

# Michigan's Transition to Postsecondary Education and the Workplace



## I. A Review of the Research

**Workforce Development Agency State of Michigan  
Education and Career Readiness  
Office of Adult Education**

## Executive Summary

Postsecondary education and training has never been more important than in today's 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. Although the immediate goal of many students who enter Michigan's adult education programs is to obtain a GED® credential, students must be prepared to successfully transition to postsecondary education and training, as well as the workplace of today and tomorrow.



Transition is a process. Effective transitioning requires a plan that identifies both the destination and the steps needed to obtain the training, skills, and experiences necessary to reach the identified goal.

Many GED® graduates have not had the experiences to navigate the postsecondary education environment or to successfully use the academic vocabulary of the system. How to read college texts, research materials to write a supporting paper, reason through college algebra, and how to complete admissions paperwork, financial aid, and select courses that lead to a credential are just a few of the skills that a GED® graduate faces. This is in addition to often working full-time and raising a family. Juggling child care and work schedules in order to attend classes and find adequate time for studying and completing assignments are often barriers to the individual's persistence in attaining a degree or credential.

Most states have a transition initiative in place. Because a GED® credential is no longer an ending point, but rather a bridge to the future, a strong transitional program for GED® graduates is an absolute necessity to assist them in attaining their career goals through successfully enrolling, persisting, and completing the coursework necessary for the credential or diploma that makes a career goal a reality.

There are many types of transition programs. This review of the research will provide you with research-based information, as well as best practices from current GED® transition programs.

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## Review of the Research

A review of the research is an important element in the development of any type of project. The following provides materials to review prior to planning, developing, and implementing Michigan's Transition to Postsecondary Education and the Workplace program.

Title	Overview	Website
<p><i>A cross-case analysis of career pathway programs that link low-skilled adults to family-sustaining wage careers</i> (2007). U. S. Department of Education. Office of Vocational and Adult Education.</p>	<p>A research study from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education on the following question: What programs, policies, curricular practices, institutional and support strategies are being implemented to support the transition of low-skilled adults through career pathways that align with postsecondary career and technical education?</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/transition.html">http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/transition.html</a></p>
<p>Achieving the Common Core. Achieve, Inc.</p>	<p>Achieve is a non-profit organization that has been instrumental in the development of the Common Core State Standards, as well as numerous materials to assist in their implementation. The website provides numerous materials and presentations.</p>	<p><a href="http://achieve.org/achievingcommoncore">http://achieve.org/achievingcommoncore</a></p>
<p>Adelman, C. (1998). The kiss of death? An alternative view of college remediation. <i>National Crosstalk: A Publication of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education</i>, 6(3).</p>	<p>An article from <i>National Crosstalk</i> that provides national information on degree attainment by students who take remedial courses in college versus those who do not take remedial courses. The author focuses on strategies necessary to reverse the problem.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.highereducation.org/crosstalk/ct0798/voices0798-adelman.shtml">http://www.highereducation.org/crosstalk/ct0798/voices0798-adelman.shtml</a></p>
<p><i>Adult basic education to community college transitions symposium proceedings report</i> (2007). U. S. Department of Education. Office of Vocational and Adult Education.</p>	<p>This publication recaps an OVAE-sponsored symposium held in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 14, 2006, that recognized the importance of adult learners and the needs they present as they pursue college and careers. Nationally recognized adult education experts shared their ideas about how to help adult learners transition successfully to postsecondary education and employment.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/ctransreport.pdf">http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/ctransreport.pdf</a></p>
<p>American Diploma Project. (2004). <i>Ready or not: Creating a high school diploma that counts</i>. Washington, DC: Achieve Inc.</p>	<p>A comprehensive study on what postsecondary education institutions and the workplace expect from students and employees.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.achieve.org/files/ADPreport_7.pdf">www.achieve.org/files/ADPreport_7.pdf</a></p>

