

Special Education in High School Redesign

Annotated bibliography prepared by the National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research® and the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center



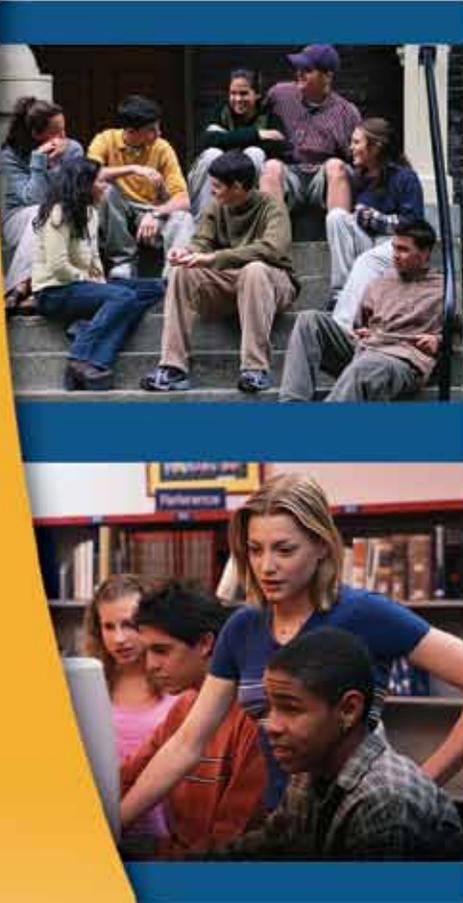
May 2011

The discussion of redesigning or reforming high schools has recently increased in fervor in anticipation of the upcoming reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act ([IDEA], 2004); the renewed focus on preparing students for colleges and careers (U.S. Department of Education, 2010); the adoption of the recently released Common Core State Standards (Council of Chief State School Officers and National Governors Association, 2010a, 2010b); and recent federal initiatives that promote high school improvement, such as the School Improvement Grants and the High School Graduation Initiative.

Students with disabilities and the special education programs that serve them are significant stakeholders in the outcomes of the reforms being implemented (McGlaughlin & Thurlow, 2003). Policymakers, researchers, and practitioners in the last decade have called for examination of the intended and unintended consequences of reform efforts and for effective programs for all secondary students.

The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) annually reviews the professional literature to identify effective practices in secondary transition. On topics that are of interest to the field but lack an evidence base (that is, lacking a randomized controlled trial and not designed as strong quasi-experimental studies), NSTTAC produces annotated bibliographies to assist consumers as they navigate what has been published on a topic. The National High School Center (NHSC) identifies research-supported improvement programs and tools, offers user-friendly products, and provides technical assistance services to improve outcomes for all high school students, including students with disabilities, to become adequately prepared for college, work, and life. Building on this overlap in priorities, the two centers have partnered to develop this publication on high school redesign that is pertinent to all students.

The robust list of special education and general education articles that compose this new publication is organized around the NHSC's *Eight Elements of High School Improvement: A Mapping Framework* (National High School Center, 2011) to ensure a more comprehensive set of resources that address the key systemic elements of high school improvement. All the articles included here have been vetted by the explicit and rigorous review processes of the



National High School Center and NSTTAC.¹ Articles in this annotated bibliography are annotated according to their source (i.e., research, intervention study, and product or tool). Although the primary purpose of this bibliography is to identify articles that address high school redesign as it relates to students with disabilities or special education's role in such initiatives, some other kinds of articles are included. For example, articles that provide thorough descriptions or analyses of high school redesign and seminal research pieces without referencing students with disabilities are included in the bibliography.

The table contains the bibliographic information for each publication and identifies the type of source and the key elements it relates to. After the table, each publication is annotated with bulleted points about what it provides. The table and annotated list are in alphabetical order. It is recommended that a source of interest be reviewed in full to draw conclusions and implement suggestions summarized here.

National High School Center's Eight Elements of High School Improvement

The National High School Center has developed a framework of eight core elements for mapping school, district, and state high school improvement efforts (National High School Center, 2011):

- **Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction:** Ensure that all students have access to rigorous curricula and instruction designed to meet college and career readiness standards.
- **Assessment and Accountability:** Implement coherent assessment and accountability systems that cover a broad range of formal and informal assessment policies and practices and that are consistent and coherent.
- **Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth:** Implement teacher effectiveness and professional development systems that recognize a teacher's need for deep content and pedagogical knowledge and skills and include a broad set of recruitment, induction, professional growth, and retention policies and practices.
- **Student and Family Involvement:** Engage families in providing all students with positive conditions for learning that address the whole child, including physical, social, and emotional needs.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve school and community stakeholders to leverage their interests, skills, and resources for—and create a sense of ownership of—high school improvement strategies and initiatives.
- **Effective Leadership:** High school improvement strategies and initiatives require high-quality instructional and organizational leadership that improves student achievement.
- **Organization and Structure:** Ensure that the school organizational and operational structures are designed and revised to support student needs.
- **Sustainability:** Identify and commit adequate resources for supporting continuous high school improvement strategies and initiatives.

¹For more information on the review criteria, see <http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/ResearchReviewCriteria09232008.pdf> and <http://www.nsttac.org/ebp/LiteratureReview.aspx>

Table 1: List of Articles Coded by Source and NHSC Eight Elements

Publication	Type of Source (as designated by NHSC)			NHSC Eight Elements X= Primary Topics S=Secondary Topics							
	Intervention Study	Research Product	Product/Tool	Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction	Assessment and Accountability	Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth	Student and Family Involvement	Stakeholder Engagement	Effective Leadership	Organization and Structure	Sustainability
Bassett, D. S., & Kochhar-Bryant, C. A. (2006). Strategies for aligning standards-based education and transition. <i>Focus on Exceptional Children, 39</i> (2), 1–20.		X		X			S				
Bates, L., Breslow, N., & Hupert, N. (2009). <i>Five states' efforts to improve adolescent literacy</i> (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2009–No. 067). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands.		X		X	S	S		S			S
Bohanon, H., Flannery, K. B., Malloy, J., & Fenning, P. (2009). Utilizing positive behavior supports in high school settings to improve school completion rates for students with high incidence conditions. <i>Exceptionality, 17</i> (1), 30–44.		X					X				
Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). <i>Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis</i> (Report No. 59). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.		X		X							
Bottge, B. J., Gugerty, J. J., Serline, R., & Moon, K.-S. (2003). Block and traditional schedules: Effects on students with and without disabilities in high school. <i>NASSP Bulletin, 87</i> (636), 2–14.		X								X	
Bottoms, G., & Feagin, C. (2003). <i>Improving achievement is about focus and completing the right courses</i> (Research brief). Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board.		X		X							
Bouck, E. C. & Wasburn-Moses, L. (2010). The implementation of an alternate route to a diploma in one state. <i>Remedial and Special Education, 31</i> (3), 175–183.	X				X						
Braden, J. P., Schroeder, J. L., & Buckley, J. A. (2001). <i>Secondary school reform, inclusion, and authentic assessment</i> (RISER Brief No. 3). Madison: University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Youth With Disabilities.			X	S	X						
Brigham, N., Morocco, C. C., Clay, K., & Zigmond, N. (2006). What makes a high school a good high school for students with disabilities. <i>Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 21</i> (3), 184–190.		X		X			X		X	X	

