Introduction

In this report, our third to examine college access trends in Indiana, we explore some new themes. This report looks at Indiana college access and success in the context of four sets of issues:

- Rural needs and challenges
- Correctional Education
- Undocumented immigrant students
- Students with disabilities

In our 2004 and 2005 college access status reports, we documented significant issues related to declining high school graduation rates, diminishing affordability, widening male and minority achievement gaps, disparities in college preparation and anticipatory experiences, changing demographics, and the particular struggles of former foster youth in reaching and succeeding in college. This year’s focus derives from an interest in broadening the conversation about college access and success, not that we shift attention from the matters discussed in the earlier reports.

The four themes in this report revolve around a central thesis: In Indiana, there are large concentrations of talent that remain unrealized and underdeveloped. Through increased opportunities for college access and success, many more Hoosiers would graduate from high school and participate in postsecondary education. Failure to realize the potential of these Hoosiers diminishes the economic future and general welfare of the state. The purpose of this report is to identify strategic targets for investment in the human capital of the state.
Part 1: Rural Needs and Challenges in Indiana Postsecondary Education

Of the 50 Indiana counties that have college participation rates lower than the average for the state as a whole, 47 are rural counties. Students in rural high schools have high school graduation rates that exceed the average rate in all areas of the country (Swanson, 2004; National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Despite the advantage of higher secondary school graduation rates, the rates of postsecondary participation in rural areas are below average. The Educational Needs Index finds 30 Indiana counties to have college participation rates warranting the terms “critical” or “most critical” (Davis, 2006).

In addition to graduating from high school in greater proportions, rural students achieve higher test scores (particularly in the earlier grades), and earn higher grades than their urban and suburban counterparts. Still, despite these assets, fewer rural high school graduates pursue postsecondary education in Indiana (USDA, 2003). Rural students constitute 30 percent of the Indiana student population (Rural School and Community Trust, 2005). For a listing of Indiana counties and their respective postsecondary participation rates, see Appendix 1.

Increasingly, economic development favors areas with an educated workforce. The chart to the left shows national job growth in manufacturing by high- and low-education non-metro counties (USDA, 2003). As the knowledge requirements for employment grow, employers seek locations that are favorable to securing educated employees. The largest education disadvantage for rural areas in Indiana is at the college level (USDA, 2003). Rural areas already suffering a shortage of jobs may decline further as opportunity inclines to areas with greater proportions of more-educated workers, and young workers migrate to areas with better opportunities.

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1 The table uses the Indiana Department of Education’s postsecondary intentions survey, which overstates participation rates but is useful for making cross-county comparisons and for identifying trends.
2 Low-education counties are those non-metro counties with below the median high school completion rates. High-education counties are those non-metro counties with above the median high school completion rates (USDA, 2003).
Higher levels of education are correlated with social benefits such as reduced costs for health care (resulting from generally improved physical health of those with higher levels of education). With the high cost of health insurance, companies increasingly seek to locate in areas with lower health care costs. Indiana ranks low in educational attainment and high in the incidence of smoking during pregnancy, childhood diabetes, and childhood obesity (Kids Count Databook, 2005). Indiana also ranks higher than national averages in adult diabetes, adult obesity, adult heart disease, adult cancer, and adult asthma (Trust for America’s Health, Hearne, S., 2005). Clearly, low rates of educational attainment and associated negative health effects endanger not only the health of citizens but Indiana’s economic future, as well.

According to data from the 2000 US Census, 12 percent of rural Indiana residents completed college compared to 21.7 percent of their urban counterparts. Rural areas lag in their production of college graduates, and college graduates from rural areas often find career opportunities to be elsewhere.

Why do fewer high school graduates from rural areas pursue higher education? What follows is a discussion of several possible explanations:

- Poverty and affordability
- Lack of college-educated role models
- Geographic distance
- Social distance
- Lack of social capital
- Residence/aspiration conflict
- Fewer school counselors/more tasks per counselor
- Less access to the Internet
- Fewer students preparing for higher education
- High schools with fewer upper-level courses in science, mathematics, and foreign languages

The effect of poverty and disadvantage is striking in rural communities. On average, advantaged youth in rural areas are likely to complete an estimated 18 or more years of schooling, resulting in education beyond the bachelor’s degree, while disadvantaged youth are likely to complete an estimated 10 years of schooling, resulting in less than a high school diploma (Blackwell, D. and McLaughlin, D., 1999).

Per capita income and income per job are substantially less in rural areas than urban areas (USDA Economic Research Service, 2005). In Indiana, the urban income differential may be as much as 20 percent. As a result, in rural parts of the state, there are fewer dollars with which to pay for the rising costs of higher education. Even for Indiana’s “affordable option,” Ivy Tech Community College, rural residents face greater commuting costs as a result of geographic distance from campuses. In addition to the direct costs of commuting, students lose time that they could be devoted to employment that would help pay for their education costs.
Social comparison theory suggests that the presence of role models influences educational aspirations. In rural communities, students may find themselves with little contact with or knowledge of a college-educated population (other than their teachers at school).

