

PSC-ED-OUS

**Moderator: Marco Davis
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1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you all for standing by. At this time all participants will be in a listen-only mode. After the presentation we will conduct a question-and-answer session.

To ask a question you may press star then 1. This call is being recorded. If you have any objections you may disconnect at this point. And now I'll turn the meeting over to Ms. Alejandra Ceja. Ma'am, you may begin.

Alejandra Ceja: Thank you, welcome everyone. My name is Alejandra Ceja. I'm the Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Education of Excellence for Hispanics. And I'm joined today by several colleagues here at the initiative. And I want to thank you all for joining us for our webinar today.

Before we get started I just want to inform and remind you that this webinar is off the record and not intended for press purposes. I would also like to let you know that this webinar including the Q&A will be recorded and the recording and transcript along with the slide presentation is going to be posted on our website after the call.

We want to make sure this information is available to anyone who was unable to join us for the live webinar.

The agenda is going to proceed as follows. I will describe today's webinar topic briefly and then introduce our first presenter who's going to speak for up to 15 minutes and then we will have an opportunity for Q&A. We will then turn it over to our second presenter who is going to speak for up to 15 minutes and we will open the floor up again for Q&A for the remainder of the time.

When we open the floor for questions the Operator is going to come to provide guidance on how to get into the queue for these questions so we look forward to your participation.

Now on to our discussion on Summer Melts. Summer Melts is the phenomenon of college-enrolled high school graduates not showing up to school the following fall - they melt away. Typically during the summer. Nationally about 10% to 20% of college eligible students melt away.

Most of which are low income minority students planning to go to community college. In the southwest district that includes Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico; 44% of students tend to melt away. It's important to address summer melt to ensure that the opportunity of high education is not missed by so many students and to increase the number of Latinos earning two and four-year degrees.

Today we will hear about the administration's efforts to increase college access and then we will learn about some of the efforts to address summer melt that are currently being implemented. So without further adieu I'm going to turn it over to our first presenter, Mr. Greg Darnieder who is a Senior

Advisor at the US Department of Education and a recognized expert on college access. Greg?

Greg Darnieder: Alejandra, thank you very much, really appreciate the opportunity to give everyone a quick update on what's been developing over the last number of years around college access here at the Department.

And I'm more than pleased to have the opportunity to share this time with Lindsay Page and Ben Castleman who I've gotten to know over the last several years around not only summer melt but also some of the other related work that they've been engaged. So again, thank you very much.

So I just want to touch on four areas very quickly and happy to answer any questions during this webinar or even afterwards.

The first is give you a quick just refresher on where we're at with FAFSA. The second is to talk about the First Lady's newly announced Retire Initiative. I always take these opportunities to emphasize the importance of data in college access persistency and eventual post secondary graduation and Alejandra already alluded to that just with the data - some of the key data around summer melt and such.

And then finally just mention a few of the upcoming competitions that either are currently underway or will be announced very, very soon.

So on FAFSA, on the first slide here, we - everyone, I'm sure, knows that this is launched January 1 of every year, that basically it's - even though it's not officially technically categorized as an entitlement program it basically functions as an entitlement program.

And it's starting January 1, high school seniors and adults can apply at any point during that calendar year for a Pell grant to see if they are eligible.

And it's also important, particularly for this webinar, to note that the FAFSA's available in Spanish.

On the next slide, some of the things that have - that we've been working on over the last five years that the current administration has been in place is simplifying the form. When I - I spent about half my time traveling the country and the first couple of years before we simplified the form it was a common complaint about how arduous it was and difficult to fill out.

I can tell you that since we've eliminated, like, a third of the questions and introduced the IRS data retrieval tool, the ability to get a real time PIN, that I don't think I've heard a complaint in the last three years because the average time is now down to 23 minutes and for folks who use the IRS data retrieval option I'm told it's - takes only about six or seven minutes to fill out the rest of the form.

Now one of the projects that some of you might be familiar with and that I've had the pleasure of working on is to basically get - allow school districts as well as what's about to be announced some federal grantees the opportunity to track FAFSA completion by high school senior name from January 1 of their senior year into the fall of that year in terms of them enrolling in post secondary education.

So this is a very simple project in many ways and very complex in others. And the basic premise of the project is if you could tell a school counselor or a college access provider by student name whether that student has filled their FAFSA, yes or no, that's all it does, yes or no, or that they've submitted and

it's incomplete that this would be very powerful information for that school counselor or college access professional to know.

The challenge is that we have got over 1.1 million seniors who graduate - have graduated, they graduated last year in 2013 and in 2012 and this year in 2014 we have another over 1.1 million each year graduating who don't fill out the FAFSA form and leaving nationally conservatively billions of dollars, at least \$3 billion, on the table.