Alamprese, Judy (2005). <i>Helping adult learners make the transition to postsecondary education</i> . Abt Associates, Inc.	This background paper is part of a series funded by the Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. The paper discusses the challenges ABE programs must address to develop and implement transition services, provides examples of emerging efforts, and discusses the implications of this transformation for policy and practice.	<a href="http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/transpost.pdf">http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/transpost.pdf</a>
Common Core State Standards Initiative	The National Governors' Association and the State Superintendent's Association have worked together for the development of The Common Core State Standards. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that people need for success in college and careers. The standards will be used by the GED Testing Service® as they develop the forthcoming test.	<a href="http://corestandards.org/">http://corestandards.org/</a>
Gittleman, Julia (2005). <i>The New England ABE-to-College Transition Project Evaluation Report</i> . Commissioned by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation.	The New England ABE-to-College Transition Project is a comprehensive college transition model, funded by Nellie Mae Education Foundation. This study looks at the experiences of its program participants and examines the outcomes of the project. The evaluation includes quantitative and qualitative analyses of data gathered from participating students and programs.	<a href="http://www.collegetransition.org/research/evaluation.pdf">http://www.collegetransition.org/research/evaluation.pdf</a>
I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training (2005). Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Offices for Adult Basic Education and Workforce Education.	A study by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Offices for Adult Basic Education and Workforce Education that researched ten demonstration projects that paired ESL and professional-technical instructors in the classroom who concurrently provided students with literacy education and workforce skills.	<a href="http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/docs/data/research_reports/resh_05-2_i-best.pdf">http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/docs/data/research_reports/resh_05-2_i-best.pdf</a>
Greene, Jay P., Ph. D. (2000). <i>The cost of remedial education: How much Michigan pays when students fail to learn basic skills</i> . A Mackinac Report. Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Midland: MI.	This study calculates the financial costs incurred by Michigan business and institutions of higher learning when students do not possess the basic skills for success.	<a href="http://www.mackinac.org/3025">http://www.mackinac.org/3025</a>
Jacobson, Louis, Ph.D. and Mokher, Christine, Ph.D. (2009). <i>Pathways to boosting the earnings of low-income educational attainment</i> .	Prepared for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation by The Hudson Institute and CAN, this research report studies the effect of postsecondary education on the earnings of American workers, as well as the effect of preparation on postsecondary outcomes.	<a href="http://www.hudson.org/files/publications/Pathways%20to%20Boosting.pdf">http://www.hudson.org/files/publications/Pathways%20to%20Boosting.pdf</a>

<p>McLaughlin, J. W., Skaggs, G., and Becker Patterson, M. (2009). <i>Preparation for and performance on the GED® 6est</i>. GED Testing Service®, Research Studies, 2009-2. GED Testing Service®, A Program of the American Council on Education™.</p>	<p>This research study compares the scores of those GED candidates who took the Official Practice Test with those who did not, as well as the including the factor of either attending or not attending an adult education program.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/PrepPerformanceOnGED2009-2.pdf">http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/PrepPerformanceOnGED2009-2.pdf</a></p>
<p>Patterson, M. (2010). <i>GED® tests passers in postsecondary institutions of up to two years: Following up on enrollment and graduation</i>. GED Testing Service®, Research Studies, 2009-5. GED Testing Service®, A Program of the American Council on Education™.</p>	<p>A follow-up report on <i>Crossing the Bridge</i>, a first-year report on the population of GED test-takers from a 2003 cohort of approximately one-half million candidates. This report follows up on the subpopulation of enrollees with GED credentials in institutions of up to two years. Especially notable are the characteristics of those individuals who graduate from a postsecondary institution.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/GED_Passers_in_Postsecondary_Institutions_of_up_to_Two_Years_(2010-3).pdf">http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/GED_Passers_in_Postsecondary_Institutions_of_up_to_Two_Years_(2010-3).pdf</a></p>
<p>Patterson, M., Zhang, J., Song, W., &amp; Guison-Dowdy, A. (2010). <i>Crossing the bridge: GED credentials and postsecondary educational outcomes year one report</i>. GED Testing Service®, A Program of the American Council on Education™.</p>	<p>This is the year 1 report of a three-year study in support of the effort to transition adults without a high school diploma to the GED® credential and career and college readiness via accelerated learning. The initiative is a multi-year program that consists of three key components: education and preparation; enhanced career- and college-ready assessment aligned with the Common Core State Standards and enhanced credentialing process; and connections and transition services to postsecondary education and the workplace.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/CrossingTheBridgeReport2010.pdf">http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/CrossingTheBridgeReport2010.pdf</a></p>
<p><i>Postsecondary education transition: A summary of the findings from two literature review</i>. (2010). U. S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education.</p>	<p>A comprehensive report that focuses on the various types of transition interventions being implemented, the barriers to success, the limited rigorous research on transition interventions, and what research is needed to determine which, if any, are effective.</p>	<p><a href="http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/transition-literature-reviews.pdf">http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/cclo/transition-literature-reviews.pdf</a></p>
<p><i>Preparing Michigan's Students for Work and College Success</i> (2006). Michigan Department of Education.</p>	<p><i>A report from Michigan's Department of Education that provides statistical data and research on students transitioning to postsecondary and the need for remediation/developmental education.</i></p>	<p><a href="http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hs_research_doc_149897_7.pdf">http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hs_research_doc_149897_7.pdf</a></p>
<p><i>Reach higher, America: Overcoming crisis in the U. S. workforce</i>. (2008). National Commission on Adult Literacy. Commission for Advancement of Adult Literacy. New York:NY</p>	<p><i>The final report of the National Commission on Adult Literacy provides a call to action for resetting the goals of adult education and the workforce system with an action roadmap provided that identifies steps to take to improve the educational system and the economic system of the United States.</i></p>	<p><a href="http://www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/ReachHigherAmerica/ReachHigher.pdf">http://www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/ReachHigherAmerica/ReachHigher.pdf</a></p>