Social distance theory suggests that students who don’t have a sense of belonging in a college community are unlikely to join one. Although not necessarily linked to geographic distance, the combination of geographical and social distance poses a significant challenge to higher education institutions seeking to attract students from rural areas.

Lack of social capital (the expectations, values, knowledge, and networks that accrue to an individual through membership in a family, community, or social class) translates into fewer students pursuing postsecondary education. Lack of social capital may help explain why fewer highly qualified first-generation students enroll in college, and, of those who do enroll, fewer graduate.

The limited range of jobs in many rural communities means that most rural college completers will not return to live in their home communities. For some families, sending a child to college is synonymous with sending that child away forever. This aspiration/residence conflict may inhibit students from enrolling in college and may discourage parents from actively encouraging postsecondary participation. In an Iowa study, about one quarter of rural boys indicated that an influential parent had discouraged them from attending college. (Blackwell, D. and McLaughlin, D., 1999).

Lower student-to-counselor ratios correlate positively with college participation. Rural schools have among the worst student-to-counselor ratios, indicating shortages of counseling services (McDonough, 2005). In Indiana, the ratio of students to counselors is 560:1 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004), up from 544:1 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002). The ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association is 250:1.

Although rural areas have substantially increased access to the Internet in recent years, there remains a significant bandwidth gap that confines rural Internet users to slow or costly Internet services. The bandwidth gap limits the potential influence of distance learning to broaden course offerings (see below) in rural communities.

Many rural high schools have difficulty offering a broad range of college preparatory courses. The economics of small schools may mean that teachers have to teach classes for which they have little preparation or certification. Rural schools tend to have less revenue per pupil than their urban and suburban counterparts. Smaller schools offer fewer opportunities for economies of scale. The Indiana Department of Education reports that rural high school students in areas that are outside of Metropolitan Statistical Areas pursue college preparatory programs, Core 40 and the Academic Honors Diploma, at lower rates than any other geographic subdivision of the state. Recent changes in Indiana’s Core 40/Academic Honors curriculum embed dual credit and advanced placement as part of the normative high school experience. Structural limitations of rural high schools will require extraordinary efforts to
enable Academic Honors Diploma completion at rates comparable to suburban and urban schools.

Geographic isolation likely results in less interaction between rural students and colleges and universities. There may be fewer college visits, less involvement in enrichment programs, and less exposure to college recruiters. Regional college fairs may not engage students from the outer range of the regions. Lack of college contact reinforces social distance and increases the need for counseling and advocacy for college participation.

The benefits of postsecondary education for rural students include higher earnings, lower rates and shorter durations of unemployment, and much lower incidence of poverty than among students without degrees (USDA, 2003). For many rural students, the alternatives to college consist of jobs (ironically in a distant, urban area) with little security, low-wages, few benefits, and little opportunity for advancement; the military (relocation a certainty); and the dangerous world of methamphetamine, the drug scourge of rural America.

There were well over 300,000 rural students in Indiana public schools in 2006. If rural students participated in postsecondary education at the same rate as suburban students, Indiana would add thousands of college graduates to its citizenry. The failure to realize this enormous pool of unrealized talent is to impoverish our state in its mind, body, and spirit.

Strategies for Increasing Rural Postsecondary Participation

Addressing the Cost of College and Transportation

Indiana financial access policy\(^3\) should enable participation by students in two years of community college without the necessity of student debt. Through a partnership with the student loan industry, the state might commit to repay loans for any student who completes an Associate’s Degree and goes to work in Indiana.

Community colleges should develop regional transportation networks that enable rural students to reduce driving distances and associated transportation costs. A partnership with existing rural transportation services, such as those of the Area Agencies on Aging might provide low-cost transportation to some rural students.

Reducing Social Distance

It is essential that young students understand that they can, should, and will go on to postsecondary education. Interactions with college students and college representatives can help inculcate students with these notions. Such interactions should occur at every level of schooling. Students need to see people that are both like themselves and like the persons they want to become. Campus visits and other experiences on campus (summer camps, enrichment programs, and athletic events) can reduce the social distance that leads many students to

\(^3\) Includes tuition pricing, financial aid, articulation, and advanced standing.
conclude that college is for someone else. Likewise, the presence of college student interns, especially in the earlier grades, provides role models and positive images of college students.

**Outreach to Parents**

It is imperative to present the rationale for postsecondary education to rural parents. Outreach to parents should begin with the parents of very young children. Parent outreach that emphasizes encouragement of their children, expectations and high standards for their children’s education, and empowerment of parents in advocating for and assisting their children in school is a powerful way of developing social capital that will transfer to the next generation.

**Advocacy of College Preparation**

Students must understand that *not* preparing for college is *not* an available option. Indiana’s mandated Core 40, effective with the ninth-grade class of 2007-2008, will result in most students enrolling in a college preparatory program. The mandate, however, in no way ensures that students will engage in learning or become confident learners. Student motivation requires a sense of possibility for learning difficult subject matter and a rationale for doing so. School cultures must embrace an ethic that all students can learn at high levels, and each student must develop confidence as a learner.

