

**NEW PAPERS FOR RELEASE IN APRIL 2017**

**“Leveling The Playing Field:  
Policy Options to Improve Post-Secondary Education and Career Outcomes “**

In the modern labor market, providing workers with the right set of skills is an urgent necessity. Both K–12 and postsecondary education have important roles to play, and both can be improved with the help of ongoing research on what does and does not work in education policy. K–12 schools face teacher shortages in specific subject and geographic areas; moreover, schools could be doing more to increase high school student engagement and preparation for college. In postsecondary institutions, federal aid must provide incentives to raise the quality of the college experience, protect the taxpayer investment, and enhance college access for workers who need to reskill.

**Increasing College Completion with a Federal Higher Education Matching Grant**

*Author:* David J. Deming (Harvard University)

The federal government largely invests in higher education through aid to students that aims to lower the effective price of college. However, Deming finds that increases in institutional spending per-pupil are particularly important for increasing degree completion. Based on this work, Deming proposes a federal matching grant for spending by public institutions in states that implement free college proposals. The proposal would give states an incentive to rein in college costs while maintaining or increasing spending levels in the core spending categories of instruction and academic support.

**A Risk Sharing Proposal for Student Loans**

*Authors:* Tiffany Chou (U.S. Department of the Treasury), Adam Looney (Brookings Institution), and Tara Watson (Williams College)

Chou, Looney, and Watson propose a risk-sharing system for the student loan program. Institutions with low repayment rates, as measured by a new cohort-based repayment metric, would be asked to pay a fee in proportion to the degree to which they miss repayment rate targets. This fee is intended to be a nudge to encourage institutions to improve matching between students and programs, program quality, completion, and other factors that relate to repayment outcomes.

**Labor Force to Lecture Hall: Pell Grants and Postsecondary Policies in Response to Job Loss**

*Author:* Sarah Turner (University of Virginia)

Currently, Pell Grants are designed to meet the needs of recent high school graduates. In this proposal, Turner explores the possibility of better tailoring Pell Grant eligibility and needs assessment to the circumstances of the adult unemployed. In addition to improving Pell access for these individuals, facilitating better matches between unemployment insurance recipients and post-secondary programs has the potential to enhance long-term labor market outcomes, which Turner proposes to carefully evaluate.

**Understanding and Addressing Teacher Shortages in the United States**

*Authors:* Thomas Dee (Stanford University), Dan Goldhaber (University of Washington)

While there is a popular perception of a national teacher shortage, Dee and Goldhaber demonstrate that teacher shortages are in fact localized and subject-specific. Teacher hiring and retention are often difficult for schools that serve low-income students as well as in particular fields like STEM and special education. The authors propose complementary strategies that K-12 school districts, teacher education programs, and regulatory authorities can use to address these shortages.

**Improving College and Career Outcomes of Low-Performing High School Students**

*Authors:* Louis Jacobson (New Horizons Economic Research; George Washington Institute of Public Policy)

In this proposal, Jacobson examines how to engage and prepare those high school students who are currently graduating without the skills required for college or careers, but who could be effectively aided with well-targeted interventions. Jacobson proposes a set of policies and practices, informed in part by his multimethod evaluation of the Florida College and Career Initiative (FCCRI), that would improve college and career outcomes at relatively low cost.