<p><i>Ready for college and ready for work: Same or different?</i> (2006). ACT, Inc.</p>	<p>A study that supports the need for all students to be educated to a comparable level of readiness in reading and mathematics, regardless of whether they are entering college or the workforce.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.act.org/path/policy/pdf/ReadinessBrief.pdf">http://www.act.org/path/policy/pdf/ReadinessBrief.pdf</a></p>
<p>Reder, S. (1999). Adult literacy and postsecondary education students: Overlapping trajectories. <i>Review of Adult Literacy and Learning, Vol. 1.</i></p>	<p>An article that describes the overlap between adult education and remedial postsecondary education students. A review of the research is provided, as well as implications for theory and additional research needed in the field.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.ncsall.net/?id=523">www.ncsall.net/?id=523</a>.</p>
<p>Reder, S. (2007). <i>Adult education and postsecondary success</i>. New York, NY: Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy.</p>	<p>A policy brief prepared for the National Commission on Adult Literacy that compares GED® holders with their counterparts who received a high school diploma and those individuals who have no high school credential. The brief supports the need for expanding and restructuring the adult education system to increase the number of individuals served and to raise the skill levels of students above the minimum passing score on the GED® test if they are to succeed in postsecondary education.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/content/rederpolicybriefrev10807.pdf">http://www.nationalcommissiononadultliteracy.org/content/rederpolicybriefrev10807.pdf</a></p>
<p><i>Return to learning: Adults' success in college is key to America's future</i> (2007). Lumina Foundation for Education.</p>	<p>A report released by the Lumina Foundation for Education, calls for colleges to, among other things, provide more convenient and affordable access for adult learners and to work to get older students out of non-credit programs and into courses that lead to degrees and certificates.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/ReturntolearningApril2007.pdf">http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/ReturntolearningApril2007.pdf</a></p>
<p><i>Rising to the challenge: Are high school graduates prepared for college and work? A study of recent high school graduates, college instructors, and employers.</i> (2005). A study conducted for Achieve, Inc. by Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Public Opinion Strategies. Washington, DC.</p>	<p>A study of recent high school graduates, college instructors, and employers. The report includes skills that are needed for successful transition to postsecondary education and the workplace.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.achieve.org/files/pollreport_0.pdf">http://www.achieve.org/files/pollreport_0.pdf</a></p>
<p>Schneider, Mark. (2010). <i>Finishing the first lap: The cost of first-year student attrition in America's four-year colleges and universities</i>. American Institutes for Research.</p>	<p>An analysis by the American Institutes for Research shows that more than \$9 billion was spent by state and federal governments to support students at four-year colleges and universities who left school before their sophomore year during a five-year period. The cost of educating students who drop out after one year account for between 2% and 8% of states' total higher education appropriations.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.air.org/files/AIR_Schneider_Finishing_the_First_Lap_Oct101.pdf">http://www.air.org/files/AIR_Schneider_Finishing_the_First_Lap_Oct101.pdf</a></p>

<p>2010 Closing the Expectations Gap: Fifth Annual 50-State Progress Report. Achieve. American Diploma Project.</p>	<p>This report from Achieve, Inc. reports state progress on implementing the American Diploma policy agenda – the alignment of high school policies with the demands of college and careers.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.achieve.org/files/AchieveClosingtheExpectationsGap2010.pdf">http://www.achieve.org/files/AchieveClosingtheExpectationsGap2010.pdf</a></p>
<p>Zafft, Cynthia, Kallenbach, Silja, and Spohn, Jessica (2006). <i>Transitioning adults to college: Adult basic education program models</i>. NCSALL Occasional Paper. National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. Cambridge, MA.</p>	<p>A survey study by The New England Literacy Resource Center. The study provides information on adult education centers with transitions components in order to capture and categorize emerging models of ABE-to-college transition programs.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.collegetransition.org/planning/nctntransitionpaper.pdf">http://www.collegetransition.org/planning/nctntransitionpaper.pdf</a></p>
<p>Zhang, Jizhi (2010). <i>From GED® credential to college: Patterns of participation in postsecondary education programs</i>. GED Testing Service®, Research Studies, 2010-1. GED Testing Service®, A Program of the American Council on Education™.</p>	<p>A study on the participation patterns of GED® credential recipients in postsecondary education, in comparison with high school graduates. The study also discusses the functions of social demographic background characteristics on enrollment in postsecondary programs.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/FINALAERA2010docMayA.pdf">http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/FINALAERA2010docMayA.pdf</a></p>
<p>Zhang, Jizhi &amp; Patterson, Margaret (2010). <i>Repeated® tests examinees: Who persists and who passes?</i> GED Testing Service®, Research Studies, 2010-2. GED Testing Service®, A Program of the American Council on Education™.</p>	<p>A study on the characteristics and testing histories of repeated GED® test examinees and different testing center policies with examinees' test performance.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/Repeat_GED_Tests_Examinees_Practitioners_2010.pdf">http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/pubs/Repeat_GED_Tests_Examinees_Practitioners_2010.pdf</a></p>
<p><i>Workforce data report #2009 – 03R</i>. (2009). Workforce Education. Florida Department of Education.</p>	<p>A report from Florida that presents data on the transition into postsecondary education of GED® candidates who receive the State of Florida High School Diploma.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/pdf/ged.pdf">http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/pdf/ged.pdf</a></p>