Many rural schools suffer shortages of counselors. Counselors are key players in establishing a school culture of college-going. Reducing the student-to-counselor ratio by employing additional counselors is a necessary strategy for strengthening advocacy of college preparation. Recent history doesn’t bode well for this strategy. Indiana student-counselor ratios are moving in the wrong direction with 2004 ratios worse than 2002. In Indiana, there are 560 students for each counselor (compared to a national average of 488). The recommended ratio is 250:1 ([National Center for Education Statistics](https://nces.ed.gov), reported by [American School Counselor Association](https://www.schoolcounselor.org), 2005).

A targeted communications campaign to rural middle schools could provide students with encouragement to pursue high-level courses in high school, an introduction to Core 40 and the Academic Honors Diploma, information about earning college credit while in high school, and guidance for parents in supporting their children’s educational aspirations. Importantly, such communications would provide students with the rationale for educational attainment and with information that addresses perceived barriers to postsecondary education. The target audience would be students and parents in grades seven and eight. Indiana’s LearnMore Center would be a logical provider of this information.

**Distance Learning, Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and Early College**

In 2005-2006, according to Cathy Whaley, director of the Indiana Academy for Mathematics, Science, and the Humanities’ distance learning program, 36 rural high schools are offering Advanced Placement courses by distance education to more than 250 students in rural areas.
of the state. In addition to the Ball State offerings, Vincennes University offers Advanced Placement courses by distance education.

Likewise, the Indiana University Independent Study Program offers both high school and dual credit offerings at a distance. Additionally, other campuses of Indiana University list dual credit courses in the Indiana College Network database.

Advanced Placement courses offer the advantages of no cost to the student and wide transferability of credit based on rigorous examination of student learning. Disadvantages of advanced placement have included a shortage of qualified teachers and a low passing rate by Indiana students on the Advanced Placement examinations.

Dual credit courses open additional opportunity for students to earn college credit while in high school. However these courses cost as much as $600 per course or more, depending on the number of credits. Indiana does not make any financial aid available for dual credit courses, and, as a result, the classes are limited to those families who can afford the hefty cost. Ivy Tech Community College has made face-to-face dual credit courses available in some high schools with no tuition charge for students.

In November 2005, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education adopted policy on the subject of dual credit learning that will lead to strengthening of standards, improved transferability of credit, and greater recognition of the value of dual credit course work. On the agenda for future Commission meetings is consideration of policy that would reduce the student cost of dual credit to zero, thus opening opportunities for students of limited means.

Distance learning enables rural high schools to broaden their curricular offerings without incurring the costs of hiring additional teachers. With distance learning, students in the most remote locales of Indiana may learn Japanese, study advanced calculus, or pursue Advanced Placement biology. The infrastructure for course delivery and the courses are available. What needs to be created is a learning culture that makes taking such courses normative rather than exceptional.

A relatively recent innovation is the early college high school. With support of the Gates Foundation, there is a nationwide movement to establish high schools that combine secondary school with the first two years of college. In Indianapolis, the Herron School will open its doors in the fall of 2006 with an entering class of 100 ninth-grade students. In subsequent years, new cohorts of ninth graders will be added.

**Smaller Schools**

Research by the Rural School and Community Trust (2002) showed that smaller schools reduce the harmful effects of poverty on student achievement. The effect of smaller schools was found in four divergent states (Georgia, Montana, Ohio, and Texas). Smaller schools may help students from less affluent communities to narrow the academic achievement gap between them and students from wealthier communities.
Poverty has more power over students in larger schools. The lower the income in the community, the more student achievement is benefited by smaller schools.

In all four states, smaller schools cut poverty’s power by between 20 and 70 percent, and usually by 30-50 percent, depending on the grade level. Smaller schools are particularly beneficial at the middle school level, where students are approaching the age when they will be most at risk of dropping out.

**Career Development**

Perhaps no strategy is more important than a comprehensive career development program that enables young people to make informed and considered career decisions. Systematic career development programs that begin in elementary school and continue through high school ensure that students learn about the criticality of educational attainment to employment security, employment options, income, health, and other benefits. Career development programs enable students to better assess their strengths, interests, and values and to apply these to their future education and work. Career development programs help students to develop step-by-step plans to realize their education and career goals. Indiana’s exodus of talent could be reduced through career development programs that help students find meaningful career opportunities within Indiana. Reiterating an earlier point, additional school counselors are needed to ensure that a comprehensive career development program reaches all students. Mandates to document career planning are insufficient; fifteen years of such mandates have left most students out of the career planning process.⁴

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⁴ Since 1992, Indiana law has required students to complete career and course plans by the end of the ninth grade. Annual surveys of ninth graders have indicated greater breach than compliance with this mandate.
Part 2: Correctional Education as a High-Return Investment

In 1977 in Indiana, there were 4,633 prisoners in state and federal custody. By 2004, the number had skyrocketed to 28,008 prisoners in state and federal custody. Numerous studies (Karpowitz and Kenner, 2003) report the substantial return on investment in correctional education. Recidivism is inversely related to the level of education completed while in prison. In addition to the benefits to individuals, families, and communities, and saving vast sums on corrections, criminal justice, and social services, investing in correctional higher education provides important benefits:

- The inmate’s development of workplace skills through postsecondary education enhances chances of employment upon release.
- Participation in postsecondary programs raises the self esteem of inmates and contributes to lower incidences of misbehavior while incarcerated.
- Increasing an inmate’s level of educational attainment reduces the likelihood of returning to prison, irrespective of employment status (see Note 9).