And this plays out in each of your communities because colleges in many communities is an economic engine and paying for college whether it's through federal grants or state grants becomes critically important, particularly for first generation students.

So about a month ago - actually on - I'm sorry, a couple of months ago on March 7 the President went to Miami and announced that we had given to each state, to each governor through state educational officials, the authority to be able to set up a system within their state to verify that each of the high school seniors in your state has filed their FAFSA form.

And again, so this is a big thing from the administration standpoint. And now we've got to get each state to basically set up their system. And we think there's enough economic reason for states to do such because of the hundreds of millions of dollars in some states and certainly tens of millions of dollars in other states that are, if you will, left on the table by students failing to fill it out.

So initial indications from school districts around the country have shown double digit increases in a single year, double digit percentage point increases so going from 44% to 54% in just a single year or the largest increase was

actually in San Antonio, 31 percentage points; Riverside, California, 21 percentage points; Albuquerque, 11 percentage points.

All of those were achieved over the last couple of years in just a single year in terms of increased. And what we're particularly interested in then is to what extent does this actually lead to post secondary enrollment the following fall or at any point after high school graduation.

So FAFSA, if - and the last point I'll make here is that FSA posts on its website for every public and private high school in the country the raw number of seniors who have completed a FAFSA form.

So you can go on FSA's website or you could Google FAFSA by high school and go to the - your state and then go to the high schools in your city. And you can actually see the raw number of FAFSAs that were - have been submitted.

You'll have to calculate that into a percentage because we don't know currently how many seniors are in every high school in real time across the country.

All right, so let's move on to the next slide real quickly, our reach higher initiative. So the First Lady in San Antonio three weeks ago went there to announce at a college signing ceremony for the seniors graduating in 16 school districts in the City of San Antonio her new initiative, Reach Higher.

This will - is joining her focus over the last few years around military families in her joining forces campaign as well as Eating Healthy has been her second and exercise her second focus and now college access is her third focus. So you can see here a picture from San Antonio, seniors sitting behind her.

We had about 2500 of them at the University of Texas-San Antonio and we're very excited about the First Lady's intentional focus over the next couple of years on college access and such.

On the next slide, you can see the President holding a card there with the tag, retire. This was actually taken on the same day that the First Lady was in San Antonio where we got 12 federal agencies to have their employees wear their t-shirt or sweatshirt or some piece of gear from the college that they graduated from.

And so we had interesting tweets from all across the world from different secretaries as they were traveling, Secretary Kerry I believe was in Africa and he tweeted from his plane. So some really interesting things. This will probably become a national campaign every May 1 or so in terms of getting the country to celebrate not only college admission but also college completion.

So her initiative is going to focus in on exposing students to college and career opportunities, on - the second point here is around financial aid eligibility and college affordability, on academic planning, summer learning using the summer months to your advantage as a student all the way through high school and certainly months in college.

And then the last point around school counselors and the important guidance and role that they play in terms of the futures of our young people.

All right, we move to the next slide here and just want to make some critical - some points around data and college access and the such. And I don't think we can emphasize this enough in terms of how critical it is to have data, particularly in this arena, and as we delve and work with researchers like Ben

and Lindsay in terms of what are some of the most economic and also strategic investments we can make.

So one of the things that we've done under Point 1 is SLDS stands for State Longitudinal Data Systems is to put significant amounts of money into each state to help them build out their data systems.

The second point talks about FAFSA but it also then talks about college enrollment persistency and completion as well as the ultimate indicator of folks entering the labor market - the labor market.

And so how are these factors - what's the - what are the kind of the behind scenes data on race and on gender and on geography across the country as we look at not only FAFSA completion then but - and the second part of this webinar around when - even when we do all the right - what we think are the right things in high school, are students actually then going on to post secondary.

So they filled out their FAFSA. They fill out their college applications. They actually got accepted but did they actually end up going? So we'll delve into that in a minute.

But this integration of data, both from the student information systems of school districts and states with outside data sets is becoming more and more important.

Collective impact is some of your communities are hopefully involved in this very dynamic process. There's a couple examples of where this is happening, Strive based in Cincinnati is - gets credited with kind of being at the forefront of this movement starting a number of years back around the use of data.

Secretary Duncan talks all the time about let's be honest with our data and let's really tell the truth because if we can't get better if we're fooling with the data and manipulating it and such.

So collective impact, if you're not familiar with Strive I encourage you to Google it. There's groups like the National League of Cities that have been extremely supportive of this collective impact theory of change.

And if you want to see one of the more dynamic way - areas of the country where this is playing out go to the Michigan local college access networks, the Michigan LCANS, where they have constructed a dashboard in over 50 communities around a dozen plus indicators of how each of those communities is doing in terms of FAFSA completion, college enrollment, reducing remediation rates and the such. So - and you can see, the last point, some of the indicators listed there.