Publication	Type of Source (as designated by NHSC)			NHSC Eight Elements X= Primary Topics S=Secondary Topics							
	Intervention Study	Research Product	Product/Tool	Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction	Assessment and Accountability	Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth	Student and Family Involvement	Stakeholder Engagement	Effective Leadership	Organization and Structure	Sustainability
Bulgren, J. A., Lenz, B. K., McKnight, M., Davis, B., Grossen, B., Marquis, J., et al. (2002). <i>The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: The perceptions of general education teachers</i> (Research Report No. 7). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access.		X		S		X				X	
Castellano, M., Stringfield, S., & Stone, J. R. III. (2003). Secondary career and technical education and comprehensive school reform: Implications for research and practice. <i>Review of Educational Research</i> , 73(2), 231–272.		X		X			X			X	
Cobb, B., Lehmann, J., Tochtermann, S., & Bomotti, S. (2000). Students with disabilities in transition: A review of four reforms. In D. R. Johnson & E. J. Emanuel (Eds.), <i>Issues influencing the future of transition programs and services in the United States: A collection of articles by leading researchers in secondary special education and transition services for students with disabilities</i> (pp. 3–20). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, National Transition Network.			X	X	X		X				
Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center. (2005). <i>Works in progress: A report on middle and high school improvement programs</i> . Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.			X	X						X	
Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center. (2006). <i>CSRQ Center report on middle and high school CSR models</i> . Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.			X	X			X	X		X	X
deFur, S. H. (2002). Education reform, high-stakes assessment, and students with disabilities: One state's approach. <i>Remedial and Special Education</i> , 23(4), 203–211.			X		X						
Deshler, D. D., Grossen, B., Marquis, J., Schumaker, J. B., Bulgren, J. A., Lenz, B. K., et al. (2002). <i>The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: The characteristics and perceptions of students with disabilities</i> (Report No. 2). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access.		X		X			X				
Deshler, D. D., Schumaker, J. B., Marquis, J., Bulgren, J. A., Lenz, B. K., Davis, B., et al. (2002). <i>The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: A case study comparing the school life of students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities</i> . (Report No. 13). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access.		X		X			X				

Publication	Type of Source (as designated by NHSC)			NHSC Eight Elements X= Primary Topics S=Secondary Topics							
	Intervention Study	Research Product	Product/Tool	Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction	Assessment and Accountability	Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth	Student and Family Involvement	Stakeholder Engagement	Effective Leadership	Organization and Structure	Sustainability
Dukes, C., & Lamar-Dukes, P. (2006). Special education: An integral part of small schools in high schools. <i>High School Journal</i> , 89(3), 1–9.		X		S		X				S	
Dukes, C., & Lamar-Dukes, P. (2007). Conceptualizing special education services in small learning communities. <i>Urban Education</i> , 42(5), 412–431.		X				S				X	
Erickson, A. S., & Morningstar, M. E. (2009). The impact of alternate high school exit certificates on access to postsecondary education. <i>Exceptionality</i> , 17(3), 150–163.		X			X						
Feist, M., Joselowky, F., Rochelle, N., & Frazier Raynor, A. (2007). <i>Building a system of excellence: A framework and tool for discussion and action</i> . Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development; Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.			X				X	X			
Garrison-Wade, D. F., & Lehmann, J. P. (2009). A conceptual framework for understanding students' with disabilities transition to community college. <i>Community College Journal of Research and Practice</i> , 33(5), 417–445.		X					X	X			
Gwynne, J., Lesnick, J., Hart, H. M., & Allensworth, E. M. (2009). <i>What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago Public Schools: A focus on students with disabilities</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research.		X		X			X			X	
Hanley-Maxwell, C., Phelps, L. A., Braden, J., & Warren, V. (2000). <i>Schools of authentic and inclusive learning</i> (RISER Brief No. 1). Madison: University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Youth With Disabilities.			X	X							
Heppen, J. B., & Therriault, S. B. (2008). <i>Developing early warning systems to identify potential high school dropout</i> . Washington, DC: National High School Center, American Institutes for Research.			X		X						
Herlihy, C. M., & Quint, J. (2006). <i>Emerging evidence on improving high school student achievement and graduation rates: The effects of four popular improvement programs</i> . Washington, DC: National High School Center.		X		X			X			X	X
Jerald, C. D. (2006). <i>Measured progress: A report on the high school reform movement</i> . Washington, DC: Education Sector.			X	S						X	

Publication	Type of Source (as designated by NHSC)			NHSC Eight Elements X= Primary Topics S=Secondary Topics							
	Intervention Study	Research Product	Product/Tool	Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction	Assessment and Accountability	Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth	Student and Family Involvement	Stakeholder Engagement	Effective Leadership	Organization and Structure	Sustainability
Johnson, D. R., Stout, K. E., & Thurlow, M. L. (2009). Diploma options and perceived consequences for students with disabilities. <i>Exceptionality, 17</i> (3), 119–134.		X			X						
Johnson, D. R., Thurlow, M. L., & Stout, K. E. (2007). <i>Revisiting graduation requirements and diploma options for youth with disabilities: A national study</i> (Technical Report No. 49). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.		X									
Jones, J., Adams, G., Schumaker, J. B., Deshler, D. D., Davis, B., Gossen, B., et al. (2002). <i>The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: The perceptions of administrators</i> (Report No. 6). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute of Academic Access.		X							X		
Kemple, J. J., & Snipes, J. C. (2000). <i>Career academies: Impacts on students' engagement and performance in high school</i> . New York: MDRC.	X			X			X			X	
Kennelly, L., & Monrad, M. (2007). <i>Approaches to dropout prevention: Heeding early warning signs with appropriate interventions</i> . Washington, DC: National High School Center.			X	X			X				
Lachat, M. A. (2001). <i>Data-driven high school reform: The breaking ranks model</i> . Providence, RI: Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University.			X	X	X						X
Lawrence-Brown, D. (2004). Differentiated instruction: Inclusive strategies for standards-based learning that benefit the whole class. <i>American Secondary Education, 32</i> (3), 34–63.			X	X		S					
Martinez, M., & Bray, J. (2002). <i>All over the map: State policies to improve the high school</i> . Washington, DC: National High School Alliance.			X								X
McLaughlin, M. J., Hoffman, A., Miceli, M., & Krezmien, M. (2008). <i>Next generation state high school assessment and accountability: Students with disabilities</i> . Washington, DC: Achieve.			X		X						
Mooney, M., Phelps, L. A., & Ancil, T. M. (2002). <i>Using postschool outcome data to improve practices and policies in restructured inclusive high schools</i> (RISER Brief No. 6). Madison: University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Youth With Disabilities.	X		X	X	S	S			S	S	S

Publication	Type of Source (as designated by NHSC)			NHSC Eight Elements X= Primary Topics S=Secondary Topics							
	Intervention Study	Research Product	Product/Tool	Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction	Assessment and Accountability	Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth	Student and Family Involvement	Stakeholder Engagement	Effective Leadership	Organization and Structure	Sustainability
Morocco, C. C., Aguilar, C. M., Clay, K., Parker, C. E., Brigham, N., & Zigmund, N. (2006). Good high schools for students with disabilities: Introduction to the special issue. <i>Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 21</i> , 135–145.		X		X			X		X	X	
Müller, E., & Burdette, P. (2007). <i>High school reform: Integration of special education</i> . Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education.			X			X					X
Nagle, K. M., & Crawford, J. (2004). <i>Opportunities and challenges: Perspectives on NCLBA from special education directors in urban school districts</i> . College Park, MD: Educational Policy Reform Research Institute.		X		S	S	S					S
Nagle, K., Yunker, C., & Malmgren, K. W. (2006). Students with disabilities and accountability reform: Challenges identified at the state and local levels. <i>Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 17</i> (1), 28–39.		X		S	X					S	
National High School Center. (2007). <i>Dropout prevention for students with disabilities: A critical issue for state education agencies</i> . Washington, DC: Author.			X	X			X	X		X	
National High School Center. (2007). <i>New Hampshire's multi-tiered approach to dropout prevention</i> . Washington, DC: Author.			X	X			X	X		X	
National High School Center, National Center on Response to Intervention, & Center on Instruction. (2010). <i>Tiered interventions in high schools: Using preliminary "lessons learned" to guide ongoing discussion</i> . Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.			X	X	X		X	X		X	
Newman, L. (2006). Facts from NLTS2: <i>General education participation and academic performance of students with learning disabilities</i> . Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.		X		X	X		X				
Phelps, L. A. (2003). <i>High schools with authentic and inclusive learning practices: Selected features and findings</i> . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition.		X		X		S					
Quint, J. C., & Byndloss, D. C. (with Melamud, B.). (2003). <i>Scaling up First Things First: Findings from the first implementation year</i> . New York: MDRC.		X		X		X	X		X	X	X