All of the above contribute to improved possibilities for societal re-integration, which will profoundly influence the next generation’s education and life chances.

The overwhelming majority of prisoners in Indiana prisons will eventually be released to take their place in society. Prior to prison, most were poor, undereducated, and under- or unemployed. Without a significant intervention while in prison, the conditions that led to crime will be unchanged upon their release. Indiana’s Department of Corrections Commissioner, J. David Donahue, has made successful re-entry the benchmark for the success of the Indiana corrections enterprise, a $1.2 billion annual expenditure for state taxpayers (Donahue, 2005).

The state has initiated a website dedicated to prisoner re-entry at http://www.reentry.in.gov. The site provides information about the Plainfield Re-entry Education Facility, which will provide services to 3,006 central Indiana offenders prior to release during the next three years. Thus far, the site provides no information about college access, provides no links to outreach services at Indiana higher education institutions, and provides no information about the availability of financial resources that enable college participation.

For over twenty years, college-in-prison programs slashed rates of reincarceration from 60% to less than 15%. They spread higher-education among the most isolated communities and were the most cost-effective form of public correctional spending. Despite these facts, funding for prison colleges was eliminated in 1995, at the peak of the ‘tough on crime’ frenzy in American electoral politics. Within that year some 350 such programs closed nationwide, ending the presence of the most affordable and transformative programs in American criminal justice. [From the Bard College Prison Initiative.]

\[\text{Note 9: The rate of return to prison within three years of prison release.}\]
According to the Prison Policy Initiative, in 1982, there were at least 350 college programs in U.S. prisons. In 2001, the number of college programs in prisons had dwindled to 12. Nationally, there have been a variety of influences that have resulted in the near elimination of prison-based higher education.

- Harsher public attitudes about treatment of prisoners
- Mandatory and longer sentencing, which strain prison budgets (the Indiana prison population tripling in recent decades)
- Diminished belief in the capacity of institutions and inmates to rehabilitate
- Termination of federal Pell Grants to inmates since 1994
- Greater competition for state funds
- Intensified competition for student financial aid in a time of escalating costs of higher education

Between 1983 and 1994, the re-arrest rate for prisoners three years following release increased for all types of offenders, according to Hughes (2005).

Indiana’s Department of Corrections states that the recidivism rate for Indiana is 37.8 percent. In the largest national study of recidivism, Langan and Levin (2002), found that 51.8 percent of prisoners released in fifteen states were re-incarcerated within three years. A study cited in Karpowitz and Kenner (2003) showed recidivism rates in three states were reduced by 29 percent for inmates who attended a college program in prison. The estimated savings to taxpayers were two dollars for every dollar invested.

Educational programming reduces the likelihood of repeat offenses. In an interview with the Urban Institute, Carolyn Heier, Division of Programs and Community Service of the Indiana Department of Corrections, noted Indiana’s commitment to vocational training that leads to high-wage employment.

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6 In 1994, prisoners accounted for use of .1 percent of Pell Grant funds (Hartfordinfo.org, 2004).
7 Prisoners returned to prison within three years of their release.
8 In this study, the key variable was attendance not completion.
In Indiana, state legislation allows inmates to reduce their sentences by completing vocational programming. The result appears to be an increase in the number of inmates taking advantage of existing vocational opportunities. Currently, the Indiana Department of Corrections offers 21 vocational tracks. The Department emphasizes occupations the Indiana Department of Workforce Development has classified as both low supply and high demand. Offenders receive highly technical training from professional instructors.

Longer sentences have increased the number of older prisoners. Prisoners over the age of 40 constituted 55 percent of the growth in the prison population between 1995 and 2003 (Harrison and Beck, 2004). Older ex-offenders face additional barriers in their quest for employment and reintegration following release from prison. For these prisoners, prison education programs may be crucial to their chances to remain out of prison. According to the Prison Policy Initiative (2006), the cost of incarceration of people 55 and over is three times that of younger inmates, providing even stronger rationale for interventions that reduce recidivism.

Despite evidence of the positive effects of prisoner education programs, prison higher education programs enjoy little support among state legislators, whose constituents often oppose the opportunities provided to inmates. This is especially so when constituents perceive that financial aid programs aren’t available to their own children. A state grant administrator reported receiving calls from angry taxpayers, “Every time there is a newspaper article on the subject of financial aid for prisoner education, I hear, “You mean all my kid has to do to get a grant is to rob somebody or rape somebody?”

It was sentiments like these that led President Clinton’s administration in 1994 to concur with Congress in eliminating Pell Grants for prisoners, prompting most states to follow suit with their state grant programs. To its credit, Indiana is among the minority of states that has continued to make state grants available to its prison population. Indiana also participates in a federal college aid program for youth offenders who are in their last five years of detention.

