Case Statement: Thirty thousand young people who entered ninth grade in the School District of Philadelphia’s Classes of 2000-05 failed to graduate four years later.\(^1\) Resulting losses are huge - to lifetime earnings and employment for these young people, to government revenues and to the regional economy.\(^2\) Fortunately, a renewed interest in the out-of-school youth population in Philadelphia and across the country in recent years is leading to a growing understanding of the challenges faced by these young people, and to an increasing body of effective practices aimed at reconnecting them to high-quality educational opportunities with pathways to postsecondary education and careers.

Research-Based Practices that Reconnect Out-of-School Youth to Education and Employment:

- **A Variety of Educational Options (“Multiple Pathways”).** Communities need a system for youth development and opportunity that includes a diversity of educational programming to re-engage out-of-school youth, and collaboration across multiple agencies and systems.\(^3\) For example:
  - **Smaller, student-focused high schools.** Small credit-recovery high schools have proven successful in helping over-age and under-credited students return to high school and graduate.\(^4\)
  - **GED Plus.** National data show that close to 60% of dropouts eventually earn a GED, but very few gain college degrees or certificates. However, bridge programs are demonstrating success in helping GED recipients transition successfully to college.\(^5\)
  - **College-Based Programming.** This approach enables former dropouts to enroll in college, earning a high school diploma and credits towards a college credential.\(^6\)

- **Blending Education and Employment.** Successful models often blend education with employment so that older, disconnected youth can build education credentials while learning skills and earning money.\(^7\)

- **Specialized Programming for High-Risk Youth.** Youth involved in the juvenile justice and/or foster care systems benefit from support that helps to smooth transitions, integrate them into their communities and stabilize them in their educational and social settings.\(^8\)

Related Efforts in Philadelphia...

- The School District operates several educational options for over-age and under-credited students, and has recently issued an RFP to fund new capacity for innovative schools.
- YouthBuild Charter School provides an education/work programmatic blend focusing on the construction trades for former dropouts.
- Gateway-to-College at CCP enables former dropouts to earn a HS diploma and credits toward a college degree.
- In Summer 2008, the School District opened a Re-Engagement Center for youth returning to education.
- With Project U-Turn, the city has become a recognized national leader in dropout prevention and re-engagement efforts, with more than $50M leveraged from government and foundation investments.
- Philadelphia has five community-based E\(^3\) centers that provide education and training for out-of-school youth.

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