And then finally, I'll just mention on the next slide some of the upcoming competitions that are coming up. The Gear Up competition is literally around the corner. Any day now it will be announced.

It's as you probably know, the only seven year funding strategy coming out of the Department of Ed that I know of. And certainly the only seven year funding strategy in college access in the such starting in the middle grades all the way through high school into that and through that first year of post secondary.

So if you're - if you're interested in applying I would encourage you to go to our - the Department of Ed's website and look at some of the past grantees and you need to start writing today if you're going to go after a Gear Up grant. So but very exciting opportunity. In some communities this has been as much

as \$50 million over seven years so not an insignificant amount of money either.

The training program related to (unintelligible) programs, actually that deadline is just literally around the corner on Friday. And you are seeing an opportunity there promoting baccalaureate opportunities for Hispanic Americans, May 30.

And then we just announced literally a couple days ago the first in the world competition, which is all - which is really targeted towards high ed institutions around college enrollment, persistency, completion, as well as affordability and the such.

So what are the strategies being used by higher ed institutions to not only take our young people in but help them be successful in completing post secondary and - post secondary goals and the such.

So with that I'll stop and happy to take a few questions or we can - let's try that Alejandra.

Alejandra Ceja: Great, thank you so much. Thank you, Greg. Operator, can you please tell callers how to get into the queue to ask a question?

Coordinator: Okay, thank you, ma'am. We will now begin the question-and-answer sessions. If anyone likes to ask a question please press star and then 1. Please unmute your phones and record your names clearly and slowly when prompted. Again, that is star and then 1.

To cancel your request you may press star and then 2. One moment please for the first questions.

Greg Darnieder: I feel like we should have a ticking clock here.

Coordinator: Okay, speakers, we have our first question on queue. The first question is coming from the line of Ms. (Velma Ricks). Ms. (Ricks), your line is open. You may begin.

(Velma Ricks): Hi, can you hear me?

Greg Darnieder: Yes.

(Velma Ricks): Okay, hi, as I mentioned, my name is (Velma Ricks) and my question for you is this discussion is not necessarily new and I certainly hope that Dr. Benjamin Castleman is listening. My father used to be - many, many moons ago back in the early 70s, my father was the Dean of Admissions for the - Assistant Dean of Admissions for the University of Virginia.

And the conversation then of course was steered around the success and the discussion around at that time African American students, moving them post secondary, etc. And the dialog considered around Title IX, etc.

What I'm seeing is this concept is not new but one of the things they were successful at doing to ensure success in getting them there and them staying and being successful was to create what used to be referred to as transition programs where a guidance counselors in high school and Dean of Admissions at colleges successfully worked to identify (unintelligible) students.

They would send them to a four week or six week training in the summer time and they would say this is the University of Virginia and, you know, this was campus college life.

They found them other students who were successful on the campus to talk to them and - it gave them a sense of, you know, this is the university, introducing some of them - many of them were first time graduates, first generation graduates - first generation for having the opportunity to get to college.

And I suspect with our Latino students that this is also where we are, we want to ensure that success.

And my question is just a little about that particular program. We will - some of the people who participated in that program - one lady's a Director at the National Institute of Health, another is the first African American woman on the Virginia Supreme Court, another is a judge, another is a doctor, etc. They went on to be very successful and so we'd like to see the same duplication for our Latino students.

My question to you when you mentioned about some of the grant money and funding is the colleges in the southwest, colleges and universities in the southwest, are they doing or accepting programs like this to prevent that melt away?

Greg Darnieder: Thanks for your comments. And you're absolutely right, many of the questions that we're facing today are not new. I've been in this work for over 40 years.

(Velma Ricks): Okay, so that's (unintelligible).

Greg Darnieder: And low income communities in Chicago and whether - I mean summer melt was happening back in the late 70s and 80s. We just didn't have a - this is - but that was a time before we had any technology for one thing. And so we didn't - we knew it was happening. We knew I needed to pay attention to it, you know, with the young people I was working with.

But what gets me excited are the folks on the phone, Lindsay and Ben. We have a group of researchers now across the country who are really committed to delving into this broad college access and completion arena. And we're able to quantify what's working in really powerful ways that we haven't been able to do before.

And so I don't - I agree, I don't think the questions have changed all that much. But now we have an opportunity for the broad community as well as individual institutions like you're saying, whether it's University of Virginia or, you know, St. Mary's College in San Antonio or wherever to really track and look at the impact and the added value that their different programmatic strategies are contributing.

And you know, I guess this was highlighted just with the recent article in the New York Times around the University of Texas and how it changed its strategy around supports to young people and such.

So I'm sure - I don't know, Lindsay and Ben, you know, do you want to comment on this even before summer melt?