Publication	Type of Source (as designated by NHSC)			NHSC Eight Elements X= Primary Topics S=Secondary Topics							
	Intervention Study	Research Product	Product/Tool	Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction	Assessment and Accountability	Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth	Student and Family Involvement	Stakeholder Engagement	Effective Leadership	Organization and Structure	Sustainability
Schumaker, J. B., Bulgren, J. A., Davis, B., Grossen, B., Marquis, J., Deshler, D. D., et al. (2002). <i>The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: General education classes and the satisfaction of general education teachers</i> (Report No. 5). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access.		X		X		X	X		X	X	
Schumaker, J. B., Deshler, D. D., Lenz, B. K., Bulgren, J. A., Davis, B., Grossen, B., et al. (2002). <i>The educational context and outcomes for high schools students with disabilities: Overview of the study and findings</i> (Report No. 1). Lawrence: University of Kansas Institute for Academic Access.		X		X		X					
Schumaker, J. B., Lenz, B. K., Bulgren, J. A., Davis, B., Grossen, B., Marquis, J., et al. (2002). <i>The educational context and outcomes for high schools students with disabilities: Special education programs and the perceptions of special education teachers</i> (Report No. 4). Lawrence: University of Kansas Institute for Academic Access.		X		X		X					
Shaw, S. F. (2009). Transition to postsecondary education. <i>Focus on Exceptional Children, 42</i> (2), 1–16.		X		X			X	X			
Sitlington, P. L., & Neubert, D. A. (2004). Preparing youths with emotional or behavioral disorders for transition to adult life: Can it be done within the standards-based reform movement? <i>Behavioral Disorders, 29</i> (3), 279–288.		X		X							
Test, D. W., Fowler, C. H., White, J., Richter, S., & Walker, A. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition practices for enhancing school completion. <i>Exceptionality, 17</i> (1), 16–29.		X					X			X	
Thurlow, M. L. (2002). Positive educational results for all students: The promise of standards-based reform. <i>Remedial and Special Education, 23</i> (4), 195–202.			X								
Thurlow, M. L., Cormier, D. C., & Vang, M. (2009). Alternative routes to earning a standard high school diploma. <i>Exceptionality, 17</i> (3), 135–149.		X			X						
Thurlow, M. L., & Johnson, D. R. (2000). High-stakes testing of students with disabilities. <i>Journal of Teacher Education, 51</i> (4), 305–314.			X		X	X					
Truscott, S. D., Meyers, J., Meyers, B., Gelzheiser, L. M., & Grout, C. B. (2004). Do shared decision-making teams discuss special education in educational reform meetings? <i>Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 15</i> (2), 112–125.		X		X					S	X	

Publication	Type of Source (as designated by NHSC)			NHSC Eight Elements X= Primary Topics S=Secondary Topics							
	Intervention Study	Research Product	Product/Tool	Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction	Assessment and Accountability	Teacher Effectiveness and Professional Growth	Student and Family Involvement	Stakeholder Engagement	Effective Leadership	Organization and Structure	Sustainability
Volonino, V., & Zigmond, N. (2007). Promoting research-based practices through inclusion? <i>Theory Into Practice</i> , 46(4), 291–300.			X	X							
Wagner, M., Newman, L., & Cameto, R. (2004). <i>Changes over time in the secondary school experiences of students with disabilities: A report of findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2 (NLTS2)</i> . Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.		X		X	X		X			X	X
Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., Levine, P., & Marder, C. (2003). <i>Going to school: Instructional contexts, programs, and participation of secondary school students with disabilities. A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2 (NLTS2)</i> . Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.		X		X	X		X			X	
Wasburn-Moses, L. (2006). Obstacles to program effectiveness in secondary special education. <i>Preventing School Failure</i> , 50(3), 21–30.		X		X		S				S	
Weller, D. R., & McLeskey, J. (2000). Block scheduling and inclusion in a high school: Teacher perceptions of the benefits and challenges. <i>Remedial and Special Education</i> , 21(4), 209–218.		X								X	

REFERENCES

- Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. (2010a). *Common core state standards for English language arts and literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects*. Retrieved April 11, 2011, from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf
- Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. (2010b). *Common core state standards for mathematics*. Retrieved April 11, 2011, from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_Math_Standards.pdf
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. P.L. 108-446. (2004).
- McGlaughlin, M. J., & Thurlow, M. (2003). Educational accountability and students with disabilities: Issues and challenges. *Educational Policy*, 17(4), 431–451.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. 6301. (2002).
- National High School Center. (2011). *Eight elements of high school improvement: A mapping framework* (Rev. ed.). Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved April 11, 2011, from <http://www.betterhighschools.com/pubs/documents/NHSCEightElements7-25-08.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2010). *A blueprint for reform: The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved April 11, 2011, from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf>

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bassett, D. S., & Kochhar-Bryant, C. A. (2006). Strategies for aligning standards-based education and transition. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 39(2), 1–20.

- Describes secondary reform efforts that incorporate both standards-based education and a focus on the skills needed for successful transition to postsecondary education and employment.
- Asserts that a focus on transition should be implemented as a comprehensive reform effort, aligning high-quality standards with options and pathways for how students can achieve postsecondary goals.
- Concludes that this type of secondary reform will enable all students to be successful after high school, as it provides them with a usable skill set and several areas to pursue according to what best fits their needs.

Bates, L., Breslow, N., & Hupert, N. (2009). *Five states' efforts to improve adolescent literacy* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2009–No. 067). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands. Retrieved April 12, 2011, from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2009067.pdf

- Describes efforts by five states—Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, New Jersey, and Rhode Island—to improve adolescent literacy.
- Highlights five strategies that each state undertakes to support its literacy goals:
 - Engage key stakeholders
 - Set rigorous goals and standards
 - Align resources to support adolescent literacy goals
 - Build educator capacity
 - Use data to measure progress

Bohanon, H., Flannery, K. B., Malloy, J., & Fenning, P. (2009). Utilizing positive behavior supports in high school settings to improve school completion rates for students with high incidence conditions. *Exceptionality*, 17(1), 30–44. <http://www.uvm.edu/~cdcil/best/readings/strandK2.pdf>

- Finds that implementation of positive behavior support (PBS) may be related to improvement in student behavior, school climate, and subsequent improvement in rates of school completion.
- Describes schoolwide PBS as based on the tenets of implementing a common set of expectations consistently implemented across environments; this process is difficult in a larger high school setting.
- Finds that, in case studies, the implementation of PBS in high school was associated with a reduction in the annual dropout rate and in office discipline referrals.

- Suggests that by embedding preventative strategies within the high school setting, educators can bridge the gap between risk factors and improve school-completion rates.

Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S. (2002). *Comprehensive school reform and student achievement: A meta-analysis* (Report. No. 59). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk.

- Presents the results of a meta-analysis of the research on the achievement effects of 29 widely implemented comprehensive school reform (CSR) models (whole-school designs that met the CSR criteria) as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Demonstrates that schools that implemented the CSR models for more than five years showed strong and consistent positive effects.
- Highlights practices that meet the highest standard of evidence and were found to have a positive impact on student test scores, including Direct Instruction, the School Development Program, and Success for All.
- Suggests that more research is needed to get a better sense of which models work best, under what circumstances, and with which populations.

Botte, B. J., Gugerty, J. J., Serline, R., & Moon, K.-S.. (2003). Block and traditional schedules: Effects on students with and without disabilities in high school. *NASSP Bulletin*, 87(636), 2–14.

- Reports results of a study comparing block scheduling and traditional scheduling, using 12 matched pairs of randomly selected high schools in the Midwest.
- Finds no differences related to teachers' self-reported instructional practices or job satisfaction in block scheduling or traditional scheduling schools.

Bottoms, G., & Feagin, C. (2003). *Improving achievement is about focus and completing the right courses* (Research brief). Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board.