In Indiana in 2004, Ball State University, Indiana State University, Grace College, and Purdue North Central served 93 percent of the state’s prisoners who received state grants. Prisoners receiving grants, however, constitute less than five percent of the state prison population.

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9 Numerous federal and state government studies, all of which demonstrate significant reductions in recidivism, are cited in Karpowitz and Kenner (2003). The reduction in recidivism exists independent of employment status of former offenders, suggesting that the process of education has a normalizing effect on participants.

10 Left out of this perspective are the huge subsidies of public money that underwrite public higher education for middle and upper-income students. Whether through the states’ investment in public institutions or the federal government’s higher education tax credits for middle and upper-income households, these sums dwarf investments in financial aid for low-income students and families.
While it costs less than $4,000 to provide a year of higher education to a prisoner, the cost of one year of incarceration in Indiana is $50,000.\footnote{Calculated as the total annual cost of corrections divided by the total number of prisoners ($1,200,000,000 ÷ 24,000 prisoners = $50,000).}

**Strategies for Increasing Postsecondary Participation and Success by Prisoners and Reducing Rates of Incarceration and Re-incarceration.**

**Making the Story Compelling**

Little improvement in prisoner rehabilitation-through-education efforts is likely without a better public understanding of the benefits of such investments. A daunting challenge looms in addressing the public’s emotion-charged resistance to expand efforts to educate and train prisoners. The cost savings and benefits in crime reduction and, importantly, the *reduction in victimization* that derives from successful prisoner re-entry to society mandate that we move beyond retributive policies that are counter-productive. The public’s demand for immediate returns on public investment and its preference for harsh punishment and moral condemnation, even for nonviolent transgressions, stand menacingly between prisoners and the schoolhouse door.

**Portal to Educational Opportunity**

Develop the Indiana Department of Corrections re-entry website into a portal to educational opportunity. This can be done by contextualizing and deep linking to web resources such as LearnMore, the State Student Assistance Commission, finaid.org, the Indiana Youth Institute, the Indiana College Network, the Indiana Pathways to College Network, Ivy Tech Community College, Vincennes University, the Commission on Proprietary Education, and more.

**Sentence Reduction for Educational Attainment**

For nonviolent offenders, approximately 50 percent of the Indiana prison population, an incentive of reduced prison time could encourage greater participation in educational programs. Already in place for some vocational training programs in Indiana, course completion and degree attainment could be written into sentencing decrees as benchmarks for early release.

**Distance Learning**

Despite the stories of criminal enterprises managed from behind the walls, technological safeguards can minimize risks of technology-delivered educational programming. Indiana’s catalog of Internet-delivered course offerings provides a wide range of educational opportunities, ranging from developmental courses through graduate programs.
Male-oriented Learning Environments

Although female incarceration rates have increased, males still constitute 93 percent of the inmate population (U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005). As the understanding of male differences in learning leads to better education practices [see Pollack (1999) and Gurion (1999)], the creation of learning environments that more effectively support male learning will lead to fewer school failures, an important precursor of crime.

Reinstatement of Pell Grants

A 1995 pamphlet (cited in Karpowitz and Kenner (2003) published by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Correctional Education buried these facts in an appendix:

- Of the $5.3 billion awarded in Pell grants in 1993, about $34 million were awarded to inmates. This represents less than one-tenth of one percent (< .1%) of the total grant awards.
- The annual Pell grant awarded per inmate was less than $1,300.
- Pell grants are given to education providers, not to inmates, to pay for the inmates’ educational expenses.
- Death row inmates and inmates serving life sentences without parole were not eligible for Pell grants.

There is no intervention that rivals the success of postsecondary education in its efficacy to reduce crime and rates of recidivism. It will take many years to rebuild the prison postsecondary system. Conservatives, liberals, independents, and fence-sitters should unite to seek reinstatement of the Pell Grant and expansion of postsecondary access for qualified prisoners.
Immigrant families come to the United States for many reasons, such as to search for work, to join family, or to flee dangerous situations in their home countries. Many immigrant families come to the United States without proper immigration documentation or permission, and are commonly referred to as “undocumented immigrants” (Curran, 1998). [excerpt from Ruge & Iza (2005)]

Who are undocumented immigrants in Indiana? Among the undocumented are youths who entered the U.S. legally with their parents who overstayed or otherwise lost their legal status. Other undocumented children entered the U.S. with parents who entered illegally.

Annually, about 65,000 undocumented students who have been in the U.S. for five years or more graduate high school (Urban Institute, 2003). The Urban Institute estimates that there are between 75,000 and 100,000 illegal immigrants in Indiana. Using the Pew Hispanic Center estimation (Passel, 2005 and 2006) that one-sixth of illegal immigrants are children 18 years old and under, it can be estimated that Indiana has between 12,500 and 16,667 undocumented children. Depending on the age distribution, there may be between 400 and 70012 undocumented students who graduate from Indiana high schools annually.