Ben Castleman: I would just add I - certainly it's an honor to hear I think your father was the Dean of Admissions here and I just yesterday met with our current Dean of Admissions who I know is thinking hard about how to ensure not only the

transition but also the success of all students who come to the University of Virginia.

As you'll hear in a couple minutes, I think we are strong believers in the more intensive summer bridge programs that institutions in various parts of the country use. We also recognize that for many colleges and universities that serve large shares of under represented students that the resources needed to support those more intensive bridge programs may sometimes be difficult to come by.

And so I think our work as you'll see has largely been oriented around trying to develop lower cost, easily scaled interventions that nonetheless provide students with the support and information they need to both get to college and be successful once they're here.

Lindsay Page: And I would just add to that, you know, thinking about the summer, the summer can also be an important time for students to maintain full time jobs so that they're able to be earning money to college - earning money for college. And so students may face constraints in getting to their campuses on time.

But as we are able to present some of our results and even work that we weren't able to fit into the short amount of time we have happily been engaged in a number of sites in the southwest area.

I know that our colleagues from Austin, Texas are on the line. We've done some exciting work in Austin as well as in some other school districts that we'll be talking about through the formal part of our presentation.

(Velma Ricks): One last thing I want to point out (unintelligible) as you know, we represent a lot of higher education folks and we're having similar discussions because often the English language center are where the - many of the students of underrepresented populations come to for their support and comfort throughout their years of college, even when they graduate from incented English programs. So this is great dialog.

Lindsay Page: Great, thank you.

Greg Darnieder: Thanks, thanks for your comments and observations, appreciate it.

Alejandra Ceja: Operator, do we have any other calls?

Coordinator: Yes, ma'am. Next question on queue is coming from the line of Ms. (Stella) (unintelligible). Your line is opened, you may begin.

(Stella): Good afternoon. My name is (Stella) (unintelligible). I'm in a school district in North Texas and I have a question regarding the Gear Up program. Originally I'm from South Texas and I was very familiar with the Gear Up program and many of our South Texas region schools participated.

I have not heard much participation in the North Texas area and I'm wondering if participation of the criteria for participation based on the number of low SCS students you have in the district?

Greg Darnieder: It is. I don't know the percentage offhand. I want to say it's like 80/20 or 75/25, but that - I'm not sure exactly. But are you talking about the Rio Grand area?

(Stella): Well, yes...

Greg Darnieder: Region 1 or...

(Stella): Well, Region 1 and Region 2. But I'm now in Region 10 and we're having an increase in our Hispanic population. A lot of our students who are newcomer students and access to higher education is a challenge.

And another part of - the other question is, is there - is the US Department of Education doing any research in terms of how we can educate our minority parents in terms of college access because that seems to be one of the barriers is informing and educating our parents so that they can support college opportunities or access to college.

Greg Darnieder: Right, so a couple quick comments. One is I would encourage you to go at the Department - on ED.gov website because the guidelines for Gear Up changed just slightly every time we do a competition but for the most part they're going to be pretty much the same. And so you can get a sense of - on the question - your question around family income there.

The great thing about Gear Up is that parents are one of the central tenants of the overall strategy. And the third thing is that the Department actually has an office of community and faith based outreach and the such. And so they are out across the country all the time interacting with parents and particularly have college access as one of their main focuses.

So happy to have you follow up with me afterwards if you want to on any of that.

(Stella): Okay, well, thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

Greg Darnieder: Sure.

Alejandra Ceja: I think we're going to move on to our second presenters. If there's folks that have a question for Greg that you weren't able to ask please feel free to send it to us at WHIEEH@Ed.gov.

It's the same email address that you use to register for this webinar and we'll make sure that we - that he gets those questions. We'll also have an opportunity at the end of our second presentation for Q&A.

So I'd like to turn it over to Dr. Lindsay Page who's a research assistant professor at the University of Pittsburg School of Education and Dr. Benjamin Castleman who is an assistant professor at the University of Virginia School - Curry School of Education. I'm turning it over to you Lindsay and Ben. Thank you for joining us.

Ben Castleman: Great, thank you. I see the slides are up. Alejandra, we're very grateful for the chance and thank you to everyone who joined the webinar.

In the next several minutes Lindsay and I will be presenting our research on summer melt among college attending high school graduates and the interventions we've developed over the last several years to support students in their transition through the summer.

We want to quickly acknowledge the generous support we've received from numerous funders that you can see at the bottom of the first slide. And none of the work we would have - we've done would have been possible without their support.

Next slide, please. So summer melt is a term that's traditionally been used by college admission offices to refer to the tendency of students who've paid a deposit to enroll at one institution to instead matriculate at a different institution, usually one that we presume to be of peer quality.