- Reports data from a survey of 4,244 graduating seniors (inclusion of disabilities not noted) from 51 rural high schools in 12 states.
- Provides findings that showed that students who completed the rigorous academic or career/technical courses offered by High Schools That Work schools had higher mean achievement scores than those students who did not participate in that curriculum.
- Suggests that states regularly collect data about the number of courses completed by students, so as to inform practices in a course of study with a solid academic core with either an academic or career concentration.

Bouck, E. C., & Wasburn-Moses, L. (2010). The implementation of an alternate route to a diploma in one state. *Remedial and Special Education*, 31(3), 175–183.

- Describes a sample of guidance counselors at 117 Indiana high schools who provided information about exit exam waiver procedures at their schools for students with and without disabilities.

- Examines Indiana’s implementation of an alternative route to a diploma.
- Unfortunately, findings show that, although the routes appeared fairly compatible in supporting students’ alternative pathways toward a diploma and there is relative consistency in the use of these routes across schools in the state, few students who continue to fail the exit exam apply for a waiver.
- Presents important implications for the implementation of policies related to exit exams and alternative routes to a diploma.
- Suggests future research on the question of whether alternative routes do indeed identify qualifying students validly and reliably.

Braden, J. P., Schroeder, J. L., & Buckley, J. A. (2001). *Secondary school reform, inclusion, and authentic assessment* (RISER Brief No. 3). Madison: University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Youth With Disabilities. Retrieved April 12, 2011, from <http://archive.wceruw.org/riser/Brief%203.pdf>

- Describes the similarities and differences among the terms *education reform*, *inclusion*, and *assessment* for students with and without disabilities.
- Suggests that for reform efforts to be effective, they must promote authentic learning, defined by three attributes:
 - Construction of knowledge
 - Disciplined inquiry
 - Value beyond school
- Offers recommendations for assessment practices that are inclusive and that encourage authentic and effective secondary school reforms for all students, especially for students with disabilities.

Brigham, N., Morocco, C. C., Clay, K., & Zigmond, N. (2006). What makes a high school a good high school for students with disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 21(3), 184–190.

- Summarizes case studies of three high schools that the researchers identified as “positive examples” that employ schoolwide policies and practices with an explicit view of benefiting students with disabilities.
- Describes five schoolwide strategies in the three schools:
 - Provide a wide range of academic course and program options, allowing for academic choice
 - Provide schoolwide support structures that have the flexibility to serve individual needs
 - Focus on connecting students to the school
 - Cultivate a network of adults to meet students’ academic and social–personal needs

- Develop responsive leaders, committed to overcoming the challenges of preparing students with disabilities for postsecondary pathways
- Articulates a comprehensive framework—or “synergistic approach”—to educating students with disabilities. (The framework is titled a “theory of action for good high schools.”)

Bulgren, J. A., Lenz, B. K., McKnight, M., Davis, B., Grossen, B., Marquis, J., et al. (2002). *The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: The perceptions of general education teachers* (Research Report No. 7). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED469287).

- Reports the results of a survey of 70 teachers of students with disabilities from nine high schools in four states (Kansas, Washington, California, and Oregon).
- Notes concerns on the amount of planning time allotted to teachers to make feasible and significant changes to current practice.
- Reports that teachers found that, to enable students with disabilities to meet standards, the following changes must be made: smaller class size, more collaboration with special education staff, curriculum modification, more individualized attention to students, and use of a variety of teaching methods.
- Documents that teachers tend to use technology rather than teacher-directed instruction to help students with disabilities and low-achieving students.
- Notes that teachers most frequently cited a knowledge of “cooperative learning” as a research-based strategy.

Castellano, M., Stringfield, S., & Stone, J. R. III. (2003). Secondary career and technical education and comprehensive school reform: Implications for research and practice. *Review of Educational Research*, 73(2), 231–272.

- Summarizes literature on comprehensive school reform (CSR) in career and technical education.
- Reviews 48 studies, primarily those published since 1992, and summarizes findings on legislated reforms (e.g., integrated curricula, work experiences, accountability) and other reforms (e.g., career academies, career magnets).
- Discusses the connections between academic and career education reform efforts in high schools.
- Discusses effective practices for students at risk of dropping out of school early.

Cobb, B., Lehmann, J., Tochtermann, S., & Bomotti, S. (2000). Students with disabilities in transition: A review of four reforms. In D. R. Johnson & E. J. Emanuel (Eds.), *Issues influencing the future of transition programs and services in the United States: A collection of articles by leading researchers in secondary special education and transition services for students with disabilities* (pp. 3–20). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, National Transition Network.

- Provides a review of school reform since the early 1980s with particular focus on (1) the standards movement, (2) high-stakes testing, (3) school-to-work, and (4) charter schools.

- Reviews four pieces of literature on recommended practices at the secondary level for students with disabilities.
- Concludes that reform efforts may improve outcomes for all students using (1) accountability systems, (2) more relevance in the content learned, (3) greater focus on parental involvement, (4) smaller classes, and (5) connections between schools and communities, but that the impact of efforts for students with disabilities is unclear, and additional monitoring and research are necessary and critical.

Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center. (2005). *Works in progress: A report on middle and high school improvement programs*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

- Outlines key issues that educators face in school and district improvement, including transitions, dropouts, postsecondary readiness, violence, and literacy.

Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center. (2006). *CSRQ Center report on middle and high school CSR models*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

- Reviews current research on middle and high school CSR models.
- Examines various CSR models and the research evaluating these models across several areas:
 - Impact on student achievement, overall and by subject
 - Effects for diverse populations
 - Parent, family, and community involvement
 - Services and support provided to schools to enable successful implementation

deFur, S. H. (2002). Education reform, high-stakes assessment, and students with disabilities: One state's approach. *Remedial and Special Education, 23*(4), 203–211.

- Discusses the history of accountability systems that account for student level, as well as teacher, school, district, and state performance in education.
- Illustrates assumptions of including students with disabilities in accountability systems: (1) including students in accountability systems leads to higher expectations and (2) high-stakes testing leads to data-based decisions regarding instructional strategies, educational opportunities, and specific interventions that lead to better postschool outcomes.
- Delineates Virginia's experience in including students with disabilities in district and state assessments and the challenges and improvements to date.

Deshler, D. D., Grossen, B., Marquis, J., Schumaker, J. B., Bulgren, J. A., Lenz, B. K., et al. (2002). *The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: The characteristics and perceptions of students with disabilities* (Report No. 2). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access.

- Reports the results of a survey of students from nine high schools in four states (Kansas, Washington, California, and Oregon).

- Concludes that minority and low-income students were disproportionately classified as having disabilities.
- Documents that a small percentage of students with disabilities were enrolled in rigorous general education courses and that students with disabilities performed poorly on national achievement exams and statewide assessments.

Deshler, D. D., Schumaker, J. B., Marquis, J., Bulgren, J. A., Lenz, B. K., Davis, B., et al. (2002). *The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: A case study comparing the school life of students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities*. (Report No. 13). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access.

- Reports the results of observations of 53 ninth-grade students: 26 with disabilities and 27 without disabilities. Participants were in nine high schools in rural, urban, and suburban locations in four states (Kansas, Washington, California, and Oregon).
- Concludes that students with disabilities were part of the social fabric of the high school setting, had frequent and positive interactions with teachers and positive (though less frequent) interactions with their peers, were engaged in their classes, were assigned less homework than their peers, and received few accommodations within the general education setting.
- Suggests that future research is needed to identify additional contextual factors that enable students with disabilities to succeed in secondary education.

Dukes, C., & Lamar-Dukes, P. (2006). Special education: An integral part of small schools in high schools. *High School Journal*, 89(3), 1–9.

- Discusses inclusive education and its relationship to the small-schools movement.
- Suggests that the two can be naturally integrated to create a suitable learning environment for students with disabilities by taking the following actions:
 - Providing all students with access to high-quality instruction
 - Encouraging collaboration among educators to deliver comprehensive services and supports
 - Increasing the instructional repertoire of all teachers
 - Providing access to a comprehensive system of support for general education students with unmet academic and social needs
- Suggests that future research on small schools explore the nature of collaborations between general education and special education teachers, including professional development opportunities, curriculum modifications that facilitate student engagement, and social activities that encourage friendship between students with and without disabilities.