## Transition Program Websites

The following websites provide information on transition programs and materials.

Program	Overview	Website
Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults: A Program Development Guide (2005)	This manual provides concrete guidance on how to develop and implement "bridge programs" that help adult students improve their basic skills and succeed in college.	<a href="http://www.womenemployed.org/docs/BridgeGuideFinal.pdf">http://www.womenemployed.org/docs/BridgeGuideFinal.pdf</a>
Career Bridge GED® Program. Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center at James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia	Career Bridge GED® program is career-focused GED® instruction that integrates instruction necessary to successfully pass the GED® test with foundational skills in one of two career tracks: hospitality and health care. While students gain the academic skills needed to pass the GED® test, they also have an opportunity to participate in career-related projects and field trips, learn industry-related vocabulary, review career briefs and job prospects, and apply reading and math skills to career-related materials and lessons.	<a href="http://www.valrc.org/publications/hospitality/">http://www.valrc.org/publications/hospitality/</a>
Florida GED® PLUS College Preparation Program and GED® Preparation: Beyond the Basics (2005-2007)	These programs are designed to help adult students to earn their GED® credential with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in college and careers. Includes a program implementation guide and curriculum resources for the PLUS program and a resource guide and twenty-four lessons for GED® Preparation: Beyond the Basics.	<a href="http://www.floridatechnet.org/GEDPlus/">http://www.floridatechnet.org/GEDPlus/</a> and <a href="http://floridatechnet.org/GEDBeyond/index.html">http://floridatechnet.org/GEDBeyond/index.html</a>
Hudson Valley-Catskill Partnership NYS Plus/Post-secondary Transition Program	This New York project is piloting transitional services in different regions of the state. The site includes research information, as well as beginning projects, curriculum, etc.	<a href="http://www.hvcp.org/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=category&amp;layout=blog&amp;id=66&amp;Itemid=67">http://www.hvcp.org/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=category&amp;layout=blog&amp;id=66&amp;Itemid=67</a>
Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-Best) Program. Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.	An integrated transition program in the state of Washington that was designed to meet the changing needs of employers and students with the goal of assisting students to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workplace.	<a href="http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_integratedbasiceducationandskillstraining.aspx">http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_integratedbasiceducationandskillstraining.aspx</a>
Maine College Transitions Program	The Maine College Transitions Program provides pathways to post-secondary education for adults. The site provides information on the program, as well as sample syllabi for writing and math skills for college.	<a href="http://www.maine.gov/education/aded/dev/transitions.htm">http://www.maine.gov/education/aded/dev/transitions.htm</a>
Opening Doors. MDRC	MDRC, a non-profit organization, is working	<a href="http://www.mdrc.org/proje">http://www.mdrc.org/proje</a>

	with numerous states to test various combinations of innovations in curriculum and instruction, supplementary financial aid, and student support services to address high rates of attrition among low-income community college students and the shortage of reliable evidence about which strategies are effective in improving student retention.	ct_31_2.html
The National College Transition Network	This organization features resources for program planners, teachers, counselors, researchers, and policy-makers interested in college transitions for ABE students. Provides information on developing transition services, recruiting and assessing potential students, and building relationship with colleges.	<a href="http://www.collegetransition.org/">http://www.collegetransition.org/</a>
Transition to Postsecondary Education. Jefferson County Public Schools.	Site provides materials developed by Jefferson County Public Schools Adult and Continuing Education Department for a GED®/College Transition Program, including handbooks, PowerPoints, test prep materials, etc.	<a href="http://ged4u.com/ged4u/Programs/EES/EES_Trans.htm">http://ged4u.com/ged4u/Programs/EES/EES_Trans.htm</a>

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