So you could think of a student who paid a deposit to enroll at the University of Virginia and instead enrolling at Wake Forest.

Next, please. Throughout the presentation and in our work we used summer melt to refer to an entirely different phenomena, when students who've been accepted to colleges in many cases apply for financial aid, and even chose where to enroll as of high school graduation fail to enroll anywhere in the year following high school.

Next slide, please. Up until several years ago the summer after high school really had been largely overlooked, at least at a broad level by researchers and policymakers as an important time period in student's transition to college.

But as you can see on this map, and this draws on data that we and our colleagues have collected over the last several years, summer melt occurs across the country and at surprisingly higher rates.

So if you look in Boston, Massachusetts, in Fulton County, Georgia; one in every five college attending students fails to matriculate. Again, these are students who've been accepted to college, in most cases have applied for financial aid. They've even chosen where to go as of the end of high school.

In Philadelphia, in Dallas, it's closer to one in three, and you can see in these regions in the southwest, 28% of students in Dallas, 29% of students in

Albuquerque, and upwards of 44% of students in Fort Worth, Texas fail to realize the college plans that they worked hard to achieve.

Next, please. So this obviously raises the question of why students melt? And the reality as we find in our research is that even after students have done everything they're supposed in high school.

They've gone into college, they've chosen where to enroll, that students face a complex and often unanticipated set of tasks they have to complete in order to matriculate.

Next, please. A lot of these relate to financial aid and the cost of college. So in our work we find that a pretty substantial share of students come into the summer not having even received their financial aid award letters.

Oftentimes they're unaware that they've been flagged by the Department of Education to verify income and asset information provided on their federal aid applications.

Other students are often just surprised by fees associated with required summer tasks, like applying for housing.

Next, please. In addition to these financial hurdles, we find that students are also often confused by the procedural tasks they have to complete like registering for orientation or completing academic placement tests.

Next. And the thing that we've recognized and tried to address is that this array of tasks occurs at a time when students typically have little access to professional help. They're no longer a part of their high school and their

school counselors typically don't work over the summer but they've also yet to engage with supports at their college.

For the students that we've worked with who are the first in their family to go to college, we find often that their parents really want to help them but don't know how to provide them with specific guidance to matriculate in college or the parents face real and valid competing pressures with their child going off to college, like foregone income the child might bring in or offering childcare support.

Next slide, please. So over the last several years we've designed and evaluated primarily using randomized control trials different interventions to support students in their transition from high school to college.

And our early work, we had school counselors or community based financial aid officers reach out to students to offer individualized help with completing required tasks like the financial and procedural tasks I talked about on the prior slide.

Next, please. In a subsequent summer we hired peer mentors who were thriving in college and who had graduated from the same communities to reach out and provide encouragement, first hand perspective, and support with summer tasks.

Next, please. That same summer we worked with a large urban district in the southwest and the university attended by the majority of college going graduates from the district to investigate whether students are more responsive to outreach from the college or from the high school.

Next. And finally, in a set of interventions that we've worked on now over two summers, four states, and over ten districts including Austin as Lindsay mentioned, we've investigated the impact of personalized and automated text messages as a low cost but also easily scaled strategy to provide students and where we've been able to parents information about tasks they need to complete in order to matriculate.

Next. And I think it's worth pointing out that all of these strategies address some common themes that affect whether students are able to follow through on their college plans. We try and provide students with guidance on how to navigate complex processes related to college and financial aid.

Wherever possible we both simplify and personalize information about required college and financial aid tasks to make sure students understand what they need to do. And finally, we minimize barriers as much as we can to students seeking professional assistance when they need help.

And I think a great example of that is in the text messaging work rather than the student needing to pick up a phone, go into school to find a counselor, all they have to do is write back to a text message and that can connect them to one-on-one assistance.

So now I'm going to turn it over to Lindsay who will discuss the results of these interventions we've run as well as how we're using these strategies to support students at other stages in their trajectories.

Lindsay Page: Thanks so much. So if you could click to the next slide, so in the few minutes that I have to provide some remarks I'm going to provide sort of a snapshot of some of the findings across the (unintelligible) implemented.

And one sort of overarching comment, if you take nothing else away I want to channel our colleague (Erin Cox) at an organization called You Aspire in Boston with whom we've implemented a lot of this work.

And when she's speaking about it she really sums it up this way, we've tried a number of different types of interventions and what we've found across all of these interventions was really very rigorous experimental design research is that providing students with transitional support between high school and on time college enrollment really helps. It really helps to improve on time college enrollment for students.

And so if you're thinking about implementing one of these strategies for your organization I think the number one thing is to think about what strategy is going to work for you and what type of strategy is really - you're really able to implement to better support your students.

So turning now to the slide, in this slide we provide evidence on the impact of summer - in the summer, counselors or financial aid advisors providing proactive outreach to students over the summer.

