

## REL Southwest Ask A REL Response

College and Career Readiness

December 2018

### Request:

*(1) Provide research studies on the key components of near-peer advising programs and the criteria for implementation of each component. (2) Provide research studies on the relation of near peer advising to postsecondary outcomes and to the role of counselors and their availability to address noncollege issues.*

### Response:

Thank you for the question you submitted to our REL Reference Desk. We have prepared the following memo with research references to help answer your question. For each reference, we provide an abstract, excerpt, or summary written by the study's author or publisher. Following an established Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest research protocol, we conducted a search for research reports as well as descriptive study articles on the components of near-peer advising and its relationship to middle school; technology; college readiness, matriculation, and persistence; and the role of counselors.

We have not evaluated the quality of references and the resources provided in this response. We offer them only for your reference. Also, we searched the references in the response from the most commonly used resources of research, but they are not comprehensive, and other relevant references and resources may exist. References provided are listed in alphabetical order, not necessarily in order of relevance. We do not include sources that are not freely available to the requestor.

### Research References

Bruneau, L., & Protivnak, J. J. (2012). Adding to the toolbox: Using creative interventions with high school students. *Journal of School Counseling, 10*(9).  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ978865>

*From the ERIC abstract:* "This article provides a comprehensive overview of creative interventions used with adolescents in the secondary school setting. School counselors who incorporate creative interventions along with traditional counseling methods will increase their effectiveness with high school students. Creative interventions that can be delivered through classroom guidance and/or individual and group counseling will be

discussed, including the use of art, props, reading, writing, music, play, and sandtray. Specific examples of ways to utilize each intervention are also provided to assist school counselors with implementation of these methods.”

Collins, W. (2011). Authentic engagement for promoting a college-going culture. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 15(4), 101–118.

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ957109>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “The United States has lost ground internationally as a leader in educational attainment. Personal empowerment, national economic progress, and democratic ideals are enhanced through education, yet inequalities persist in the educational attainment of certain groups, such as low-income families or underrepresented minorities. Because the evolving economic landscape increasingly demands a diverse, highly trained, and well-educated labor force to fill the kinds of jobs required of the information age, the United States cannot afford to let large portions of its population languish educationally. Higher education outreach efforts to engage communities and promote the broad embrace of a college-going culture are seen as vital to achieving increased educational attainment.”

Pluth, M. D., Boettcher, S. W., Nazin, G. V., Greenaway, A. L., & Hartle, M. D. (2015).

Collaboration and near-peer mentoring as a platform for sustainable science education outreach. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 92(4), 625–630.

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1062335>

*From the ERIC abstract:* Decreased funding for middle and high school education has resulted in reduced classroom time, which, when coupled with an increased focus on standardized testing, has decreased the exposure of many middle school students to hands-on science education. To help address these challenges, we developed an integrated outreach program, spanning grades 6-12, designed to engage students by bringing students to the University of Oregon to perform hands-on laboratory experiments. Initially developed to supplement science education lost to state-mandated furlough days, the programmatic design can be applied readily in other contexts including afterschool, weekend, or summer programs. The outreach activities and scaffolding rely heavily on near-peer mentoring, which provides a visible pathway for younger students to envision themselves as future scientists while also providing mentoring and leadership opportunities for high school, undergraduate, and graduate students. The use of near-peer mentoring is also critically important for the program's sustainability because it enables a more efficient allocation of graduate student and faculty time. In the first 2.5 years, over 450 middle school students have participated in the program and student feedback shows that students are engaged and excited about the outreach activities.

Radcliffe, R., & Stephens, L. C. (2008). Preservice teachers are creating a college culture for at-risk middle school students. *RMLE Online: Research in Middle Level Education*, 32(4), 1–15. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ827008>

*From the ERIC Abstract:* “This mid-point report from a seven-year study about building a college culture investigates how a multifaceted approach including mentoring, technology, campus visits, parent involvement, and tutoring impacts at-risk middle school students' college aspirations and eventual success gaining college acceptance. Based on NAEP report data, many young adolescents may not be adequately prepared for postsecondary education and workforce success. This longitudinal study follows a student cohort (n = 50) starting in their sixth grade year, uses a quasi-experimental design including three comparison groups, and collects data from surveys, interviews, written reflective statements, and student academic measures to evaluate efforts and outcomes of building a college culture. Midpoint findings suggest that experiencing college life through campus visits and vicariously through mentoring experiences with preservice teachers may be linked to improvements in at-risk middle school students' perceptions of college. Digital story-writing projects and on-campus writing marathons helped these students gain insight on their academic and career futures. Different strategies have been implemented to increase parental participation in building a college culture. Because many of these students need higher grades, the project shifts emphasis during year three to academic tutoring by preservice teachers as the students enter eighth grade.”

