

REL Southwest Ask A REL Response

April 2019

Question:

What are effective approaches and strategies for implementation of individual learning plans (also called student success plans or student academic and career plans), and what are the outcomes associated with implementation of these plans?

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 approaches and strategies for implementation of individual learning plans and outcomes demonstrating their effectiveness.

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

Britton, T., & Spencer, G. (2017, April). *Individualized Learning Plans: Do students who fail to plan, plan to fail?* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Antonio, Texas. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED592945>. Full text retrieved from <http://www.aera.net/Publications/Online-Paper-Repository/AERA-Online-Paper-Repository/Owner/940215>

From the ERIC abstract: “A synopsis of students course taking and the type of diploma chosen by high school students, also known as their Individualized Learning Plans (ILP), provides a holistic view of student's preparation in high school, and serves as a reliable indicator of their college and career readiness. While ILPs are mandated in over 30 states, limited work has been done on measuring their effectiveness in ensuring that students are better prepared for college and career. We thus propose to use propensity score matching

to measure the effectiveness of using ILPs by comparing the number of college applications and likelihood of entry into college for students who use ILPs, when compared to students with similar characteristics who do not use this tool. We use data from the High School Longitudinal Study (HSLs) of 2009.”

Moeder-Chandler, M. (2017). School counselor lead initial individual career and academic plan implementation design. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(19), 198–207. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED581244>

From the ERIC abstract: “In Fall of 2014 for Fountain-Fort Carson School District #8 undertook a revamping of graduation and state-mandated ICAP requirements for implementation for the graduating class of 2021. This design and implementation process included numerous stakeholders and several years of planning from Fall of 2014 to Spring of 2017. The design and implementation of this process, and its measures, can be used as a roadmap of best practices for other schools and districts moving towards ICAP and state mandated graduation requirement implementation. With increased significance placed at the state and national level for post-secondary preparation for all students, the necessity for high quality career and academic planning, created and led by school counselors, continues to be paramount. This study grows the body of knowledge practice around multi-year post-secondary planning and design implementation for current high school practitioners.”

Nagle, J., & Taylor, D. (2017). Using a personal learning framework to transform middle grades teaching practice. *Middle Grades Research Journal*, 11(1), 85–100. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1146224>. Full text retrieved from <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Using+a+personal+learning+framework+to+transform+middle+grades...-a0503275582>

From the ERIC abstract: “In 2013 the Vermont legislature enacted Act 77 mandating that students in Grades 7-12 develop personalized learning plans (PLPs) to guide them toward high school graduation using proficiency-based requirements. In the present qualitative self-study, we document the impact of implementation of a personal learning framework integrating PLPs into a humanities curriculum on a seventh- and eighth-grade team at a Vermont middle school during a 2-year period. Findings indicate that: (1) teaching transformed over time—it became more constructivist and integrated; (2) the personal learning framework required students to develop a growth mindset through the iterative process of goal setting, evidence curation, and reflection; and (3) the use of the personal learning framework and the digital tools to facilitate the development of PLPs afforded exposure to multiple and new literacies.”

Phelps, L. A., Durham, J., & Wills, J. (2011). Education alignment and accountability in an era of convergence: Policy insights from states with Individual Learning Plans and policies. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 19(31), 1–33. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ956028>

From the ERIC abstract: “In response to the rising demand for market-responsive education reform across the U.S., since 1998 more than twenty states have created

Individual Learning or Graduation Plan (ILP/IGP) state policies. Using extensive policy document analyses and stakeholder interview data from four early-adopting ILP/IGP states, the goal of this four-state case study was twofold. First, to determine the extent to which states are leveraging federal and state resources to align their ILP initiatives with other policies aimed at fostering education innovation and assisting economic recovery. The second goal was to develop policy recommendations for making intergovernmental investments to strengthen performance outcomes in education and workforce development in ILP/IGP states. The federal interest in equal protection and improving equity for special populations including youth with disabilities stimulated and animated the investigation. Several key findings emerged across the four states. First, to date limited fiscal investments in professional development and systematic data collection have constrained ILP-IGP implementation and evaluation efforts. Second, the opportunity to align and leverage the state investment with federal programs and other state employment and education initiatives was largely unexplored in these states. Recommendations for state policy improvements include aligning ILP policies with state plans for improving outcomes in federal programs for students confronting economic, language, and disability challenges.”