What's important about this - what's not revealed on the slide is that before we ran this intervention we randomized students to either receive proactive outreach or not. And all of the students who didn't receive the proactive outreach over the summer were still reminded at the beginning of the summer.

Your counselors, your advisors are here for you over the summer. If you have questions, if you need support, come on in. And what we found is that virtually none of those students in the control group - virtually none of the students who didn't receive that proactive outreach came in for support.

And so it's not sufficient to just remind students over the summer that you're there for them if they want to come in and find you.

In contrast, for the students who received proactive outreach over the summer, counselors and advisors were able to have meaningful contact with about three-quarters of the students around their college plans.

And what counselors routinely found is that students thought that they were all set for their transition to college but when the counselors were able to probe a little more deeply, in fact there were many tasks about which students were confused or which - with which they benefited from support.

And so in this slide we present three different sets of results. If you focus on the results that are labeled fall enrollment, the blue bar represents on time college enrollment for students who received proactive outreach and the orange bar, the students who did not receive the proactive outreach.

And what we find is that the proactive outreach and support from counselors over the summer increased timely college enrollment by about 5 percentage points, a statistically significant margin.

One thing that was really important for us - so this is an initial win and very exciting but one thing that was very important for us was that we weren't just pushing into college kids who were ultimately going to struggle and drop out.

If we were supporting students just to take on college debt that wasn't culminating in several semesters of post secondary education and hopefully a college degree then arguably this kind of summer support is not necessarily a good thing.

And so for these students we've been able to follow them now into their sophomore year of college.

And what we see when we do these similar treatment control comparisons to look at whether or not students are persisting through their first year of college, whether students are persisting to their second year of college, what those two additional sets of bars reveal is that the impact is persisting and in fact getting a little bit larger.

And so what we think here is that the summer support is not only helping students to get into college, matriculate to college on time, but it may in fact be providing students with a better more solid foundation on which to begin their college career.

If you just click forward, there's one piece of animation in this slide. It's not revealed in the graphic itself but one thing that we do find that's particularly important here is that these impacts are even larger for the students in our sample who were from the lowest income background so students who had an expected family contribution to college of zero.

So if you click to the next slide, in the next slide we summarize a set of findings related to both our text message and peer mentor outreach strategies.

And so what we find across sites where we've implemented this work is that the - both the text message and peer mentor strategies were particularly successful and helpful in improving timely college enrollment in locations and for students who received fewer college supports during their high school careers.

And again, if you just click to add the animation to this slide, one thing that we find here is that in this set of experiments compared to the prior year we're really able to reach out to a broader (unintelligible) of students. And we found that the text message and peer mentor interventions were particularly beneficial for students in the middle of the academic distribution in their larger group of students.

And so what's interesting to us there is that the students who are well served by this kind of additional outreach and support are students who based on things like their GPA, their SAT scores, these students who are college ready and meet a lot of those college ready benchmarks that are currently being thrown around.

But they're not necessarily students who are the highest academic performers in their high school. And so these are students who may be fly under the radar a little bit when it comes to the supports that do exist in their high schools but these are still students who benefit from additional support in the summer months and are college ready once they get there.

So if you'll just click ahead to the next slide, please. Finally in this slide, this is a new set of results that we're really excited to be sharing with this - with this group in particular.

So the results that we're presenting here are based on an experiment that we ran in a school district in the southeast. And in this particular context large shares of students who continue on to four year college - matriculate to one - the state flagship institution.

And so in this intervention we worked with the school district to have counselors either situate themselves for the summer at the high school or situate themselves at that flagship four year institution.

And counselors similarly were reaching out to students over the summer and what we found - if you focus on the bars on the right-hand side or if you look just at the bottom of the slide, we separate results out here for Hispanic males and then for all other students, not because there aren't important differences across those students who we've lumped together in the all other students group.

But if you look at the green bar what we find is that for students besides Hispanic males who are intending to go on to this state flagship institution the rate of summer melt is relatively low of the students who intend to continue on to that state flagship, 94% of students are matriculating, except for the Hispanic males. For Hispanic males, that on time matriculation rate was more like 84%.

And what we found was that the university outreach - and this really relates to a large degree to that first question that we heard, outreach from the university, counselors sitting at the university where that student was intending to matriculate, those counselors reaching out to the student from the vantage of the university providing support, providing encouragement, really encouraging the student to matriculate on time, had a sizable impact on on time enrollment for - particularly for Hispanic males in the sample. So we're excited to highlight that result in particular for the group.

If you go ahead and click to the last slide, one thing I'll note, Ben and I are, of course, very, very glad to continue this conversation with anyone and everyone on the line. So our contact information is here.