Schneider, B., Broda, M., & Judy, J. (2016, March). *Summer outreach with near-age peer mentors: A randomized experiment to improve the transition to college*. Paper presented at the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness Spring 2016 Conference, Washington, DC. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED564094>

*From the ERIC abstract:* “Although students leave high school stating their plans to continue their education, some lack the information and strategies to successfully navigate a successful transition to college. This paper presents results from a randomized study that is part of a larger, quasi-experimental intervention, the College Ambition Program (CAP). The embedded study targeted graduating high school students to receive additional support through the use of near-age peer mentoring during the summer prior to beginning college. This study expects to contribute to existing theoretical and empirical research on the attrition trends for students expecting to continue on to college during the summer. Given that similar studies have found positive effects for this type of intervention during the summer, and taking advantage of the larger on-going intervention with multiple years of data on students in the CAP treatment schools, researchers examine what type of student is more likely to take advantage of this type of support over the summer. This study is best described as a pretest, posttest, experimental design. Graduating twelfth grade students at the eight high schools in the CAP study who had indicated their postsecondary plans were randomized into the treatment or control conditions. The three primary sources of data are: (1) a senior exit survey that was given to all graduating 12th grade students prior to the start of the randomized study; (2) mentor contact logs that were completed during the course of the intervention; and (3) postsecondary enrollment data provided by the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC).

With respect to participation in the summer intervention, mentors reached out via email and phone to all students in the treatment group. The response rate of actually reaching the students in the treatment group was, on average, just over 50 percent. The study is ongoing at the time of this report. A table is appended.”

Tenenbaum, L. S., Anderson, M. K., Jett, M., & Yourick, D. L. (2014). An innovative near-peer mentoring model for undergraduate and secondary students: STEM focus. *Innovative Higher Education*, 39(5), 375–385. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266749993>

*From the abstract:* “This study examined a novel mentoring model, “near-peer mentorship,” that supports the development of mentee and mentor, incorporates established principles of mentoring, and offers unique opportunities to integrate research and teaching in a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) internship. Using qualitative methods, this model was examined from the perspectives of near-peer mentors and student mentees during a science education internship at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. Results revealed that this mentorship model contributed to personal, educational, and professional growth for near-peer mentors and increased the interest and engagement of students studying STEM. We discuss implications, limitations, and future directions.”

What Works Clearinghouse (2018). *Summer counseling: What Works Clearinghouse intervention report*. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED581728>

*From the ERIC Abstract:* “‘Summer counseling’ is designed to help college-intending high school graduates complete the steps needed to enroll in college and start their college careers. These programs provide services during the months between high school graduation and college enrollment and involve outreach by college counselors or peer mentors via text messaging campaigns, email, phone, in-person meetings, instant messaging, or social media. These intervention services provide college-intending individuals with information about tasks required for college enrollment, as well as assistance in overcoming unanticipated financial, informational, and socioemotional barriers that prevent college entry. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) identified five studies of ‘summer counseling’ that both fall within the scope of the Transition to College topic area and meet WWC group design standards. All five studies meet WWC group design standards without reservations, and no studies meet WWC group design standards with reservations. Together, these studies included 13,614 recent high school graduates in 10 locations. ‘Summer counseling’ had potentially positive effects on credit accumulation and persistence and mixed effects on college access and enrollment for recent high school graduates.”

*From the text:* “Counseling and outreach was [sic] provided using a number of communication methods, including phone (five studies), in-person consultations (five studies), email (four studies), text messaging (four studies), social media (two studies), and instant messaging (two studies).”

## Additional Organization to Consult

American School Counselor Association – <https://www.schoolcounselor.org/>

*From the website:* “The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) supports school counselors’ efforts to help students focus on academic, career and social/emotional development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible members of society. ASCA provides professional development, publications and other resources, research and advocacy to school counselors around the globe.”

## Methods

### Keywords and Search Strings

The following keywords and search strings were used to search the reference databases and other sources:

- Near peer advising
- Near-peer advising
- “College and career readiness” AND “peer advising”
- “College and career readiness” AND “mentoring” OR “peer advising”
- Near peer
- Near-peer
- “Middle school” AND “near-peer advising”
- “Middle school” AND “near-age advising”
- “Middle school” AND “near-peer advising” AND college
- Middle school near peer advising models
- “Middle school near peer advising” AND “college readiness”
- “Middle school near peer advising” AND “career readiness”

### Databases and Resources

We searched [ERIC](#) for relevant, peer-reviewed research references. ERIC is a free online library of more than 1.6 million citations of education research sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). Additionally, we searched the [What Works Clearinghouse](#).

### Reference Search and Selection Criteria

When we were searching and reviewing resources, we considered the following criteria:

- *Date of the publication:* References and resources published from 2003 to present were included in the search and review.

- *Search priorities of reference sources:* Search priority is given to study reports, briefs, and other documents that are published and/or reviewed by IES and other federal or federally funded organizations, academic databases, including ERIC, EBSCO databases, JSTOR database, PsychInfo, PsychArticle, and Google Scholar.
- *Methodology:* The following methodological priorities/considerations were given in the review and selection of the references: (a) study types—randomized control trials, quasi-experiments, correlational studies, descriptive data analyses, literature reviews, mixed methods analyses, and so forth; (b) target population, samples (representativeness of the target population, sample size, volunteered or randomly selected, and so forth), study duration, and so forth; and (c) limitations, generalizability of the findings and conclusions, and so forth.

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This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by stakeholders in the Southwest Region (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest at AIR. This memorandum was prepared by REL Southwest under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-91990018C0002, administered by AIR. Its 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.