



Summer Melt: Supporting Low-Income Students Through the Transition to College

Benjamin L. Castleman, Lindsay C. Page

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Under increasing pressure to raise graduation rates and ensure that students leave high school college- and career-ready, many school and district leaders may believe that, when students graduate with college acceptances in hand, their work is done. But as Benjamin L. Castleman and Lindsay C. Page show, summer can be a time of significant attrition among college-intending seniors—especially those from low-income families. Anywhere from 10 to 40 percent of students presumed to be headed to college fail to matriculate at *any* postsecondary institution in the fall following high school.

Summer Melt explores the complex factors that contribute to this trend—the absence of school support, confusion over paperwork, lack of parental guidance, and the teenage tendency to procrastinate. The authors draw on findings from fields such as neuroscience, behavioral economics, and social psychology to contextualize these factors. Drawing on a series of research studies, they show how schools and districts can develop effective, low-cost, scalable responses—including counselor outreach, peer mentoring, and using text messages and social media—to help students stay on track over the summer.

Summer Melt offers very practical guidance for schools and districts committed to helping their students make the transition to college.

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