And then one other thing that we're also excited to share with the group and just highlight for you is that this past fall we - really in the past year we've been working on a book project related to summer melt. The book will be coming out in the fall published by the Harvard Ed Press.

And one thing that was really exciting for us, we're primarily quantitative researchers. We spend a lot of time with really dull looking data sets.

What this book project really gave us the opportunity to do was really dig into the experiences of students and the experiences of counselors and other supporting adults who worked with those students through often really great challenges and making the transition to college.

And so what we aim to do in the book is sort of define summer melt to really illuminate the issue of summer melt with the experiences of students and counselors. And then dig much more deeply into the interventions that we just had the short amount of time to highlight for the group today.

So I think I'm going to stop there. I'm really grateful for the time and opportunity to present to this group. And we look forward to conversation and questions.

Alejandra Ceja: Great, thank you both for your presentation. Operator, we'd like to open the floor for questions again.

Coordinator: All right, thank you, ma'am. Okay, so the next question on queue, this one is coming from the line of Mr. (John Ogen). Your line's open, you may begin, sir.

(John Ogen): Can you hear me?

Alejandra Ceja: Yes.

(John Ogen): Okay, great. Yes, what we have over here from the El Paso Community College over here in El Paso, Texas, we have a program that deals with early college programs.

So basically a lot of students are in the high schools, they're already getting - probably like in their junior or senior years they get their - some credit for going into college and then from - I guess, going on - immediately into college, either at UTEP or at MSU, they can - I guess they can build the momentum by gaining some of the college credit at that early college option that they have.

Do you think it's - I mean a long - coupled along with the mentoring project that you mentioned in the slides, is it - has anybody looked or investigated or into that, like, the coupling of the two and actually really promoting that, you know, for those people who are - for those students that are actually into that - you know, that early advancement in high school?

Is there a coupling of that? Has anybody looked at that? It's basically since we're primarily also down here - also primarily Hispanic institution - serving institutions.

Lindsay Page: Right, it's a great question so thanks very much for it. I don't know - so I'll start and then Ben will follow - you know, can follow up. We often sort of ping back and forth.

I don't know of interventions that have combined this kind of summer transition outreach with the evidence on early college high schools.

But I know that there is a robust evidence on early college high schools and the sort of dual enrolment type programs and the success that they've had in both encouraging students to stay on track for college through high school and also attain college enrollment and college credits while in high school and afterwards.

And I would be - if that line of research would be helpful I'd be glad to follow up with you after the call to help you find some of those resources. But again, I don't know of any interventions that have combined those two things.

(John Ogen): Okay, great, appreciate it, thank you.

Greg Darnieder: I'll just add that a couple resources for you on that might be to go to Jobs for the Future's website. They've been strong supporters of early college. And then there's Association of Concurrent Enrollment around concurrent enrollment.

And I'm forgetting the official name of the organization but you might Google concurrent enrollment association and I'm sure it will pop up. But there might be some research on either of those sites.

Coordinator: Okay, thank you, speakers. We have next - our next question on queue. Next question is coming from the line of Ms. (Herminia Salvidar). Your line is open, you may begin.

(Herminia Salvidar): That's all right. My question was for Greg and I will email that.

Greg Darnieder: Okay.

(Herminia Salvidar): Thank you so much.

Greg Darnieder: Sure.

Alejandra Ceja: Operator, do we have another question in the queue?

Coordinator: Yes, ma'am. Next question, this is an additional question from. Ms. (Patience Lerman)'s line. Your line is opened, you may begin.

(Patience Lerman): Yes, hello, good afternoon, and thank you for having this session today. It's really informative. I am the assistant to a dean of the college of education here at Temple University in Philadelphia here, a college that receives predominantly first generation college goers.

And so this - information is of interest to us because most of our students really fit the pool that you are - you research and are talking about here with regards to some of the interventions.

I'm wondering to what extent some of the strategies or intervention strategies that you looked at really can maybe get the effects of students who went to a public school system that was not really - I would say, the students were not well prepared to grasp the content and keep up with the level of expectations for college.

Because most of the challenges I noticed whether it's navigating the complexities of getting the forms filled out or making sure the orientation and placement test registration is done and they can fill out their housing

application, I mean if a student is well prepared and they are ready for college that's good.

But if a student really graduates high school and in a public school system or urban school system where they don't feel like they have the capacity to really cope with college life how are these interventions going to help them?

Greg Darnieder: Yes, so I would say two things in response. One thing to - that I think we always try and be clear about is we are not proposing summer melt interventions as a substitute for continuing to focus on increasing college affordability, increasing academic readiness.

We view those as important areas for ongoing investment. They also require kind of long term systemic change and investment.

And we see a lot of - a large share of students who by virtue of getting into four year colleges and universities and having graduated high school, have demonstrated an academic readiness to succeed in college and nonetheless encounter these stumbling blocks.