Dukes, C., & Lamar-Dukes, P. (2007). Conceptualizing special education services in small learning communities. *Urban Education*, 42(5), 412–431.

- Describes a model that integrates special education services into high school improvement initiatives, such as small learning communities.

- Shows that small learning communities and inclusive education efforts are linked, as both movements address the inaccessibility of curriculum for many high school students, especially students with disabilities.
- Includes in the model (1) collaboration among professionals as the foundation of high school reform, (2) consultation, and (3) coteaching as three tiers to enable all learners to achieve positive academic and social gains.

Erickson, A. S., & Morningstar, M. E. (2009). The impact of alternate high school exit certificates on access to postsecondary education. *Exceptionality, 17*(3), 150–163.

- Reports the consequences of obtaining an alternate exit certificate instead of a standard diploma.
- Sample was two states selected for their high percentage (10%) of alternate exit certificates awarded to students. Within each state, a sample of postsecondary institutions was selected, resulting in a sample of 22 institutions (seven 4-year public institutions, seven 4-year private institutions, and eight 2-year public institutions).
- Postsecondary educational options were limited for students who obtained an alternate education certificate. Authors conclude that that alternative diploma options are not needed for students with disabilities.
- The authors recommend further exploration of the social value of alternate high school exit certificates and note that (1) this value should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders and (2) attention should be paid to how students who receive these certificates are classified in studies that explore high school completion and dropout.

Feist, M., Joselowsky, F., Rochelle, N., & Frazier Raynor, A. (2007). *Building a system of excellence: A framework and tool for discussion and action*. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University.

- Provides a framework for systemic high school transformation, involving the community, and engaging students in their own education.
- Provides sample indicators and worksheets to gauge how a school is transforming, on the basis of the experiences of the seven Carnegie Schools for a New Society.
- Offers discussion points for districts to consider when embarking on high school transformation.

Garrison-Wade, D. F., & Lehmann, J. P. (2009). A conceptual framework for understanding students with disabilities transition to community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 33*(5), 417–445.

- The authors present a synthesis of literature on students with disabilities and their transition to community college, based on a conceptual framework developed from prior research on the topic. The study examined systematic research reviews published during the last 10 years.

- The research syntheses analyzed supported the framework to some extent and also provided a better understanding of the specific interventions that promote student success. This information guided the revision of the original framework.
- In the revised framework, planning took on a more prominent role. Specifically, planning is now an underlying component in all aspects of the framework across three dimensions: (1) ongoing communications across institutions, (2) goals for the high school student, and (3) goals for his or her community college experience and for a future career.
- The authors recommend ways in which community college leaders, policymakers, and education practitioners can use the framework to improve the transition to community college for students with disabilities.

Gwynne, J., Lesnick, J., Hart, H. M., & Allensworth, E. M. (2009). *What matters for staying on-track and graduating in Chicago Public Schools: A focus on students with disabilities*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Consortium on Chicago School Research.

- The sample in this study consisted of three groups of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students: (1) students with disabilities who receive special education services, including students with learning disabilities, mild cognitive disabilities, emotional disturbances, speech/language disabilities, and physical/sensory disabilities; (2) students who did not receive special education services but who had extremely weak academic skills, defined in this study as students who enter high school two or more years below grade level; and (3) students with no identified disabilities who did not receive special education services and did not enter high school two or more years below grade level.
- Special education services in CPS were the targeted intervention in this study.
- Students with emotional disturbances and students who entered high school with extremely weak academic skills had the lowest level of course performance of any group. Both for students with disabilities and for students who entered high school two or more years below grade level, freshman year course performance was a strong predictor of graduating from high school in five years or less.
- In addition, students with learning disabilities and students with mild cognitive disabilities do not benefit as much from rigorous study habits as students without identified disabilities.
- This type of research is useful in informing educators about early warning signs so as to target students who are at risk for dropping out.
- Topics the study identified for future research were (1) identifying types of school environments in which students with disabilities can best perform, (2) developing school-level support structures that benefit student performance, and (3) improving student attendance by understanding the causes of absences.

Hanley-Maxwell, C., Phelps, L. A., Braden, J., & Warren, V. (2000). *Schools of authentic and inclusive learning* (RISER Brief No. 1). Madison: University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Research Institute on Secondary Education

Reform for Youth With Disabilities. Retrieved April 12, 2011, from <http://archive.wceruw.org/riser/Brief%201.pdf>

- Provides an overview of the foundation of RISER's work in secondary school reform that benefits all students.
- Explores the pitfalls and possibilities of education reform and inclusion and explains the tenets of authentic learning and how it is beneficial for all students, especially those with disabilities.

Heppen, J. B., & Therriault, S. B. (2008). *Developing early warning systems to identify potential high school dropout*. Washington, DC: National High School Center. Retrieved April 12, 2011, from http://www.nationalhighschoolcenter.net/pubs/ews_guide.pdf

- Discusses the factors that help predict the probability that individual students will eventually drop out of high school prior to graduating and includes step-by-step instructions for building an early warning system.

Herlihy, C. M., & Quint, J. (2006). *Emerging evidence on improving high school student achievement and graduation rates: The effects of four popular improvement programs*. Washington, DC: National High School Center. Retrieved April 12, 2011, from http://www.betterhighschools.com/docs/NHSC_EmergingEvidence_010907.pdf

- Draws on findings from four MDRC studies of the problems found in low-performing high schools and the effectiveness of promising interventions.
- Bases lessons on evaluations of four high school reform models in 16 school districts: (1) career academies, (2) First Things First, (3) Project Graduation Really Achieves Dreams (GRAD), and (4) talent development.
- Suggests that positive change is associated with a combination of instructional improvement and structural changes in school organization and class schedules.
- Presents five cross-cutting challenges that high schools face in seeking to influence student outcomes:
 - Assisting students who enter high school with poor academic skills
 - Improving instructional content and practice
 - Creating a personalized and orderly learning environment
 - Providing work-based learning opportunities and preparing students for the world beyond high school
 - Stimulating change in overstressed high schools

Jerald, C. D. (2006). *Measured progress: A report on the high school reform movement*. Washington, DC: Education Sector.

- Reviews the current research on high school reforms and several large-scale evaluations of these initiatives.
- Highlights two important findings:
 - High schools are not as resistant to change as many believe

- Most notable improvements to high schools come from combining strategies (e.g., rigorous curricula and tougher graduation rates and both structural and curricular reforms)
- Finds the most significant improvements combine high expectations and rigorous instruction for students.

Johnson, D. R., Stout, K. E., & Thurlow, M. L. (2009). Diploma options and perceived consequences for students with disabilities. *Exceptionality*, 17(3), 119–134.

- The sample consisted of respondents to a questionnaire sent to the state directors of special education or their designees in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- This article focuses on individual state graduation policies and practices on alternative diploma options.
- Results from the study show that states vary in their diploma options as well as the locus of control over requirements that are set for graduation: whether the local education agency or the state has more policy-setting authority. More than half of all states have increased their graduation requirements in order to earn a standard diploma for both students with and without disabilities. The study also found a number of intended and unintended consequences of various graduation requirements (e.g., requiring students with disabilities to pass exit exams, single diploma option for students with disabilities).
- Suggests it is important to know what graduation requirements and diploma options are being implemented in every state to better understand which policies result in learning and achievement for students with disabilities.
- The authors suggest that future research should be carried out on the intended and unintended consequences and the implications of state graduation requirements and diploma options.