Additional Organizations to Consult

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) – <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>

From the website: “The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) assists state and local workforce development systems to better serve all youth, including youth with disabilities and other disconnected youth. The NCWD/Youth, created in 2001, is composed of partners with expertise in education, youth development, disability, employment, workforce development and family issues. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), NCWD/Youth is managed by the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C. NCWD/Youth offers a range of technical assistance services to state and local workforce investment boards, youth councils and other workforce development system youth programs.”

REL Southwest note: NCWD/Youth offers the following relevant resources on its website:

- An ILP implementation guide, “Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans Throughout the Lifespan: A Revised and Updated ‘ILP How to Guide 2.0,’” available at <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Promoting-Quality-ILPs-Throughout-the-Lifespan-WEB.pdf>.
- A policy brief, “Using Individualized Learning Plans to Produce College and Career Ready High School Graduates,” available at http://www.ncwd-youth.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/PolicyBrief_issue_6.pdf.

State of New Jersey, Department of Education – <https://www.nj.gov/education/cte/pslp/>

From the website: “A Personalized Student Learning Plan (PSLP) is defined as a formalized plan and process that involves students setting learning goals based on personal, academic and career interests, beginning in the middle school grades and continuing throughout high school with the close support of adult mentors that include teachers, counselors and parents. (N.J.A.C. 6A:8).”

REL Southwest note: The department offers the following relevant resources on its website:

- A PSLP implementation guide, “A Guide for Implementing Personalized Student Learning Plan (PSLP) Programs,” available at <https://www.nj.gov/education/cte/pslp/PSLPGuide.pdf>.
- A PSLP pilot evaluation report, “New Jersey Department of Education Personalized Student Learning Plan Pilot Program, 2010-2011 evaluation report,” available at <https://www.nj.gov/education/cte/pslp/EvaluationReportY2.pdf>

State of Vermont, Agency of Education – <https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/personalized-learning/personalized-learning-practices>

From the website: “Personalized Learning in Practice: Over the course of the FY16-17 academic year, the Personalized Learning Team visited a number of schools around the state—from Bennington to Canaan—to have conversations about the successes and challenges of implementing personalized learning and flexible pathways at their schools. Many themes emerged from those conversations and informed the development of updated resources and a professional learning series that can be found at the [Vermont Professional Learning Network](#).

Personalized Learning /Flexible Pathways Grants: In the spring 2017 the personalized learning team [awarded 14 Flexible Pathways grants to Supervisory Unions](#) to support their work in the following areas: 1) Developing and Scaling Career Advisory; 2) Integrated Expanded learning Opportunities into Personalized Learning Plans and Flexible Pathways to Graduation; and 3) Developing Work-Based Learning at the Secondary Level. Review the [summary of all the Flexible Pathways Expansion Grants](#).”

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) – <https://www.dol.gov/odep/ilp/kickstart.htm>

From the website: “Individualized Learning Plans Across the U.S.: Many states have adopted policies that require all middle and/or high school students to develop and maintain an individualized learning plan in order to make schools more personalized and improve student outcomes. As part of the ILP Research Project, ODEP sought to determine the status of ILP implementation across the U.S. and compile the results into one, easy-to-use tool. The purpose of this Interactive Policy Map is to provide a snapshot of ILP implementation in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.”

REL Southwest note: OEPD offers the following relevant resources on its website:

- An interactive map with descriptions of ILP policies by state, available at <https://www.dol.gov/odep/ilp/map/>.
- A policy brief, “ILPs across the U.S.,” available at <https://www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/2014-ILP-Map.pdf>

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings

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

- ((individualization OR individual OR individualized OR personalization OR personal OR personalized) AND (“learning plan” OR “success plan” OR “academic and career plan” OR “career and academic plan”))

AND

- (implement OR implementation OR outcomes OR impact OR effectiveness)

Databases and Resources

We searched [ERIC](#) for relevant, peer-reviewed research references. ERIC is a free online library of more than 1.7 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 2004 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.

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.