“There’s a lot of love in YouthBuild, and some day we’re going to spread it around the world.”

-- Victor Ortiz, 17

Conditions for Learning

Effective Practices to Support Student Engagement and Success
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

- A national program with 273+ local programs serving 10,000 low-income youth
- Students have dropped out or been pushed out of school
- 16 to 24 years old with an average age of 19 years old
- 73% Male and 27% Female
- 43% African American; 23% Latino; 23% White
- 36% Adjudicated
- 25% Parents
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

YouthBuild students read at a 7th grade average reading level and a 5th grade average math level at entry.

"I didn’t know how to read well. My class didn’t laugh at me. If I had been in a regular school, they would’ve laughed at me. If I got a word wrong, they helped me. And now, I know how to read. It’s a miracle! I love YouthBuild.”
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

Construction
- On-site Training
- Health & Safety Standards
- Industry Certifications
- Career Readiness Skills
- Vocational Skills & Education
- Pre-apprenticeship

Education
- Academic Skills
- Remedial Education
- GED/HSD Preparation
- College Readiness
- Career Exploration
- Cultural Events

Graduate Success
- College/Career Counseling
- Job Development
- Internships
- College/Career Placement
- Follow-up
- Community Leadership Roles

Leadership Development
- Decision Making
- Group Facilitation
- Program Leadership Roles
- Public Speaking
- Negotiating
- Community Service
- Advocacy

Counseling & Case Management
- Referrals for Child Care, Housing, etc.
- Peer & Group Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Life Skills
- Goals
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

Of 1 million low-income young people,

**HALF A MILLION**
half a million leave high school without a diploma each year.

Of the half million who dropout of high school each year,

**45%**
about 45%, (approximately 225,000) end up obtaining a diploma or GED through various “second chance” systems.

Of the 45% obtaining a diploma or GED,

**3%**
only 3%, (approximately 6,700) earn a postsecondary credential with labor market value.

SOURCE: Jobs for the Future Analysis of NELS Data
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

In a postsecondary success pilot program with seven sites, we are seeing the following outcomes:

- High school diploma or GED: 72% of all enrollees
- Entering PSE: 43% of all enrollees
- Continuing into year two of PSE: 48% of those enrolled in college
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

What works?

Academic supports to meet students’ varied academic needs

- A range of flexible, high-quality academic programs, all challenging and with necessary supports, offering:
  - Academic remediation — tutoring and after-school services
  - Academic acceleration and competency-based programming
  - Programming addressing multiple learning styles
  - Strategic use of technology
  - Flexible scheduling and year-round learning
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

- Meaningful, real-world curriculum connected to students’ communities, histories, interests
- Individual development plans that consider postsecondary and career linkages to learning
- Special education services
- Learning to learn strategies — explicitly taught skills for note taking, research, analysis
- College and career readiness — dual credit, internships, consistent exposure, supports, bridge programming
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

What Works?

Supports for students’ non-academic learning needs

- Explicit focus on teaching leadership skills — resilience, teamwork, persistence, problem solving

- Navigation skills for postsecondary education and careers — college knowledge, career ladders

- Focus on successful transition to postsecondary and careers, seamlessly integrated across all elements and starting from day one of school
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

“YouthBuild put into my head that I can do something with my life. They made me feel wanted. They made me feel important.”

“I got my first college acceptance letter. I brought it back to school. I had to show off. They accepted me! I didn’t even think I was going to college, at all.”
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

What Works?

Supports for students’ social-emotional needs
(may require partnerships with community agencies)

- Mental health needs
- Hunger and homelessness supports
- Incarceration supports — probation requirements
- Parenting/care giving
- Increased family engagement
- Adults who engage with the whole student — sense of connection
- Student-centered schools with meaningful inclusion of student perspectives and feedback
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

What Works?

Positive school culture — a mini community of adults and peers committed to each person’s success

- Intentionally created positive, respectful, high expectations school culture that is shared across staff and is evident across the school’s program and operations
- Adult expectations of success and support shared explicitly with students, shared early and often
- Students integrated across the school community rather than set apart as the “alternative” kids
- Multiple adult mentors who have meaningful relationships with each student
- Individual needs assessment and comprehensive plan to address students’ obstacles to success
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

“The difference between high school and YouthBuild is that they sit down with you one-on-one or take you aside to teach you things. In high school, it was different. You had 20 to 30 students in a classroom and they don’t care.”

“The number one thing about YouthBuild that allowed me to transform my life was the dedicated teachers.”
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

What Works?

Collaboration across the community/recognition that schools can’t “go it alone”

- Involvement of youth-serving organizations and community-based organizations
- Collaborative initiatives, tasks forces, councils, advisory boards of employers, postsecondary institutions
- Sharing of information and ideas across sectors
Conditions for Learning
Promising Practices from YouthBuild

What Works?

Smart use of data

- To document the character and magnitude of the problem and communicate the need
- To identify resources needed for success and those that are currently available
- Cross-sector data sharing for ongoing improvement and student success
- To identify early warning indicators of students falling off track
Conditions for Learning Promising Practices from YouthBuild

What Works?

Policy environment that supports the work

- Dropout prevention and recovery visible priorities in public officials’ agendas
- Legislation to address dropout prevention and recovery
- Graduation rates part of accountability system
- Eliminating punitive policies and disincentives to serving the disconnected youth population — understanding of alternative accountability measures
- Credit based on competency
- Increased flexibility
“When I started at college, I thought the academics would be the hardest part, but the hardest part is time management and being responsible for your own learning. It’s really all about making a commitment to do the work. But it helps a lot to know that I have a support network in YouthBuild that I can fall back on. It’s kind of like the Verizon Network; it’s there whenever you need it.”