

## **REL Appalachia Summary of Verified Research Findings**

Path to Graduation, Postsecondary

May 2018

Stakeholders in the Rural College and Career Readiness partnership collaborated with REL Appalachia to develop a research agenda identifying shared questions that, if answered, provide stakeholders with information that can facilitate decisions about ways to strengthen student outcomes. Some of these research questions may be answered with evidence from existing research.

REL Appalachia staff prepared this memo to summarize verified and readily available information from high-quality research to answer the question:

**Which interventions provided by higher education institutions (for example, college fairs, peer mentoring) can increase high school students' likelihood of enrolling and later persisting in college?**

To answer this question with rigorous research studies with results that were verified by independent sources, the research team reviewed information from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) and Evidence for ESSA websites. No information about this research question was available from the Evidence for ESSA website. More details about our search process are in the databases and resources section at the end of this memo.

Exhibit 1 displays a summary of the results of this search, including direct hyperlinks to the WWC publications that provide more details of the results and the research studies that support these results.

Exhibits 2 and 3 display the criteria WWC uses to determine ratings of effectiveness of an intervention and the extent of evidence for an intervention.

All studies the WWC reviews must meet WWC group design standards with or without reservations. Group design standards without reservations are those that provide strong evidence for an intervention's effectiveness, such as a well-implemented randomized controlled trial. Studies meeting group design standards with reservations provide weaker evidence for an intervention's effectiveness, such as a quasi-experimental design or a randomized controlled trial with high attrition that has established equivalence of the analytic samples.

**Exhibit 1. Summary of verified research findings from the What Works Clearinghouse**

| <b>Intervention</b>           | <b>Outcome</b>                     | <b>Effectiveness Rating</b>  | <b>Extent of Evidence</b> | <b>Citation</b>   |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Summer Bridge Programs</b> | Postsecondary enrollment           | No discernable effects       | Small                     | <a href="#">U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2015, March).</a> |
|                               | Postsecondary academic achievement | No discernable effects       | Small                     |   |
|                               | Postsecondary credit accumulation  | No discernable effects       | Small                     |   |
|                               | Postsecondary attainment           | Potentially positive effects | Small                     |   |
| <b>Summer Counseling</b>      | College access and enrollment      | Mixed effects                | Medium to large           | <a href="#">What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2018, March).</a> |
|                               | Postsecondary credit accumulation  | Potentially positive effects | Small                     |   |
|                               | Postsecondary persistence          | Potentially positive effects | Small                     |   |

## Exhibit 2. Criteria used to determine the rating of effectiveness for an intervention

| Rating of Effectiveness             | Criteria  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Positive effects</b>             | Two or more studies show statistically significant positive effects, at least one of which met WWC group design standards for a strong design, AND No studies show statistically significant or substantively important negative effects.   |
| <b>Potentially positive effects</b> | At least one study shows a statistically significant or substantively important positive effect, AND No studies show a statistically significant or substantively important negative effect AND fewer or the same number of studies show indeterminate effects than show statistically significant or substantively important positive effects.   |
| <b>Mixed effects</b>                | At least one study shows a statistically significant or substantively important positive effect AND at least one study shows a statistically significant or substantively important negative effect, but no more such studies than the number showing a statistically significant or substantively important positive effect, OR At least one study shows a statistically significant or substantively important effect AND more studies show an indeterminate effect than show a statistically significant or substantively important effect.                      |
| <b>Potentially negative effects</b> | One study shows a statistically significant or substantively important negative effect and no studies show a statistically significant or substantively important positive effect, OR Two or more studies show statistically significant or substantively important negative effects, at least one study shows a statistically significant or substantively important positive effect, and more studies show statistically significant or substantively important negative effects than show statistically significant or substantively important positive effects. |
| <b>Negative effects</b>             | Two or more studies show statistically significant negative effects, at least one of which met WWC group design standards for a strong design, AND No studies show statistically significant or substantively important positive effects  |
| <b>No discernible effects</b>       | None of the studies show a statistically significant or substantively important effect, either positive or negative.  |

### Exhibit 3. Criteria used to determine the extent of evidence for an intervention

| Extent of Evidence | Criteria   |
|--------------------|--|
| Medium to large    | The domain includes more than one study, AND<br>The domain includes more than one school, AND<br>The domain findings are based on a total sample size of at least 350 students, OR, assuming 25 students in a class, a total of at least 14 classrooms across studies. |
| Small              | The domain includes only one study, OR<br>The domain includes only one school, OR<br>The domain findings are based on a total sample size of fewer than 350 students, AND, assuming 25 students in a class, a total of fewer than 14 classrooms across studies.        |

### Databases and Resources

We searched the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), an IES-sponsored resource that reviews existing research on education programs, products, practices, and policies to provide educators with information to make evidence-based decisions. This search included WWC topics of *Path to Graduation* and *Postsecondary*. REL AP staff identified WWC reviewed interventions administered by postsecondary institutions and included in this memo available information about student outcomes in postsecondary programs.

Resources included in this document were last accessed on May 21, 2018. URLs, descriptions, and content included here were current at that time.

### References

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2015, March). *Developmental Students in Postsecondary Education intervention report: Developmental summer bridge programs*. Retrieved from <http://whatworks.ed.gov>

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse. (2016, July). *Supporting Postsecondary Success intervention report: Summer bridge programs*. Retrieved from <http://whatworks.ed.gov>

What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2018, March). *Transition to College intervention report: Summer Counseling*. Retrieved from <https://whatworks.ed.gov>

This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by education stakeholders in the Appalachia region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia (REL AP) at SRI International. This memo was prepared by REL AP under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0004 from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, administered by SRI International. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.