Johnson, D. R., Thurlow, M. L., & Stout, K. E. (2007). *Revisiting graduation requirements and diploma options for youth with disabilities: A national study* (Technical Report No. 49). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

- Reports survey results from 50 states and the District of Columbia as follow-up to previous research on graduation policies and requirements.
- Reports and analyzes results on the following:
 - Requirements for graduation for students with disabilities (whether established by state, local education agency, or combinations)
 - Changes in graduation requirements for standard diplomas
 - Diploma options
 - Allowances for diploma requirements
 - Involvement of community stakeholders in determining graduation requirements
 - Use of exit exams for diplomas
 - Passing score variability for students with or without disabilities

- Options upon failing exit exams
- Use of accommodations on exit exams
- Records of the performance of students with disabilities
- Delineates findings in the context of intended and unintended consequences.
- Concludes with recommendations: state policymakers need to (1) clarify the assumptions for a state's graduation requirements and diploma options, (2) make graduation decisions on the basis of multiple indicators, and (3) clarify the reasons for offering alternative diploma options for students with disabilities.
- Calls for future research on the intended and unintended consequences of graduation requirements.

Jones, J., Adams, G., Schumaker, J. B., Deshler, D. D., Davis, B., Grossen, B., et al. (2002). *The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: The perceptions of administrators* (Report No. 6). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute of Academic Access (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED469286).

- Reports the results of a survey of general and special education administrators in nine high schools in four states.
- Focuses on how administrators conceptualize educational programs for students with disabilities and other at-risk students.
- Reports that most administrators indicated that they had no formal vision or policy statement for including students with disabilities.
- Concludes that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the particular needs of students with disabilities that are currently not being met.

Kemple, J. J., & Snipes, J. C. (2000). *Career academies: Impacts on students' engagement and performance in high school*. New York: MDRC.

- Presents the findings of a study examining the effects of career academies; the study sample included 1,764 high school students who applied to one of nine career academy models.
- Highlights career academies as characterized by three main features:
 - A school-within-a-school organization, sometimes referred to as a "small learning community"
 - A curriculum that combines academic and vocational courses and uses a career theme to integrate the two
 - Partnerships with local employers, created to establish school-to-work connections, career development, and work-based learning opportunities
- Concludes that career academies are associated with improvement in high school outcomes for students at high risk of dropping out, a greater likelihood of graduating on time for students at low risk of dropping out, and more interpersonal support and participation in career awareness and work-based learning activities, but that career academies do not improve student scores on standardized mathematics and reading achievement tests.

- Notes that interpersonal support from teachers and peers resulted in improvement in school engagement and a reduction in dropout rates among high- and medium-risk subgroups.

Kennelly, L., & Monrad, M. (2007). *Approaches to dropout prevention: Heeding early warning signs with appropriate interventions*. Washington, DC: National High School Center.

- Outlines steps that schools can take to identify at-risk students and provide the necessary support systems and relevant interventions to assist students in obtaining a high school diploma.
- Discusses the use of early warning data systems to target interventions for groups and individual students.
- Offers a variety of best-practice approaches undertaken by higher performing high schools and presents effective programs currently implemented to stem the dropout problem.

Lachat, M. A. (2001). *Data-driven high school reform: The breaking ranks model*. Providence, RI: Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University.

- Synthesizes existing literature on data-driven high school reform, discusses barriers to effective data use, and provides strategies for capacity building in data-driven reforms.
- Provides examples of how low-performing schools have implemented data-driven reform based on the breaking ranks model.

Lawrence-Brown, D. (2004). Differentiated instruction: Inclusive strategies for standards-based learning that benefit the whole class. *American Secondary Education*, 32(3), 34–63.

- Addresses how—with suitable supports, including differentiated instruction—students ranging from gifted to those with significant disabilities can receive an appropriate education in general education classrooms.
- Presents a multilevel lesson-planning system that is manageable in a standards-based instructional context.
- Outlines supports for students with mild disabilities and explains adaptations for students with severe disabilities and for students with special gifts and talents.
- Provides advice for making a manageable change to differentiated instruction.

Martinez, M., & Bray, J. (2002). *All over the map: State policies to improve the high school*. Washington, DC: National High School Alliance.

- Identifies state policies and national trends in high school reform.
- Examines where states are in terms of creating high school reforms and secondary education policies, including exit exams and graduation requirements.
- Provides an overview of important topics in high school reform.

McLaughlin, M. J., Hoffman, A., Miceli, M., & Krezmien, M. (2008). *Next generation state high school assessment and accountability: Students with disabilities*. Washington, DC: Achieve.

- Outlines policy issues that arise when students with disabilities are included in high-stakes, standards-driven accountability models with little room for individualization.
- Summarizes the most current educational experiences, achievement, and outcomes for secondary students with disabilities.
- Discusses practices and policies that will need to inform future assessment and accountability models.
- Highlights three options and several strategies currently used by various states to effectively and meaningfully include secondary students with disabilities in new accountability and assessment models.

Mooney, M., Phelps, L. A., & Anctil, T. M. (2002). *Using postschool outcome data to improve practices and policies in restructured inclusive high schools* (RISER Brief No. 6). Madison: University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Youth With Disabilities.

- Reports results of a survey of 152 teachers from four schools that participated in the Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Students With Disabilities (RISER) five-year study. The study was conducted to examine perspectives on the use of postschool outcome data on students with disabilities and the potential implications for instructional practices and schoolwide policy development.
- Finds that study schools promoted and participated in “authentic and inclusive teaching and learning” practices for all students (e.g., self-advocacy and study skills instruction for students with disabilities, integrated academic curriculum, and service learning requirements).
- Indicates that if meaningful postschool outcome data were available, teachers would use the information to “(a) inform current instructional practices, (b) encourage curriculum development and change, (c) improve student preparation and learning for the ‘real world,’ (d) initiate changes in schoolwide policy, (e) change faculty and staff expectations and attitudes, and (f) measure general reform effectiveness.”
- Provides possible next steps for collecting and using postschool outcome data.

Morocco, C. C., Aguilar, C. M., Clay, K., Parker, C. E., Brigham, N., & Zigmond, N. (2006). Good high schools for students with disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 21(3), 135–145.

- The multiarticle series, of which this is an overview, reflects five components of the research:
 - Overview of the evaluation
 - Three individual case studies of high schools implementing high school redesign, including results for students with disabilities
 - Summary of the case studies with recommendations for practice

Müller, E., & Burdette, P. (2007). *High school reform: Integration of special education*. Alexandria, VA: National Association for State Directors of Special Education.

- Reviews six interviews conducted in Iowa, Michigan, and Nevada for a policy brief produced by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education that described efforts to include special education students in high school reforms at the state and local levels.
- Concludes that, although including students with disabilities in high school reform efforts is the intention and goal of these states, results are mixed.
- Concludes further that mandated general and special educator professional development, inclusion of special education students in general education classrooms, and passing more legislation focused on high school reform will increase resources and efforts dedicated to including special education students in high school reform initiatives.

Nagle, K. M., & Crawford, J. (2004). *Opportunities and challenges: Perspectives on NCLBA from special education directors in urban school districts*. College Park, MD: Educational Policy Reform Research Institute.

- Reports the results of a survey and two focus groups involving 13 leaders in special education.
- Concludes that district leaders faced similar challenges to implementing NCLB, despite wide variations in the characteristics of districts they represented.
- Highlights concerns of special education directors, such as special education students' participation in and performance on assessments, struggles to meet the highly qualified teacher requirement, limitations related to finance and resources, and alignment of NCLB with other legislation, such as IDEA.

Nagle, K., Yunker, C., & Malmgren, K. W. (2006). Students with disabilities and accountability reform: Challenges identified at the state and local levels. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 17*(1), 28–39.

- Reports findings from a qualitative study (conducted as part of a larger five-year mixed-methods study) that examines the implementation and impact of NCLB adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements as they relate to students with disabilities.
- Participants included 79 key personnel from participating state education agencies and local education agencies representing departments of special education, accountability, testing, special education monitoring, Title I monitoring, curriculum development, teacher certification, and professional development.
- Concludes that participating in statewide assessments creates new opportunities for students with disabilities and that increases in participation requirements, along with increases in performance requirements, create incentives to exclude students with disabilities.
- Infers that NCLB requirements lead schools to consider more flexible approaches to the assessment of students with disabilities and that implementing AYP requirements initiated challenging system-level changes.

- Illuminates concerns about teacher quality and quantity and their impact on the schools' abilities to meet AYP goals.

