



A DIVISION OF SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Postsecondary Pathways

Financial independence is an urgent need for America's most under-served populations. But the most reliable path to get there — a four-year college degree — presents significant obstacles. The Postsecondary Pathways Initiative developed solutions to college and career challenges, with a particular focus on ensuring students can obtain the necessary career requirements for today's jobs: relevant work experience, a postsecondary degree and/or credential, and a professional network.

Defining the Problem

As we dive into the systems-level problems that impact students in life after high school, our first development stage focuses on problem definition. To date, The Postsecondary Pathways Initiative has identified the following challenges that affect students in California's San Francisco Bay Area:

Financial Concerns

The price of college is prohibitive for many students from low-to-middle income families and often directly leads to decisions to not enroll or drop out of college.

Access to College

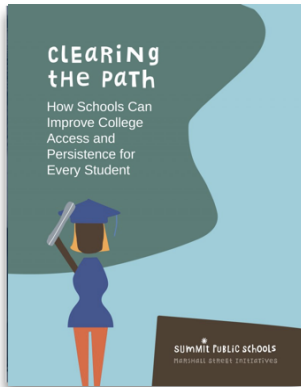
There is a supply-side access problem with our local Bay Area colleges. More high school students than ever before are graduating A-G ready and compete for limited seats at our local public state universities. Small colleges — typically an important access backstop for students who didn't get admitted to the local state universities — are threatened by financial insolvency.

Limited Pathways to Careers

While there are plenty of minimum wage openings in the Bay Area — and a shortage of workers to fill them — jobs that are careers, ones that pay family-supporting wages and offer opportunities for advancement and upward mobility, require not just a degree but also multiple years of relevant work experience and a professional network. With few exceptions, there are limited reliable pathways to relevant work experience in order to obtain these types of careers.

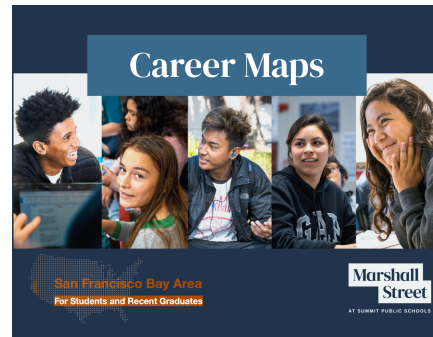


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Clearing the Path

Our white paper, released Summer 2019, outlines key needs students have in making their decisions about life after high school — and offers recommendations to school operators on how to better support those student needs.



Career Maps

K-12 students and recent grads can use Bay Area [Career Maps](#) to explore careers that align with their strengths, skills, and values. Developed in 2020, these maps outline the top 10 most in-demand careers in the San Francisco Bay Area and provide practical guidance for how to enter each field.

Our History

The Postsecondary Pathways Initiative was born out of a 2017-2019 collaboration with Summit Public School high school students focusing on how we might better help them navigate the high-stakes decision of what to do after graduation.

We entered the collaboration with the hypothesis that if we were able to help students in high school explore and develop an early sense of purpose, then that sense of purpose could be the foundation upon which students make their post-high school decisions.

While the collaboration quickly showed us that students do need a sense of purpose, there are many other factors at play in their decision-making process. Family values, identity, personal experience, and a very practical cost/benefit analysis rooted in financial realities all play equal roles in students' decisions about what to do after high school. The collaboration also uncovered a number of barriers to college and career, such as the cost of college, lack of career pathways, and lack of postsecondary options for students with lower high school GPAs.

Based on these findings, the Postsecondary Pathways Initiative was founded to build solutions to common roadblocks to college and career.