What are the prospects for these students to attend college in Indiana? They are disproportionately poor. No matter the level of family need, undocumented students can obtain neither Pell Grants nor state grants. Extraordinary financial obstacles confront Indiana’s undocumented high school graduates.

To date, nine states in the U.S. have passed legislation to provide in-state tuition to undocumented students (National Immigration Law Center, 2005-2), and three others permit these students to receive in-state rates (Protopsaltis, 2005). Several other states are considering the issue of in-state rates for undocumented immigrant students. In Indiana, residency (for tuition purposes) is largely an institutional determination. Some Indiana public institutions have amended (formally or through interpretation) their residency policies to enable undocumented students to obtain in-state tuition. In Access for All, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2005) describes state efforts to provide in-state tuition to undocumented immigrant students. Despite these efforts, a major financial gulf separates many undocumented students from their postsecondary aspirations.

A related set of issues faces Indiana children born in the U.S. of undocumented parents. These children are U.S. citizens, but they live in the shadows, disinclined to participate in programs that would advance their educational opportunity at the expense of exposing their parents

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12 The estimate derives from an assumption of equal distribution across the ages of children under 18 and a 60 percent estimated graduation rate. Using the lower estimate of the number of undocumented immigrants in Indiana (75,000), we took one-sixth of that number to estimate the number of children 18 and younger (12,500). When this number is divided by 18, it provides an estimate of the number of students in each age group (694). Using the estimate of a 60 percent graduation rate (.60 x 694) yields 416 Indiana high school graduates annually.
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who lack legal status in this country. The American Civil Liberties Union estimates as many as 10,000 Indiana low-income children are U.S. citizens whose parents are in the U.S. illegally (Neal, 2006). Although the actual number of such students is nearly impossible to measure, there are U.S. citizens in Indiana understandably unwilling to apply for financial aid and unable to participate in college without it.

What are the benefits of educating the undocumented children and children of undocumented parents? The RAND Corporation in 1995 estimated that a three percent increase in Latino college graduates would yield $600,000,000 in increased contributions to Medicare and Social Security (Protopsaltis, 2005). Another RAND study (1999) compared undocumented Mexican females and found that, compared to non-graduates, those who complete college contribute $5,300 more in taxes and use $3,900 less in welfare and criminal justice services for a savings of more than $9,000 per year (Protopsaltis, 2005).

With the undocumented issue, there are parallel political dynamics to those of the incarcerated issue. State legislators find little public support for “rewarding the illegal behavior of parents.” Many in the general public feel pressure from increasing international competition. The intensity of opposition to financially supporting undocumented immigrant children is evident from the popularity of legislative proposals that would limit public services to this population. In the 2006 Indiana legislative session, lawmakers defeated an anti-immigrant proposal (HB 1383 – text of proposal in Appendix 3) to deny health and education services to undocumented immigrants. However, the cost of keeping undocumented children under-educated and out of the mainstream is far higher than the cost of educating them.

Strategies for Improving Postsecondary Participation and Success of Undocumented Students

Providing Financial Aid to Undocumented Immigrant Students

Pending passage of federal legislation to allow states to provide benefits, e.g., financial aid, to students who lack lawful qualification of their residency status, the only legal avenue, under current federal law\(^\text{13}\), would be for the state to reduce tuition charges for all students (not a very likely scenario in the foreseeable future). The federal Development, Relief, and Education Act for Alien Minors (DREAM Act) would provide an avenue for eligible students to become lawful permanent residents, and they would then become eligible for state and federal financial aid.

Should the DREAM Act pass Congress, the state would be in a position to extend financial aid to (formerly) undocumented immigrant students. A relatively small investment of public funds in educating this population in Indiana would be offset by

\(^{13}\) The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 forbids anyone not lawfully present in the United States from receiving “public benefits” (Ruge and Iza, 2005).
Increased earnings and taxes collected

Reduced expenditures for social welfare, criminal justice, and public health programs

A strengthened workforce that bolsters economic development efforts

Such an aid program could add 300 or more associate degree completers per year in Indiana and do much to enable the life prospects of immigrant children, while strengthening Indiana’s work force, increasing state revenues, and reducing expenditures of public money.

**Inclusion of Undocumented Students in Twenty-first Century Scholars Program**

Indiana should include financially eligible undocumented students in its Twenty-first Century Scholars Program. Enrollment in the program in grade 7 or 8 and fulfillment of all participation requirements would result in full tuition subsidy to a public college or university (or a comparable level of support for attending an independent or proprietary institution). Documentation of need (for determining eligibility) could be accomplished through the sixteen support sites of the program. Denial of participation in the Twenty-first Century Scholars Program to financially needy undocumented immigrant students is a state-mandated confirmation of their second-class status and the state’s intention to limit their opportunities for social and economic development. As a “public benefit,” the Twenty-first Century Scholars Program must await passage of the DREAM Act to remove the prohibition established by Congress.