National High School Center. (2007). *Dropout prevention for students with disabilities: A critical issue for state education agencies*. Washington, DC: Author.

- Provides guidance to states as they respond to requirements presented in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004) in the area of dropout prevention for students with disabilities.
- Highlights the role of state performance plans as starting points for states to develop data collection and monitoring procedures, and supplies states with considerations and recommendations for providing a consistent method of tracking dropout data.

National High School Center. (2007). *New Hampshire's multi-tiered approach to dropout prevention*. Washington, DC: Author.

- Describes an innovative use of data collection and analysis as the key to unlocking the dropout problem for special needs students, who drop out at much higher rates than the general student population.

National High School Center, National Center on Response to Intervention, & Center on Instruction. (2010). *Tiered interventions in high schools: Using preliminary "lessons learned" to guide ongoing discussion*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

- Provides a snapshot of eight high schools selected for site visits to see how high school tiered intervention frameworks were implemented at the high school level, including the essential components of response to intervention (RTI). Originally, 51 schools were identified and contacted to indicate their willingness to participate in 45-minute phone interviews with High School Tiered Interventions Initiative (HSTII) team members. Of these, 20 schools indicated that they would participate, and 8 then received site visits.
- Reports that the HSTII team investigated emerging and current practices and tapped the knowledge of leading researchers and practitioners.
- Recommends that teachers, schools, and districts will need assistance in identifying evidence-based instructional practices, curricula, and assessment tools to implement RTI and tiered interventions in high schools.
- Recommends that all stakeholders collaborate to increase teachers' preservice training on effective instructional strategies within all content areas, engage in research that examines the effectiveness of various RTI frameworks in high schools, and establish model demonstration sites.

Newman, L. (2006). *Facts from NLTS2: General education participation and academic performance of students with learning disabilities*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

- Reports the results of the NLTS2; notes a significant increase in students with learning disabilities participating in general education classes.

- Reports that most secondary school students with learning disabilities participate in at least one general education class.
- Highlights aspects of the experience of special education students in general education classrooms:
 - The curriculum often is modified.
 - The students participate less in class than peers without disabilities.
 - The students perform well in courses but not on standardized assessments.
- Notes that additional options need to be explored for providing high-quality secondary education to students with disabilities, both to maximize their academic achievement and to give them the supports they need to perform at high levels.

Phelps, L. A. (2003). *High schools with authentic and inclusive learning practices: Selected features and findings*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition.

- Reports results from a survey of four schools that participated in the Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Students With Disabilities (RISER) five-year study.
- Finds that study schools promoted and participated in “authentic and inclusive teaching and learning” practices for all students (e.g., self-advocacy and study skills instruction for students with disabilities, integrated academic curriculum, and service learning requirements).
- Finds that study schools implemented school reform practices with funding from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs and the RISER at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- Demonstrates that teachers use tasks of high intellectual challenge both for students with disabilities and for students without disabilities.
- Finds that in samples of students’ work on 35 teacher-developed tasks that 62 percent of students with disabilities produced work that was of the same quality or higher in quality than work produced by their nondisabled peers.

Quint, J. C., Byndloss, D. C., & Melamud, B. (2003). *Scaling up First Things First: Findings from the first implementation year*. New York: MDRC. Retrieved April 12, 2011, from <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/363/full.pdf>

- Reports the findings from the first year of implementation of the Scaling Up First Things First project, an expansion of First Things First, which is a comprehensive reform that calls for transforming the structure, instructional practices, and governance of low-performing schools with the aim of increasing engagement among both students and teachers and boosting students’ academic achievement.
- Identifies three key principles of reform:
 - Small learning communities
 - The family-advocate system

- Instructional improvement strategies, including professional development programs designed to train teachers in the use of cooperative learning methods
- Reports that, at the end of the first year of operations, (1) the reform's basic structural elements were in place at most sites, although their implementation was incomplete; (2) teachers knew more about and felt better prepared to undertake the initiative after implementation, but implementing a major reform proved difficult and stressful.
- Notes that teachers increased their use of cooperative learning strategies during the implementation year and that the principal and leadership team support were more essential to successful implementation than a high degree of staff support for the intervention.

Schumaker, J. B., Bulgren, J. A., Davis, B., Grossen, B., Marquis, J., Deshler, D. D., et al. (2002). *The educational context and outcomes for high school students with disabilities: General education classes and the satisfaction of general education teachers* (Report No. 5). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED469285).

- Reports findings from surveys and observations of general education teachers in nine high schools (three each in urban, suburban, and rural areas) on students with disabilities or at-risk students in their classrooms.
- Indicates that, in the general education classroom, most of the time of interaction between teachers and students was spent with teachers talking and students listening.
- Reports that research-based programs, instructional methods, technology, and accommodations for students with disabilities were lacking.
- Concludes that general education teachers were not satisfied with the way special education teachers are collaborating with them to benefit the students with disabilities, nor were they satisfied with their own performance in teaching students with disabilities.
- Suggests that future research should be geared toward ensuring that research-based practices are used in high school education classes so that students with disabilities can succeed in the classes.

Schumaker, J. B., Deshler, D. D., Lenz, B. K., Bulgren, J. A., Davis, B., Grossen, B., et al. (2002). *The educational context and outcomes for high schools students with disabilities: Overview of the study and findings* (Report No. 1). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED469281).

- Reports are from a study of nine high schools in four states. The researchers used a combination of questionnaires, interviews, and observations to gather information from and about a variety of people at each school, including principals, special education administrators, teachers (general and special education), students, and parents.
- Provides an overview as the first of several related reports on the same study.

Schumaker, J. B., Lenz, B. K., Bulgren, J. A., Davis, B., Grossen, B., Marquis, J., et al. (2002). *The educational context and outcomes for high schools students with disabilities: Special education programs and the perceptions of special education teachers* (Report No. 4). Lawrence: University of Kansas, Institute for Academic Access (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED469284).

- Reports findings from a survey and observations of special education teachers from nine high schools across four states.
- Focuses on the types of courses in which students with disabilities are being enrolled and the role perception of special education teachers.
- Concludes that teachers believe that their most important role is to teach learning strategies to the students and to work with their general education teachers.
- Reports that two schools enroll their students with disabilities in rigorous courses, five enroll theirs in subject area courses taught by special education teachers, and three enroll the majority of their students with disabilities in low-track or adapted courses.
- Describes the findings as “cause for concern” about the framework of IDEA and the goals related to improving performance for students with disabilities.

Shaw, S. F. (2009). Transition to postsecondary education. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 42*(2), 1–16.

- Discusses the qualitative data results of the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2 (NLTS2) with respect to transition to postsecondary education.
- Indicates that secondary schools implement strategies to make the transition to postsecondary school accessible to students with disabilities.
- Recommends that professionals include a postsecondary goal on every individual transition plan.
- Recommends that comprehensive transition planning be implemented effectively, and early, to improve postsecondary access.
- Emphasizes that students need to understand the specific nature of their disability and their related legal rights and responsibilities and need to be involved in the planning.
- Recommends implementing a schoolwide model—such as RTI or PBS—to promote the development of students’ academic and social skills within general education and to ease the transition to college.
- Recommends further research into whether students with disabilities are succeeding at postsecondary education.

Sitlington, P. L., & Neubert, D. A. (2004). Preparing youths with emotional or behavioral disorders for transition to adult life: Can it be done within the standards-based reform movement? *Behavioral Disorders, 29*(3), 279–288.

- Highlights how youths with emotional or behavior disturbance perform poorly in relation to their peers with and without disabilities in terms of transition outcomes such as employment, independent living, and postsecondary education.

- Describes aspects of NCLB and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that address the needs of students with disabilities; also provides recommendations for working within this legislation to improve transition outcomes for youth with emotional or behavioral disorders.
- Recommends using transition planning as a framework for developing content and performance standards as well as ensuring that postsecondary preparation planning is a part of the general education curriculum to benefit all students.

Test, D. W., Fowler, C. H., White, J., Richter, S., & Walker, A. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition practices for enhancing school completion. *Exceptionality*, 17(1), 16–29.