So we think it's - a kind of margin of students who we can really support through these kind of policy interventions.

The other thing I would say - you know, a question that we get fairly often, which may be slightly different question that you're asking is if students are struggling to deal with their financial aid forms and remembering to register for orientation how are they going to succeed in college?

And I think what we have found over and over again with our research is that students across the socioeconomic spectrum struggle with these tasks because

they're adolescents and they'd rather focus on more immediate and pleasurable things than these kind of burdensome tasks.

The difference, of course, is that students from more affluent families often have college educated parents who are very on top of them to get their financial aid forms in and to deal with the paperwork.

And the students to whom we are reaching out often are from families or communities where it's not for lack of care that the parents aren't providing that guidance. It's for lack of personal experience or know how.

And we find that by providing support to students and reminding them about these tasks through this difficult transitional period of the summer, the students then get into academic environments that are much more similar to what their high schools were like.

And as Lindsay showed in the results from a few slides back, providing just a couple hours of help over the summer doesn't just get students in the door, it also increases the probability that they stay in college.

So while our work tends to focus on lower income students we've always tried to be clear in saying that these are issues that affect - that these types of tasks are challenging across the socioeconomic spectrum.

We are just trying to address a lack of access to professional or familial help based help that more affluent communities can often draw on.

Alejandra Ceja: Thank you. Operator, do we have another question in the queue?

Coordinator: Yes, ma'am. So the next question is coming from the line of (unintelligible) (Harris). Your line is open, you may begin.

Woman: Hi, yes, can you hear me?

Alejandra Ceja: Yes.

Greg Darnieder: Yes.

Woman: Okay, great. My name is (unintelligible) (Harris) and I'm from Detroit, Michigan. I'm actually an LCAN coordinator, which is a local college access network connector with the Michigan college access network. And this is the first time I'm in the actual first year of the program here.

And it's a predominantly African American school and I really, really appreciate your talk because I sort of am a researcher in heart. So I know the term summer melt and have begun preparing for it.

And what I am finding, which kind of connects to the last caller, is that in these sessions that I plan on having with students during the summer it is - sometimes just guiding choices. They sometimes do not realize that they do not have enough money to financially go where they want to attend.

They have been accepted, they don't understand how to read their award letter. So they see it zeroed out and don't understand that \$20,000 of it is maybe a (unintelligible) loan where they won't be able to actually - their parents may not be able to actually obtain that loan. And so it's like an education process.

My question is, you say the high school counselor - and I saw the stats there you had for that, I guess I would be more equated to that as an LCAN coordinator. Was there just one session? Was it one two-hour session? Or were there multiple times that they met with the students over the summer period?

Lindsay Page: That's a great question, thank you. So in the - I can talk quickly about the several different interventions because we didn't get to really dig into these details. In the counselor led interventions, counselors would provide proactive outreach to students over the summer, multiple times or at sort of regular intervals.

So counselors would really push hard to have at least one in person or one in-depth meeting with a student to set the student on the right course or path. And then provide regular check-ins with the student over the summer.

So that was the counselor outreach model and I think that our peer mentor outreach model followed a similar trajectory or pattern.

With the text message based outreach, in that students were receiving not text messages that a counselor or advisor sent from his or her phone, but instead we had a system through which we automated messages to students and these messages were sent on a pre-specified schedule.

And so the messages would go out to students, they would provide information and reminders about a particular topic, and then every message would prompt the student to text back if they had questions or needed additional support.

And so characteristics of all of the interventions, it wasn't just a one shot deal. Instead, there were - there was regular outreach and reminders throughout the course of the summer.

One thing that we found was that in terms of take up of that support there was sort of an initial influx and interest and then support really picked up around - at least in the northeast, around the end of July, which coincided with students actually receiving their tuition bills.

And so around the time that the rubber really hit the road in terms of paying for college, students were particularly interested in getting that additional support from a counselor or advisor.

Alejandra Ceja: So I want thank - I want to thank our presenters today. Unfortunately that's all the time we have for today's webinar. I do want to honor the time commitment of our presenters.

If there are folks on the line that have a question please email us at WHIEEH@Ed.gov and we'll make sure we get it to either Greg, Lindsay, or Ben and both Ben and Lindsay have provided their contact info on their presentation deck. If you need a copy of the presentation deck please shoot us an email, we'll make sure you get a copy.

But at this point I want to thank our presenters, and most of all, thank you who've been able to join us on this call for this important topic. We will be in touch soon with the theme and details for the next monthly webinar that we hope you will also participate in. So I want to thank you all, have a great day.

Lindsay Page: Thank you.

Ben Castleman: All right, thank you.

Coordinator: And that concludes today's conference. Thank you for participating. You may now disconnect.

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