A note about the politics of expanding postsecondary opportunity for the children of undocumented immigrants:

Prior to the *Plyler v. Doe* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1982, which requires states to provide education through secondary school to all residents, irrespective of immigration status, it was Texas law to deny K-12 education services to the children of illegal aliens (*Wikipedia, 2006*). Whether, at some point, state legislatures or the Supreme Court will expand the protection of this decision to postsecondary education is not the point. The point is that, since *Plyler*, providing education to undocumented immigrant children has improved their lives and the communities in which they live. Should there not be a similar expectation with regard to postsecondary education?

**Passage of the Federal DREAM Act**

The National Immigration Law Center (2005) cites the following in support of passage of the DREAM Act:

- The DREAM Act would provide a mechanism for certain long-term resident immigrant students to apply for legal residency so that they can work and otherwise fully

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14 The Texas comptroller found that investments in education had saved the state over 300 billion dollars, with a rate of return on investment of 5:1 (Ruge and Iza, 2005).
participate in their communities.

- The Act would delete a federal provision that interferes with a state's right to determine whether these students qualify as “residents” for purposes of in-state tuition or other education benefits.

- The DREAM Act would reduce the high drop-out rates of immigrant students, resulting in significant savings to taxpayers.

- When more immigrant students graduate from high school, tax revenues would be greatly increased, and government expenses would be decreased.

- The increased fiscal contribution would repay the required educational investment within a few years and would provide a profit to taxpayers for several decades.

- The DREAM Act would also stimulate spending and investment, by increasing immigrants’ income.

- The average Mexican immigrant woman who graduates from college as a result of the DREAM Act would likely increase her pretax income at age 30 by more than $13,500 per year.

- The cumulative impact of the DREAM Act on the economy could amount to hundreds of billions of dollars.

- In addition to increasing earnings, tax revenues, and social savings, thousands of young immigrants would be able to join the legal workforce to help the economy fill crucial needs.

- DREAM Act beneficiaries could help fill positions in areas with chronic long-term labor needs such as teaching, nursing, and the service sector.

In sum, by providing an avenue to lawful residency status, the DREAM Act would enable states to include eligible students in higher education benefit programs, such as financial aid and clarify current laws relating to provision of in-state tuition to undocumented immigrant students.
Part 4: College Access for Students with Disabilities

Youth with disabilities are more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to enroll in college. Of those who matriculate in postsecondary education, nearly two-thirds enroll in community college. Disabled students are about one-fifth as likely to enroll in a four-year institution as their non-disabled peers. Those who enroll often delay matriculation (on average, three years). Disabled students are less likely to persist and take longer to graduate (American Youth Policy Forum, 2004). Of those who graduate, disabled students are less likely to be employed full-time than other college graduates (DO-IT, 2004).

According to the Indiana Guidance Report (2004), the percentage of Indiana eleventh grade students with learning disabilities who expect to leave high school before graduating is five times that of the general student population. Nearly three times as many Indiana eleventh-grade students with disabilities expect that high school will be the highest level of education completed as students in the general student population. Among Indiana eleventh-grade students with learning disabilities, 37 percent expect to complete four or more years of college, compared with 67 percent of all eleventh graders. Nearly twice the percentage of Indiana students with learning disabilities expect to complete community college as the general student population.

According to the Indiana Guidance Report (2004), eleventh-grade students with physical disabilities are 17 times more likely to expect to leave high school before graduating than the general student population. Students with physical disabilities are more likely to be undecided about the future than either their learning disabled counterparts or the general student population. Nearly half (47 percent) of eleventh-grade students with physical disabilities expect to complete four or more years of college, and 8 percent expect to complete community college.

Go to Appendix 2 to view charts from the Indiana Guidance Report (2004).

For people with disabilities, postsecondary education is more important than for the general population. For the general population, level of education is closely correlated with employment rate and earnings. For people with disabilities, the correlation is even higher. (Conway, 2003).

Many disabilities are undiagnosed in K-12 education. Thirty-one percent of students with specific learning disorders and 44 percent of students with attention deficit disorder received their first diagnosis in postsecondary education. The National Center for Secondary Education and Transition (2002) reported that 85 percent of all dropouts in the U.S. have a disability.

Disabled students who complete high school often experience less academic rigor than other students, especially in mathematics and science. Disabled students are less likely to be

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15 Half of all emotionally disabled high school students drop out (Johnson, 2003).
16 Among students with disabilities in the U.S., 5.7 percent pursue postsecondary education at a four-year institution, compared with 28.3 percent of the general population (Insidehighered.com, 2005).
College Access in Indiana and the United States 2006

academically prepared for college. According to the National Council on Disability (2003), students with disabilities

...were much less likely to be even minimally qualified [for postsecondary education], based on an index score of grades, class rank, and test scores.

Because students with disabilities typically require longer periods of time to complete their degrees, there are added financial obstacles. Most financial aid limits the number of semesters that a student may receive aid.