- Reviews 11 articles that met the following inclusion criteria based on a three-part search process: (1) published, data-based journal article; (2) dependent variable, outcome variable, or primary topic was dropout prevention or school completion; (3) participants were individuals with high-incidence disabilities; and (4) the independent variable, predictor variable, or practice described aligned with the Taxonomy for Transition Programming.
- Conducts a review of the literature to identify evidence-based secondary transition practices that promote school completion for students with high-incidence disabilities.
- Notes that, of the reviewed articles, evidence-based support for school completion of youths with disabilities was found in the five areas of taxonomy. Two articles related to student-focused planning, 10 studies related to student development, 2 studies related to interagency collaboration, 2 studies related to family involvement, and 6 articles related to program structures.
- Describes findings that also provide evidence-based support for a variety of secondary transition practices that promote school completion or dropout prevention.
- Recommends that programs trying to increase school completion and reduce dropout for students with disabilities adopt the evidence-based secondary transition strategies found in the 11 studies that can serve as a framework for practitioners' planning.
- Recommends further research investigating the effects of secondary transition strategies on school completion and dropout rates for students with disabilities; these rigorous studies should include descriptions of interventions, implementation data, and the reliability and validity of the measures.

Thurlow, M. L. (2002). Positive educational results for all students: The promise of standards-based reform. *Remedial and Special Education*, 23(4), 195–202.

- Examines the history and context of standards-based reform and identifies potential benefits and challenges for students with disabilities.
- Outlines the benefits of including students with disabilities in accountability systems (e.g., to make accurate comparisons, to access reform efforts, to promote high expectations).
- Delineates reform points from NCLB and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

- Outlines three potential challenges for policymakers: (1) agreement on performance standards and their application for all students, (2) agreement on appropriate extensions for accountability systems for students with disabilities, and (3) use of assessment results for instruction and intervention decisions for students with disabilities.
- Calls for research on uses and effects of accountability systems to continue.

Thurlow, M. L., Cormier, D. C., & Vang, M. (2009). Alternative routes to earning a standard high school diploma. *Exceptionality, 17*(3), 135–149.

- Examines the alternative routes available for students, with and without disabilities, to earn a standard diploma.
- Describes the sample as consisting of all 26 states that require exit examinations. Within these 26 states, 46 alternative routes to a standard diploma—23 for all students and 23 for students with disabilities—were identified.
- Notes that, over the past five years, the number of alternative routes to graduation has increased by more than 50 percent.
- Describes one alternative route that emerged as the identification of the GED (which is not counted toward the graduation rate for NCLB accountability) as an alternative route to a standard diploma.
- Notes that passing criteria differed for alternative routes that applied to all students and for those that applied only to students with disabilities. With the former, alternative routes were more likely to require that students meet the same performance standards as the regular route. In contrast, routes targeting students with disabilities were less likely to require that students meet the same performance standards as the regular route.
- Discusses the continued need to attend to alternative routes that are created for all students in general and for students with disabilities specifically, to ensure that students are required to show competence on indicators of college and work readiness.
- Discusses the importance of providing transparent and easily accessible information about alternative routes to a standard diploma, disaggregated data on this measure, and information about the extent to which alternative measures are used in each state.

Thurlow, M. L., & Johnson, D. R. (2000). High-stakes testing of students with disabilities. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(4), 305–314.

- Discusses the intended and unintended consequences of accountability measures and the inclusion of students with disabilities in the wake of IDEA (1997).
- Outlines the need for policymakers at the state and district levels to understand (1) the purpose of assessment, (2) accommodations for students with disabilities, and (3) alternate assessment of knowledge and skills.
- Explains how the results of standard assessments can be used to influence: (1) access to education, (2) grade retention or promotion, and (3) graduation.
- Includes a call to teacher-educators to be knowledgeable about the issues in educational reform.

Truscott, S. D., Meyers, J., Meyers, B., Gelzheiser, L. M., & Grout, C. B. (2004). Do shared decision-making teams discuss special education in educational reform meetings? *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 15*(2), 112–125.

- Reports qualitative data collected from discussions with shared decision-making teams from three schools in a suburban school district in New York State: a primary elementary school, a middle school, and a high school.
- Indicates that the teams rarely addressed special education topics and needs.
- Recommends that at least one member of the school-based reform team be assigned the specific responsibility of representing special education during team discussions.
- Recommends routine inclusion of a designated agenda item about special education for shared decision-making team meetings.
- Recommends that districts (1) encourage school-based reform teams to represent special education teachers and students and (2) provide training to regular education teachers to increase their knowledge of special education.

Volonino, V., & Zigmond, N. (2007). Promoting research-based practices through inclusion? *Theory Into Practice, 46*(4), 291–300.

- Reports reviews of high school reform movements that attempt to implement research-based practices in the classroom, especially those practices that address the needs of students with disabilities.
- Concludes that these reforms have altered special and general education but have not necessarily improved them.
- Finds that coteaching is one practice in which general and special educators collaborate to teach students with diverse needs.
- Examines several coteaching models.
- Encourages more research evaluating coteaching models and determining use of established research strategies for effective instruction of students with disabilities.

Wagner, M., Newman, L., & Cameto, R. (2004). *Changes over time in the secondary school experiences of students with disabilities: A report of findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2 (NLTS2)*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

- Reports on descriptive findings from the survey's secondary school-age youth who were receiving special education services in 1985 and students who were receiving such services in 2000.
- Examines the secondary school experiences of students with disabilities. Identifies changes over time in the characteristics of these students' schools, selected school programs, communities, and resources in schools.
- Notes the greater emphasis on rigorous academic courses for general education in 2000 than in 1985.

- Indicates that some changes suggest improvements for students with disabilities but not to the same extent for all students with disabilities.

Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., Levine, P., & Marder, C. (2003). *Going to school: Instructional contexts, programs, and participation of secondary school students with disabilities. A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

- Reports on descriptive findings from the NLTS2.
- Shows that findings from this study have important implications for efforts aimed at creating educational interventions, environments, and opportunities that are likely to produce desirable changes in the academic outcomes of students with disabilities.

Wasburn-Moses, L. (2006). Obstacles to program effectiveness in secondary special education. *Preventing School Failure, 50*(3), 21–30.

- Reports on an analysis of survey responses of 191 teachers of high school students with learning disabilities in Michigan.
- Concludes that less than one-half of the teachers rated the quality of the reading or writing instruction at their school as satisfactory, whereas the majority of the teachers rated content-area instruction (e.g., mathematics, social studies) as satisfactory or excellent.
- Notes a lack of program coherence, including lack of curriculum alignment and a wide variety of instructional approaches used among the regular and special education teachers.

Weller, D. R., & McLeskey, J. (2000). Block scheduling and inclusion in a high school: Teacher perceptions of the benefits and challenges. *Remedial and Special Education, 21*(4), 209–218.

- Reports survey results from 14 special and general education teachers in one high school in the Midwest.
- Finds that before implementation of block scheduling, the school used a traditional schedule that allowed students to take up to six classes per semester; the school offered daily classes in 50-minute periods.
- Finds that the new schedule, Block 8, allowed students to take up to eight classes per semester; it included four periods on alternating days, each period lasting 85 minutes.
- Concludes that the block schedule allowed for more student-centered teaching and resulted in changes in teaching strategies that benefited all students.
- Suggests that successful implementation of the new schedule can be facilitated by two existing practices in the schools: team teaching and inclusion of students with disabilities in regular education classrooms.

This resource is offered by the National High School Center, a central source of information and expertise on high school improvement issues that does not endorse any interventions or conduct field studies. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National High School Center serves Regional Comprehensive Centers in their work to build the capacity of states across the nation to effectively implement the goals of No Child Left Behind relating to high schools. The National High School Center is housed at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and partners with other leading education research organizations such as the Consortium on Chicago School Research, MDRC, the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), Quill Research Associates, LLC, West Wind Education Policy Inc., and WestEd.

The contents of this brief were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

PR/Award #S283B050028

Funding Agency: U.S. Department of Education