%), but not far behind was Indiana at 11%, and at 10% each Alaska, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. Included in the report are detailed examinations of the experiences in three cities, Atlanta, Indianapolis, and Providence. The policy paper gives recommendations in three broad areas (with several specific ones within each area) for federal, state, and municipal agencies and education and business entities. They call for activities to: (1) make sure kids are supported financially and emotionally while their parents are incarcerated and following their return to the community; (2) provide education and training that includes efforts to connect parents to job pathways; and (3) provide affordable housing, good schools, and other resources to re-entering parents. A conclusion to the report notes that while criminal offenders should face the consequences of their acts, "parents who are incarcerated do not live in isolation: They are fathers, mothers, partners, caregivers, breadwinners and community members," and "their kids inevitably end up sharing their sentences."



On May 16th, the U.S. Department of Education announced [a new Dual](#)

**Enrollment Pell initiative** under which some 44 postsecondary institutions have been invited to join in an experiment allowing students to take college-credit courses using federal Pell grants as early as high school. According to the announcement, an estimated 10,000 high school students will be able to access some \$20 million in Pell funds to take dual enrollment courses offered by colleges (80% of the participants) and high schools (20%). Launch of this Departmental Pell program was timed to coincide with a new White House initiative in which \$100 million is dedicated to a **Competition to Expand Tuition-Free Community College Programs that Connect Americans to In-Demand Jobs**.



Loss of credits when students transfer from one college to another has long been a deterrent to college completion. To address this problem, **since 2011 the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has been developing an Interstate Passport for college students** with a "learning-outcomes-based framework." In the process, not only does WICHE aim to improve college graduation rates for transfer students, but it hopes to shorten time to degree completion while saving them money. The Passport is a highly complex undertaking with developmental and implementation work still to be done through 2019. It is based on student-centered learning outcomes that reflect what a student knows and can do and provides flexible ways for a student to demonstrate his/her achievement in relation to those outcomes in several knowledge areas. The project is being carried out and tested in partnership with a growing number of colleges and universities, so far mostly institutions located in the WICHE region. Citing a study by the National Student Clearinghouse, WICHE reports that about a third of America's college students transfer at least once within a five-year period. In 2013-14, nearly 15% went to college in more than one state in the process of earning their degree. Only 58% of transfer students were able to get credit for 90% or more of their prior coursework. Some 42% lost between 10% and 90% or more of their credits. Funding for Phase I of the project (2011-2014) was provided by the Carnegie Corporation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Lumina Foundation. Phase II funding (2015-2019) includes a "First in the World" grant from the Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. In Phase II, development of the framework will be completed, more colleges will be drawn into participation, and an automated process for data collection and student tracking will be put in place. In announcing Phase II funding, WICHE president David Longanecker

said: *"The Passport is a game changer for higher education on many levels. As more campuses sign on, transfer students will graduate more quickly and Passport institutions will be recognized for their leadership in advancing outcomes-based education. Having the Passport brand will also be an important marketing tool for colleges and universities in the years ahead."*

In March 2016, WICHE issued a 44-page [Handbook for Registrars and Institutional Researchers](#). It describes student mobility issues, the Passport framework and guiding principles, the role of registrars and institutional researchers, the essential faculty role, data management, academic quality assurance issues, and gives a wide variety of other information. More Passport information, including a detailed history, the coming agenda of work, and how-to-join instructions for potential institutional members is available from the [Passport page of the WICHE website](#).

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## EVENTS & RESOURCES



A webinar titled [Ensuring Professional Capacity to Support English Learners](#) will be offered by the **American Youth Policy Forum** from 12–1:30 pm EDT on May 24th.



[The Health Literacy Conference](#) is calling for abstracts for papers for its 8th Annual conference in Boston on October 13–14, 2016. The submission

deadline is July 1st. The submission form and guidelines are available [HERE](#).



**A day-long Adult ESL conference** jointly sponsored by **The New School and the Literacy Assistance Center** will be held in NYC on Saturday, October 15th. Proposals are now being invited for presentations, workshops, and panel discussions. The submission deadline is June 10th. Click [HERE](#) for submission guidelines and information.



**The American Association of Community Colleges and Salt Lake City Community College** will hold a June 6th [\*\*Congressional Briefing titled Higher Education Act Reauthorization: New Policies for Changing Community Colleges\*\*](#). It will take place from 12–1:30pm EDT in the Capitol Visitors Center. A boxed lunch will be served. Four community college presidents and the head of one state system will explain to attendees the AACC's agenda with respect to HEA and the Carl D. Perkins Act. The goal is to enhance the understanding and work of community colleges—with attention to Pell Grants, student borrowing, encouraging programs that will generate meaningful workforce outcomes, promoting innovation and academic quality, and motivating states to play a larger financing role in their community colleges. See the event's informational flyer at the above link and/or contact Laurie Quarles at [lquarles@aacc.nche.edu](mailto:lquarles@aacc.nche.edu).



**Jobs for the Future** will hold a national summit in New Orleans on June 28–29 titled [\*Voices for Opportunity and Economic Mobility\*](#). For registration (no later than May 27th) and event information, click [HERE](#).



**The National Skills Coalition** and the **Workforce Data Quality Campaign** will host a webinar on May 26th at 2pm EDT to discuss *apprenticeships in the U.S. and the current state of apprenticeship ship data*. Click [HERE](#) to register and view the agenda.



**The National Center for Families Learning** will hold its [\*2016 Families Learning Summit\*](#) on October 17–19 in Detroit. This year's Summit theme is "Together: Stronger Families, Stronger Communities." A 25% early-bird discount is available to those who register no later than June 30. For more information

and to register, click [HERE](#).

