

Alternatives to a Bachelor's Degree

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and Tennessee announced last week they have formed a network to build alternative tracks leading to a successful career. They'll be working with the Pathways to Prosperity Project at Harvard and Jobs for the Future to connect employers with educators and policymakers.

Harvard doctoral students and leaders from Jobs for the Future, an organization that seeks to align education with career opportunities, will be visiting each state to look at current workforce needs and where there are postsecondary education gaps. They'll then focus on building a system of pathways for high school students toward a postsecondary credential.

"This is valuable not just for preparing students to transition one day into the workforce but also building motivation and in-

spiration for students," said Paul Reville, Massachusetts's secretary of education.

The idea of guiding students toward a path that doesn't result in a four-year degree has been somewhat controversial. Some fear it will result in students being sent on tracks early on that limit them later in life. The report authors and network participants say students who choose a career track will be equally prepared to pursue a four-year degree later.

Robert Schwartz, co-author of the report and a leader of the state network, said the coalition comes at a time when more families are questioning the value of investing tens of thousands of dollars in higher education that burdens students with debt and doesn't always lead to a lucrative career.

The coalition expects other states to join the network in the weeks and months ahead.

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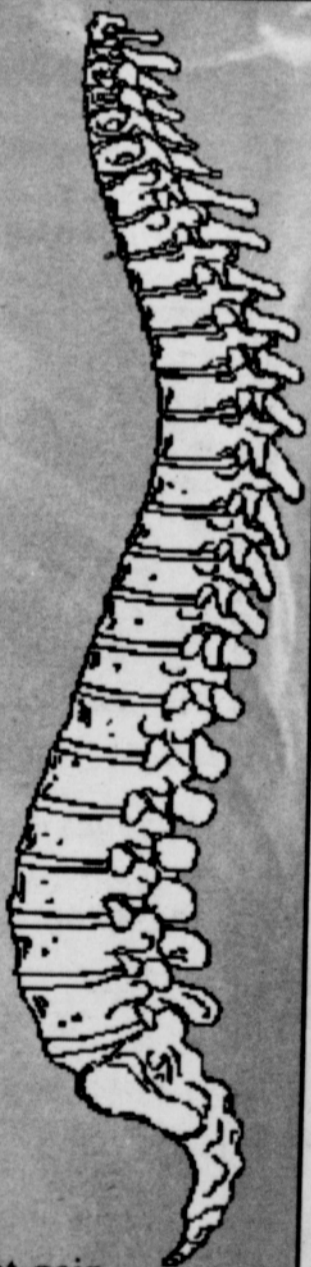


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