



# TRANSITION POINTS

The Education Strategy Group Newsletter

## Preventing a Lost COVID Cohort

In December, [data](#) from the National Student Clearinghouse revealed an alarming 22 percent drop last fall in the number of students who enrolled in higher education immediately after high school. Without swift and dramatic action from schools, communities, and all levels of government, an entire generation of students is at risk of becoming a “lost COVID cohort” with consequences that could reverberate for decades to come.



Here are a few ways you can learn more about this emergency and how to take action to stop it.

- Join ESG, The Education Trust-DC, and The Education Trust-West for a **Twitter chat on Wednesday, February 10 at 4 p.m. ET** about strategies to address the threat of a “lost COVID cohort” caused by the pandemic. Join us using the hashtag **#LostCOVIDcohort** to discuss solutions and share ideas to avert a generational crisis. We hope to see you there.
- With the generous support of the Joyce Foundation, ESG has developed a set of [key strategies and immediate actions](#) that states can take to bolster students’ transitions to higher education in this challenging environment. In addition, we will be providing direct support to Indiana and Minnesota in the coming months to implement some of these strategies.
- It will take leadership at all levels to prevent a lost COVID cohort. ESG Senior Director Ryan Reyna wrote a [post on our blog](#) explaining some of the key **opportunities for the new Biden administration** to take action, and ESG President & CEO Matt Gandal published a [piece](#) describing **actions philanthropy can take** in the most recent issue of the National School Foundation Association’s Leaders Edge newsletter.
- Some states, communities, and organizations are already taking important action to beef up support for students’ postsecondary transitions. We will be gathering [promising examples](#) of work from across the country and publishing them on the Level Up Coalition [website](#).

## Strategies to Drive Postsecondary Success in Minnesota

For the past year, ESG has supported Minnesota's P-20 Education Partnership as it set out to identify a set of high-impact strategies for meeting the state's postsecondary attainment goal. With the generous support of the Joyce Foundation, this effort engaged leaders from across K-12, higher education, and the workforce to develop a set of targeted recommendations for improving student



transitions between K-12 and postsecondary. Guided by a deep commitment to equity, the P-20 Education Partnership focused their vision on expanding opportunity for students from low-income families and Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous students.

These collective efforts have culminated in an ambitious set of [recommendations](#) to drive the state's work moving forward, which were submitted to the legislature earlier this year. To

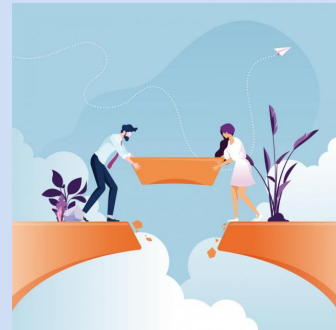
name a few, these recommendations include:

1. Leveraging the state's recent legislation on developing a cross-agency goal for increasing FAFSA completion;
2. Prioritizing a set of leading indicators of student success across the transition from K-12 to postsecondary and the workforce, and developing a tool to track the state's progress and develop policies and strategies to address gaps;
3. Adopting a single statewide definition of a high-quality credential and targeting supports to students and their families to pursue them; and
4. Expanding access to and success in dual credit opportunities for traditionally underrepresented students.

ESG looks forward to continuing to support Minnesota as it works to put these recommendations into action. To learn more and to access a recording of a recent webinar hosted by the Joyce Foundation about this work, click [here](#).

## 'Stackable Credentials' Aren't Enough

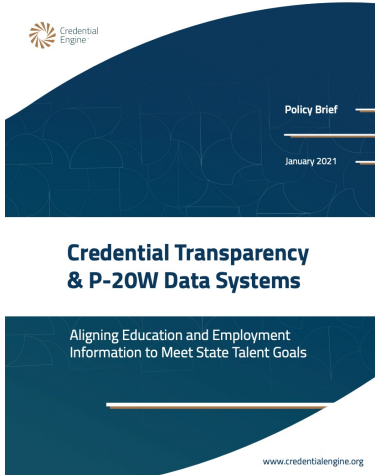
Last fall, ESG released [\*A More Unified Community College: Strategies and Resources to Align Non-Credit and Credit Programs\*](#), a comprehensive compilation of research, strategies, and examples of success in the field to support community colleges in pursuit of more equitable student experiences and outcomes. Don't miss ESG President & CEO Matt Gandal's recent [commentary piece](#) in Inside Higher Ed, which lays out the equity imperative for institutions to prioritize this important work. Matt argues that if we want to drive a more equitable economic recovery, community colleges must bridge the divide between the credit and non-credit sides of their house.



