

INSPIRING STUDENTS TO SUCCESSFUL CAREER AND WORKFORCE FUTURES

The foundation of America’s success
 is driven by the education of its youth, which in turn affects
 commerce, labor, health, social justice, poverty and hunger,
 and a free, happy, and engaged citizenry.

“Education is not about the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”
 W. B. Yeats

**CORE
 IDEA**

Ever say, **“if only I knew then what I know now.”** Many students facing challenges with school and their future could benefit significantly by hearing from their community about “what they know now.” Segue invites community members to bring to students in their classrooms actual examples from their lives of the true connection between diligent effort now and genuine future opportunity.

Founded in 2003, Segue Career Mentors has served over 12,000 students and provided over 50,000 Student Career Exposures. Impact data about Segue measured by Harvard University found statistically significant student impacts in areas known to increase academic success and reduce dropout: Mastery Orientation, College Intentions, and Future Talk. One detailed finding from this study was that students receiving multiple speakers were twice as likely to complete their homework.

Segue has developed a replicable turnkey program and seeks philanthropic or partnership support for its 501(c)(3) nonprofit from various entities that share its objective to support the education of our youth and the workforce needs of our communities. Segue is a highly efficient career mentoring program which, rather than focusing on the depth that one-to-one mentors provide, focuses on exposing students to career options and to the true and tangible realities of the workplace world. As a result, Segue can produce 6,000 Student Career Exposures (SCEs) per school.

**PERSONAL
 EXPERIENCE**

Many of us can look back at our own careers to a single individual or moment that sparked us forward onto a career path. It helped make school relevant and meaningful. It gave us inspiration and hope and good reason to move forward. We may not have stayed in that first career, but we began. We took action. It gave us an opportunity to find our place **to begin our journey within society**.

**U.S. EDUCATION
 FINDINGS**

Multiple national studies, from Harvard University’s, *Pathways to Prosperity*, to McKinsey & Co.’s pivotal work, *Education to Employment*, and other major national American education studies, find broad concurrence that the path to student success must include knowledge about the real world workplace and, at best, workplace experiences such as linked learning, internships and job shadows.

**HIGH SCHOOL
 OPERATIONS
 IN A NUTSHELL**

Volunteers, in all careers from a community’s workforce, become career mentor speakers. During a **two-minute process online**, speakers choose their school, date, and time. In their hour-and-a-half on campus they speak for 20 minutes in three classrooms and have the opportunity to make a real difference in 80-120 students’ lives. Teachers choose to opt-in online or during a faculty meeting when circulated sign up sheets enable them to choose the frequency of speakers and class periods.

**A PROFOUND
CRISIS**

The extent of the education crisis in America is well-documented by reliable sources. Every nine seconds in America a student becomes a dropout (Lehr, 2004). Rand Corp. found that every dropout “costs society up to \$388,000, and a career criminal [costs] up to \$1.5 million” (2003). U.C. Berkeley found “if high school graduation rates were just 1% higher, there would be 100,000 fewer crimes in the U.S. annually, including 400 murders, and the savings would be \$1.4 Billion” (2004). Students are losing hope of ever having a good future. They see little relevance of school to their lives. They are giving up. In many cities, like Los Angeles, 30% to 60% of students are dropping out (2011).

**MENTORING
INNOVATION**

One to one mentoring is valuable to students, but it’s just not enough. And, few adults can commit the time necessary to foster a successful relationship. Since 2003, Segue’s innovation in mentoring, what we call “career mentor speakers,” is a highly efficient departure from traditional mentoring three fundamental ways: 1) It requires much less time of the mentor 2) focuses on career option exposures to maximize the reach per mentor, and 3) costs much less per student. Forty percent of speakers invite students to internships, shadows, or tours. There are countless online student career option resources. Though students who are not motivated generally do not engage these resources, yet these are the students we need to reach. Segue reaches them in their classrooms.

TESTIMONIALS

An assistant principal at an Oxnard high school told us about an aimless student that came home from school one day all excited and told his mom that, due to a Segue speaker, he had now found a career of interest and this made “graduating high school a new and important priority in his life.”

A student from a Ventura high school shared with her principal how she was having “a rocky go of it.” A Segue speaker inspired her to become a dental assistant. She did such good work at her job that her dentist paid her education costs to become a dental hygienist. She talked about “having a little job one day” and was now thrilled to have a position that enabled her to make some good income.

AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a college readiness system for elementary through higher education that is designed to increase school wide learning and performance. An AVID student told Segue how the addition of learning about specific career options was the missing link for her in an otherwise outstanding program.

**ADDITIONAL
RELEVANT
RESEARCH**

1. **Harvard** found in its national study, *Pathways to Prosperity* (2011), that the most important step we can take to increase student success is to greatly increase student exposures to career options.
2. “*Possible Selves*,” a **University of Michigan** study, found that when a youth sees a career that they want, it can change their life because attaining that possible self “*functions as an incentive*” that “*can change future behavior*.”
3. “*Grit*,” **University of Pennsylvania** found that grit is the most important student characteristic to support his/her success in school.
4. A **California Lutheran University** study of Segue found 86% of students came to believe that “*more effort now equals more options for their future*”; and 94% of those thinking about dropping out are now “*more likely to stay in school and graduate*.”
5. **Gallup** found “*hope predicts academic success and graduation better than grades or test scores*.”
6. “*Becoming Adult*” (a national study) concluded “*perhaps the most basic prerequisite for a success transition to productive adulthood is knowledge of career options*.”
7. **Segue overview video**: Community leaders opine at: www.segueprogram.org/SegueVideo.html