



College Success Book Club Reading List

Over the first half of 2017, Michigan Future facilitated a College Success Book Club for individuals working on college access and success initiatives in Detroit. The readings were focused on a range of issues critical to college success, and conversations were centered around what we could do – collectively – to get more Detroit students across the finish line.

We're eager to keep these conversations going. Below is the set of readings we took on over three meetings, along with a brief descriptor of each session. We'd love to hear your thoughts on the readings, and what you think are the biggest obstacles to increasing rates of degree-completion here in Michigan.

Meeting 1: College Matching: why it matters and what to do about it

College matching can mean different things to different people, but we focused specifically on how we match students to the most selective school they qualify for. We'll talk about why this type of matching is important to college success, what a quality matching program looks like – in design, execution, and data collected – and how we can improve college matching in Detroit through our work at our respective organizations.

Readings:

- [MFS College Success eBook](#) p. 20 – 27; 37-51
- [“What Makes a College ‘Selective’ – and Why It Matters,”](#) by David Leonhardt
- [“Colleges Are Failing in Graduation Rates,”](#) by David Leonhardt
- [“Smart, Poor Kids Don’t Apply to Good Colleges,”](#) by Matthew Yglesias
- [“Better Colleges Failing to Lure Talented Poor,”](#) by David Leonhardt
- [“College for the Masses,”](#) by David Leonhardt
- Excerpts from the book [Crossing the Finish Line](#)

Meeting 2: Getting more students to “college-ready”

College matching is incredibly important. But in order to match students to selective institutions, they first need to be eligible for admission at those institutions. In this session, we talked through the framework MFS developed for thinking about college readiness, and how we get more students to reach that bar, starting in the 9th grade.

Readings:

- [MFS College Success eBook](#) p. 3-19
 - [“Why Do Some Poor Kids Thrive,”](#) by Alana Samuels
 - [“How Kids Learn Resilience,”](#) by Paul Tough
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Meeting 3: Alumni support

Even if we get more students eligible for selective admission colleges, and even if they get placed at selective admission colleges, they’ll still need support to make it across the finish line. In this session we talked through the most common obstacles that trip up students on the path to college graduation, and what supports might be most effective in getting students successfully over these obstacles. The high school can take responsibility for the provision of these supports by providing students a playbook for college success, providing direct supports to their students after high school graduation, and by ensuring the colleges their students matriculate to are using national best-practices in student support.

Readings:

- [MFS College Success eBook](#) p. 28-35; 48 – 54
- [“Who Gets to Graduate,”](#) by Paul Tough
- [College Initiatives Redefined,](#) by YES Prep
- [“At College, a Guided Path on Which to Find Oneself,”](#) by Tina Rosenberg
- [“How to Improve Graduation Rates at Community Colleges,”](#) by Susan Dynarski
- [Introduction to the Summer Melt Handbook](#) from the Strategic Data Project at Harvard