## Using Credential Transparency to Align Education and Employment Information to Meet State Goals

The pandemic and emerging recession have made policymakers realize the importance of aligning credential attainment with the real-world demands of the marketplace. That's why a growing number of states are linking education and workforce efforts by leveraging data systems that span early childhood education, K-12, postsecondary education, and the workforce. Leaders believe these comprehensive data systems will improve how education and training programs prepare residents for the jobs of the future.

However, these systems cannot realize their promise without credential transparency. Understanding credentials and all they entail helps states make inefficient labor markets more efficient.



A new [policy brief](#) from Credential Engine, co-signed by ESG and 9 other partnering organizations, explores how we can align education and employment information to meet state talent goals. Read the full Policy Brief [here](#).

### Credential Transparency & P-20W Data Systems

Aligning Education and Employment Information to Meet State Talent Goals

www.credentialengine.org

## New from ExcellEd: *College Acceleration in Action*

ExcellEd recently released *College Acceleration in Action: Five School Perspectives*, a follow-up to its first *College Acceleration playbook*, which identified “non-negotiables” that states, schools, and institutions can use to strengthen their college acceleration programs to benefit all students. This latest resource examines how schools are putting these non-negotiables, including Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, Early College High Schools, and more, into action. Read the playbook [here](#).



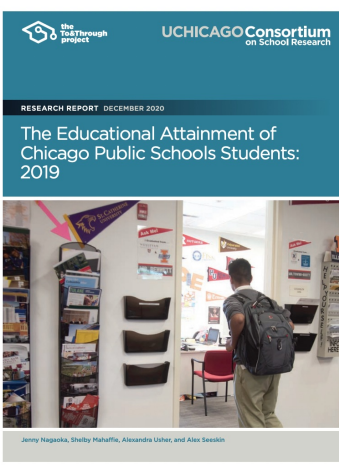
## Georgia Allots \$5M in Coronavirus Aid to Help Students Finish College

In his [State of the State address](#) earlier in January, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp announced that he plans to use \$5 million in federal coronavirus aid to provide small grants to college students with financial need to help them finish their postsecondary education. The grants, which will be administered through a pilot program with the University System of Georgia, will help keep up to 10,000 juniors and seniors with unmet financial obligations enrolled in college.

[Read more.](#)

## New University of Chicago *To & Through* Report Identifies Significant College Completion Challenges

The latest [annual report](#) on student outcomes from the University of Chicago’s *To & Through* Project finds that although Chicago has seen growth in high school graduation and college enrollment rates in recent years, completion of higher education remains a significant challenge. Though 42 percent of Chicago high school graduates enroll in college, just half of those students ultimately graduate. The report further finds that disparities by race and gender in bachelor’s degree completion rates for immediate four-year enrollees have widened over time, and that the likelihood of completing any degree is almost zero for students who do not immediately enroll in college. Having



achieved success in increasing high school graduation rates, it is now time to focus on supporting CPS graduates through successful transitions to higher education after graduation so that they are set up to persist and complete higher education.

Read the full report [here](#).

## We're Hiring! Join the ESG Team.

ESG is growing in 2021. We are looking for talented professionals to join our team and support our work to improve students' postsecondary preparation, success, and economic mobility. [Click here](#) to learn about open opportunities and apply.



*Education Strategy Group is a mission-driven consulting firm that works with America's education, business, and civic leaders to expand economic opportunity and mobility by increasing educational attainment. We are driven by the conviction that a robust education system aligned with workforce demand leads to a stronger, more equitable society.*

[Contact us](#) to learn more and work together