Students with disabilities who complete postsecondary education face added barriers to employment. A recent report (DO-IT, 2004) identifies the following:

- lack of adequate support systems
- lack of access to successful role models
- lack of access to technology that can increase productivity and independence, and
- low expectations on the part of people with whom they interact

Strategies for Increasing Postsecondary Participation and Success of Students with Disabilities

Targeted Resources that Promote College Access and Success

Students with disabilities must receive academic counseling, guidance information, and career services that are specific to overcoming or coping with a student’s particular set of circumstances. Resources from organizations such as the HEATH Resource Center assist students with disabilities in identifying financial aid and scholarships, internship opportunities, and summer precollege programs. The center provides many resources for professionals who work with students with disabilities, including school counselors.

Connecting students and parents with the many resources that are available is a daunting challenge for school counselors and others who work with students with disabilities. Statewide services, such as the LearnMore Center, should aggregate resources that support postsecondary planning, preparation, and participation of students with disabilities.

Student Participation in Transition Planning

Cameto (2004) reports that only 12 percent of high school students with disabilities take a leadership role in the development of their individualized education plans. In a survey of 11,000 students with disabilities, nearly half indicated an objective of postsecondary education. Given the inadequacy of preparation for college previously noted in this paper, the active engagement of students in ensuring the adequacy of their college preparation seems to
be of paramount importance. The transition team is a logical point of responsibility for connecting students and parents with the targeted resources mentioned in the previous section.

The federal IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004) mandates that transition planning begin at age 16; however, college planning must begin years earlier. The act permits earlier transition planning, but the kind of planning needed requires participation of middle school personnel who, typically, are not involved in this kind of effort. The benefit of early team planning is that there is more likely to be buy-in at the high school level if all of the key players participate from the beginning. For college-bound students with disabilities, transition planning must begin no later than the eighth grade.

Career Planning Interventions in High School

Given the many challenges facing students with disabilities in securing employment, career planning takes on an even greater significance for these students. Career exploration that involves identification of possible careers and work experience, internships, or volunteering can help students to identify work environments in which they can be successful and help them to refine or revise their thinking. Career planning that considers the real barriers that people with disabilities confront leads to preemptive strategies for successful career entry. Creation of a career plan should include the following elements:

- careful assessment of career interests, values, and abilities
- rigorous academic preparation for postsecondary education
- pre-college experiences on a college campus
- options for earning college credit while in high school
- identification of mentors and role models
- early work experience related to career interests
- career goal setting
- identification of potential employers
- creation of a support network
- notation of key steps, dates, and procedures
Longer Terms of Financial Aid Eligibility

Students with disabilities require more time to complete their degrees than other students. The limit of eight semesters of financial aid does not correspond with degree attainment patterns of students with disabilities. Burgstahler (2001) found that after five years of enrollment, 16 percent of students with disabilities had completed bachelor’s degrees, compared with 27 percent of the general student population. Given these data, the limitation of eight semesters of financial aid jeopardizes these students’ chances of completing a degree.

Internships

Students with disabilities face many barriers to employment. Internships during their college years provide much-needed work experience and serve to dispel many of the myths that affect employment chances of the disabled population. Internships build networks of employment contacts, provide references from within a student’s field of interest, provide experience with accommodations that enable successful job performance, and provide all important experience on the student’s resume.
Sources


## Appendix 1

### Indiana Graduates to Higher Education by County 2003

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Source: Indiana Department of Education
Appendix 2

Educational Expectations of Indiana Eleventh-Grade Students (2003-2004)

Educational Expectations of Indiana Eleventh-Grade Students 2003-2004

Appendix 3

HB 1383 Restricting Public Assistance for Illegal Aliens
Author/Co-Authors: Representative Turner, Representative J. Smith, Representative Woodruff, Representative Bright

Requires a law enforcement agency to: (1) cooperate with the United States Department of Homeland Security concerning illegal aliens; (2) attempt to verify the legal status of an individual suspected of being an illegal alien; and (3) notify the individual, the attorney general, and the United States Department of Homeland Security that the individual is suspected of being an illegal alien. Provides that an individual may not receive certain categories of public assistance, benefits for publicly funded health care, or certain health care services from publicly funded hospitals or health facilities unless the individual is legally present in the United States. Requires a state educational institution to verify the legal status of each student. Prohibits: (1) a state educational institution from admitting or permitting attendance of an individual who is an illegal alien; and (2) an agency from issuing or renewing a license, permit, or any other official authorization to an illegal alien. Requires each employer in the state to verify to the department of workforce development by October 1, 2006, that each employee of the employer is a legal resident of the United States and establishes an ongoing duty to report the same concerning each new hire. Establishes a civil penalty equal to the total payroll for the employer for the calendar month previous to the violation for the failure to report. Makes immigration forgery a Class C felony.

1/12/06 Authored by Representative Turner
1/12/06 Co-authored by Representative Woodruff, Representative Bright, and Representative J. Smith
1/12/06 First reading: referred to the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security
1/24/06 Committee report: amend do pass, adopted
1/31/06 Amendment 1 (Aguilera), prevailed; Roll Call 127: Yeas 55, Nays 43
1/31/06 Amendment 2 (Turner), prevailed; Voice Vote
1/31/06 Second reading: amended, ordered engrossed
2/02/06 Third reading: defeated; Roll Call 204: Yeas 92, Nays 7