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**From the American Youth Policy Forum – [Top 5 Lessons from Miami: Career Pathways in Action](#)** is a report on major take-aways from a visit to three Miami career-focused schools by AYPF, congressional staff, and national education leaders on March 31st and April 1st.



**From the Center for American Progress – [Jumping Through Hoops and Set Up to Fail: Parents Speak Out About Child Care Assistance](#)** is a report by Senior Fellow Judith Warner (May 6th). One startling fact given is that "the average cost of child care for an infant and a 4-year old child in Iowa is \$17,701. A report Summary can be accessed [HERE](#).



**From the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) –** Among several new papers released by CLASP during May to date are: (1) **[Career Pathways: A Step Forward and a Potential Step Back](#)**, by Anna Cielinsky and Judy Mortrude, is an analysis responding to the federal Skills Working Group letter issued on April 28th by multiple federal agencies (see News in Brief item above). (2) **[Federal Guidance Explains How the Ability to Benefit Provision Aligns with a Career Pathway](#)**, by Lauren Walizer and Judy Mortrude. Exemplary programs in Wisconsin and Washington State are cited. (3) **[Building Skills, Remodeling the HEA](#)**, by Laure Walizer, deals with reforms needed in HEA to advance workforce training at community colleges. (4) Although National Women's Health Week was earlier in May, CLASP called at the time for **[A Pledge for National Women's Health Week: Better Jobs Now](#)**, by Liz Ben-Ishai. The article presents sobering information from the HHS Office on Women's Health on disadvantages that women workers of all ages experience. (5) **[No Educational Experience Should Be An Island: How Low-Income Students' Access to and Persistence in Postsecondary Education is Restricted in the Very Programs They Need the Most](#)**, by Lauren Walizer.



**From Digital Promise –** The group has launched a monthly newsletter, **[Spotlight](#)**, to highlight connections and activities in technology and adult learners. Its aim is to "have a significant impact on the digital learning opportunities for adult learners." To sign up, click [HERE](#).



**From Education Week** – Among many articles published in April and May are: (1) [\*Share of High-Poverty, Racially Isolated Schools Rising, GAO Report Says\*](#); (2) [\*Home-School Connections Help ELLS and Their Parents\*](#); (3) [\*Teaching English-Language Learners: What Does the Research Tell Us?\*](#) [about what works]; (4) [\*How Students' Emotions Affect Their Schooling: Simple steps prevent slide in well-being\*](#); (5) [\*Teaching America's English-Language Learners: A Special Report\*](#) looks at how well schools are serving English language learners; and (6) [\*Low Performers Show Big Declines on 12th Grade NAEP Test\*](#).



**From the Health Literacy Listserv** (hldl@listserv.ihhealthliteracy.org) – (1) [\*Numbers Get in the Way\*](#) and [\*Strategies to Enhance Numeracy Skills\*](#), from the National Academy of Medicine. (2) [\*Beyond Translation: Promoting a New National Standard for Equity in Health Materials Translated from English\*](#), from the National Academy of Medicine, by Lorena Sprager and Dr. Octavio Martinez. (3) [\*Successfully Engaging Hard-to-Reach Populations in Health Insurance: A Focus on Outreach, Sign Up and Retention, and Use\*](#), commissioned by the Institute of Medicine's Roundtable on Health Literacy and funded by Blue Shield Foundation of California. (4) [\*Use of a Low-Literacy Patient Education Tool to Enhance Pneumococcal Vaccination Rates: A Randomized Controlled Trial\*](#), Journal of the American Medical Association.



**From the Huffington Post**– A May 9th Huffpost Education Blog, written by Jamie Merisotis, is called [\*America's Talent Gap: Five Areas of Focus\*](#). The propositions discussed are (1) that employers are increasingly motivated to support employee education and training because a high return on investment is becoming evident, (2) that it is important to help those who start college obtain a degree or credential, (3) that we need to overcome the inequities in American society pointed to by the Lumina Foundation's report [\*Stronger Nation\*](#), (4) that high quality certificates are increasingly important, and (5) that there are gains in the gross product of cities that invest in talent development.



**From the Migration Policy Institute** – A new fact sheet was issued in April 2016 by Margie McHugh and Madelein Morawski of MPI. The publication is titled [\*Immigrants and WIOA Services: Comparison of Sociodemographic\*](#)

## [Characteristics of Native- and Foreign-Born Adults in the United States.](#)



**From NAEPDC (National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium)** – An up-to-date (May 16) summary of [High School Equivalency Assessment Availability](#) (GED, HSET, and TASC) in all of the states, including administration costs and costs to the student in each state.



**From the National Skills Coalition (NSC)** – (1) The Workforce Data Quality Campaign has released its [sixth Workforce Data Explained video](#). It highlights the work of the Workforce Credentials Coalition to ensure better alignment between education and industry-based credentials. It will be of primary interest to employers, certification groups, and community colleges. (2) Earlier this month, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the Texas vs. United States immigration case. An NSC blog titled [What's At Stake for Skills in the Supreme Court's DAPA Case](#) explores some of the case's key features, including its implications for skills retooling and basic skills training. (3) Another recent blog reports on the [NSC's recent presentations at the COABE conference](#) in Texas, where top officials of NSC led sessions on advocacy and immigration. (4) [Putting Learner Success First](#) is a call to action by NSC and seven other groups (Advance CTE, the Association for Career and Technical Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation). The publication describes the group's goals for helping students succeed in high-quality education programs and sets forth concrete and collaborative actions needed to achieve that.



**From PACE (Policy Analysis for California)** – This article, [Transformation Goal is to Narrow Achievement Gap, Promote College and Career Success](#), discusses numerous achievements in California's public education system to improve student outcomes and make students more college and job ready. It is written by Michael Kirst, President of the California State Board of Education (April 24th).

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