

Maximizing Attainment for All High School Students

Increased focus on improving and redesigning America's high schools has recently become a main priority for many states, districts, and schools across the country. The National High School Center helps the RCCs and the states they serve cultivate a student-centered environment that maximizes attainment for all students. Our current work in the high school area is mapped into three main focus areas: High School Readiness, Rigorous Content Mastery, and Postsecondary Pathways.

High School Readiness. Students should be fully supported and academically ready for a seamless transition into high school. Topics of focused review include the critical transition from middle school to high school, with a special focus on the ninth-grade year; prerequisite learning skills; behavioral issues (motivational, social, physical, and emotional); dropout prevention; and student personalization.

Rigorous Content Mastery. All high school students need to be prepared to master core subjects and 21st century skills to graduate high school and thrive in an increasingly competitive global environment. Within this focus area, the National High School Center encourages rigorous and appropriate course work for all students. Areas of close attention include college prerequisites; differentiated instruction; high school literacy; Response to Intervention (RTI); and accelerated learning through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and honors courses.

Postsecondary Pathways. The National High School Center believes that every student has the capacity to succeed and graduate high school and to continue on a pathway of choice, whether it involves progressing to higher education or entering the workforce. Areas of particular focus include Early College High Schools, dual enrollment, and useful programs assisting with the transition out of high school.

About the National High School Center

The National High School Center is part of a national network of Comprehensive Centers and is funded by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education. As one of five national Content Centers, our main objective is to help the Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) build the capacity of states across the nation to effectively implement the goals and objectives of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that directly affect high school improvement.

The National High School Center is housed at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and benefits greatly from the work of our partners: Learning Point Associates, MDRC, the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA), and WestEd.



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Linking Research and Resources for Better High Schools

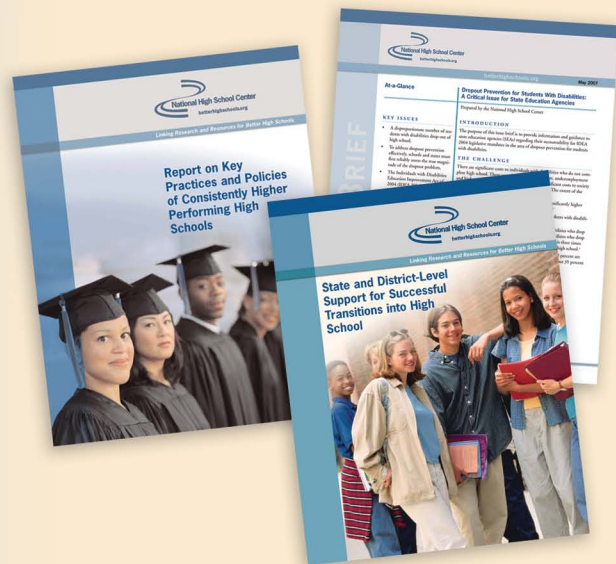
www.betterhighschools.org

National High School Center

The National High School Center serves as a central source of information and expertise on high school improvement for the Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs) and the states they serve. In doing so, we assist the RCCs in building the capacity of states across the nation to meet the goals and objectives of No Child Left Behind. Through our work, we aim to ensure that all students perform to their fullest potential and are adequately prepared for college, work, and life after high school.

Jointly funded by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education, the National High School Center believes in ensuring challenging learning strategies and appropriate academic environments for all students. In meeting our goal, we identify effective programs and tools, offer user-friendly products, and provide high-quality technical assistance to support the use of research-based practices as they relate to high schools. A significant aspect of our work includes identifying strategies that have a proven track record for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.





Pressing High School Topics

Based on the feedback from our valued stakeholders, the National High School Center is dedicated to providing the latest information and research on the following pressing topics focused on high schools:

- Dropout Prevention;
- Transitions into High School;
- Transitions out of High School;
- Restructuring High Schools;
- High School Literacy;
- High School Curriculum and Instruction; and
- Best Practices in High School Improvement.



Applying Research to Improve Instruction

The National High School Center provides access to the latest research regarding educational interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies) that help improve outcomes for all high school students.

We are committed to providing high-quality, research-based information on improvement strategies that help all high school students learn. Millions of high school students—particularly those with disabilities, with limited proficiency in English, and from low-income backgrounds—need additional support to succeed. To address these critical issues, the National High School Center produces tools and products highlighting the latest research, including research briefs and reports, topical literature summaries, issue and policy briefs, snapshots, case studies, toolkits, Webinars, online presentations, and fact sheets. Each resource posted on our Web site proceeds through a screening and review process and is organized by a relevant topical area relating to high school improvement. All resources may be accessed free of charge through the National High School Center Web site (www.betterhighschools.org).

Proactive Technical Assistance: Connecting, Collaborating, and Capacity Building

To most effectively serve the RCCs and the states they support, the National High School Center delivers substantive technical assistance by bridging research to practice. We identify relevant research in accessible formats and provide tools for educators and policymakers to support teaching and learning strategies that will improve academic outcomes for all students.

We collaborate with the RCCs to address specific requests for assistance from states within the served regions, and we support their capacity to respond to future requests.

Technical assistance services include the following:

- **MATCHING** each RCC with trained and experienced technical assistance liaisons who help with identifying specific needs, planning, and ongoing problem solving;
- **DEVELOPING** strategic and targeted learning opportunities to support the necessary capacity-building needs of the RCCs; and
- **CREATING** focused forums and online platforms to support peer-to-peer collaboration.

Interactive Resources and Events

In addition to providing user-friendly tools and products directly to RCCs and on our public Web site, the National High School Center facilitates the following activities:

Webinars and Dialogues. Our interactive forums provide guidance on a variety of relevant topics related to curriculum and practices in high schools, such as dropout prevention and transitions into high school. The forums also include interactive discussions that allow participants to share information around common challenges and learn from one another.

Annual Institute. The National High School Center hosts an annual Institute to offer a collaborative venue for RCC staff, policymakers, practitioners, and national experts to share and celebrate successes and to discuss common themes specifically focused on expressed needs.

National High School Network. In our role as facilitator, we link our stakeholders to national education organizations doing exceptional work. As a broker of knowledge, we connect our stakeholders with leading experts to discuss best practices and solutions. Through the “Friends of the National High School Center,” our expert network, we link the RCCs with leaders of national high school improvement initiatives. Our work also benefits from the knowledge and expertise of the National High School Center Advisory Board, which guides our work by providing meaningful insight representing national and state perspectives.

Communications and Electronic Exchanges.

Through *E-News for Better High Schools*, our electronic newsletter, and *High School News Update*, our news clipping service, we keep our stakeholders informed of the latest tools and products, news and events, and research regarding high school improvement. Additionally, we offer concise and understandable information about key federal policy and relevant legislation shaping the high school landscape.

Map of the Regional Comprehensive Centers

