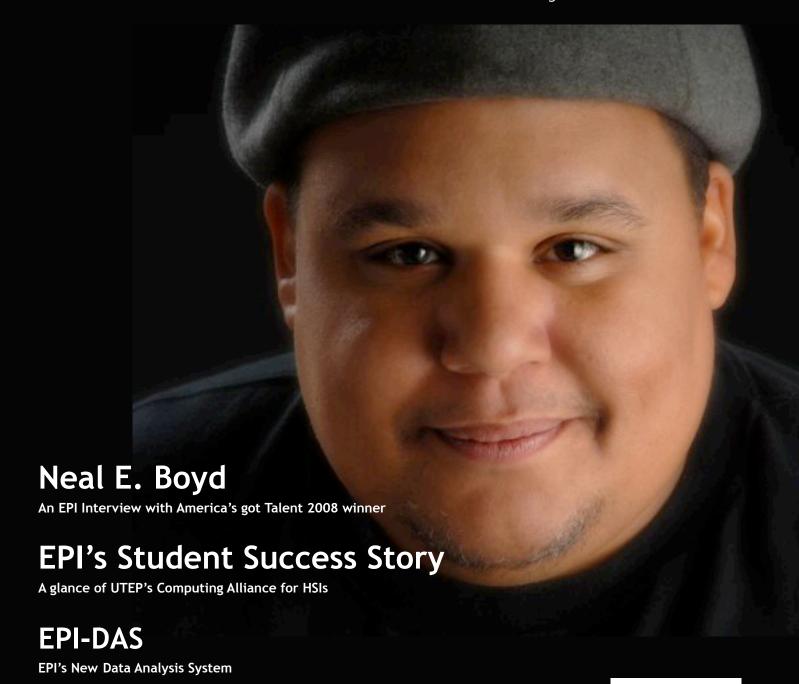
The Educational Policy Institute's

STUCE CONTROL WINTER 2011

The Newsletter for Higher Education Professionals



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WINTER 2011

Student Success is an occasional e-publication of the Educational Policy Institute to EPI members. Premier membership to EPI may be purchased at www.educationalpolicy.org/memberships.html.

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THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE

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The Educational Policy Institute (EPI) is a non-profit, non-partisan, and non-governmental organization dedicated to policy-based research on educational opportunity for all students. EPI is a collective association of researchers and policy analysts from around the world dedicated to the mission of enhancing our knowledge of critical barriers facing students and families throughout the educational pipeline.

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Watson Scott Swail, Ed.D.
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Opening Shots

Last fall, I had the privilege of meeting Neal Boyd, America's Got Talent 2008 winner, at AACRAO's SEM Conference in Dallas, Texas. I didn't know anything about Neal. In fact, I almost didn't meet him (I attend a lot of conferences, and typically "miss" the general sessions so I can conduct other EPI work. I know hotel rooms well).

But I decided to poke my head into this one. My good friend Jay Goff of Missouri University of Science and Technology, who also was chairing the AACRAO conference, pulled me over to his table. Neal was sitting next to him and was about to go up on stage.

Neal is a big boy. Not tall, but big. He commands presence even before he opens his mouth. And within about 30 seconds, Neal owned the audience. He owned me.

Neal Boyd comes from a small town in rural Missouri. A small white town. And Neal is Black. In this issue of Student Success, Neal gives us an insight into the challenges he faced growing up, and how it was important to look toward college and other opportunities to help not only him, but his mother.

In the end, Neal earned two bachelor's degrees and a master's degree in management. He has succeeded. But his greatest achievement, perhaps, was in Summer 2008 when he sang Puccini's Nessun Dorma, winning the America's Got Talent 2008 competi-

tion. He is now living his dream as a singer.

At AACRAO, Neal told the audience of his humble beginnings, about his drive to succeed, the factors that contributed to success, and the people in high school and college who helped make it all happen. Then he sang. And sang. He brought most of us to tears with his story, insight, and talent.

I invite you to see Neal LIVE with us at RETENTION 2011 in San Diego this June. Come experience a person who has persevered and succeeded. Let Neal share his dream with you.

See you in San Diego.





JUNE 12-14, 2011 - SAN DIEGO, CA

The Educational Policy Institute cordially invites you to attend RETENTION 2011, our sixth annual conference dedicated to exploring contemporary issues related to student success. Hosted by the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina in San Diego, CA on June 12-14, 2011, this year's conference looks like it could be our biggest in years, based on the number of proposals for presentations received. We will have the most breakout sessions ever, with 65 concurrent sessions, plus our plenary sessions. The event will bring together teachers, administrators, researchers and policymakers from around the world who are dedicated to promoting student

THERE WILL BE TWO PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS:

Workshop 1: An Introduction to Student Retention June 12, 9:00 am - 12:00 noon; Dr. Watson Scott Swail, Educational Policy Institute

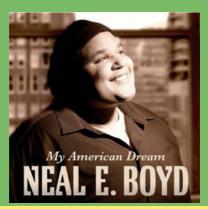
This session will outline a retention framework and discuss issues related to defining retention on campus, data usage, student tracking systems, campus buy-in, and proven practices.

Workshop 2: Building a Roadmap for Meeting Institutional Regional Goals

June 12, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm; Jay Goff & Harvest Collier, Missouri University of Science & Technology

This session provides an opportunity for institutional leaders to discuss how coordination between offices in data collection can be useful in analyzing institution-specificretention issues.

FEATURED SPEAKER



Neal E. Boyd, 2008 winner of America's Got Talent

he unlikeliest of superstars, singer Neal E. Boyd won the hearts and votes of millions of fans when he appeared as a contestant on the wildly popular NBC show "America"s Got Talent." Now, with the release of his highly anticipated debut CD "My American Dream" on Decca (June 23rd), Neal is determined to make sure that his example" and his music ""inspires others to succeed.

Neal Boyd credits his readiness to succeed to many of the educators and mentors who believed in him and made a difference in his life.

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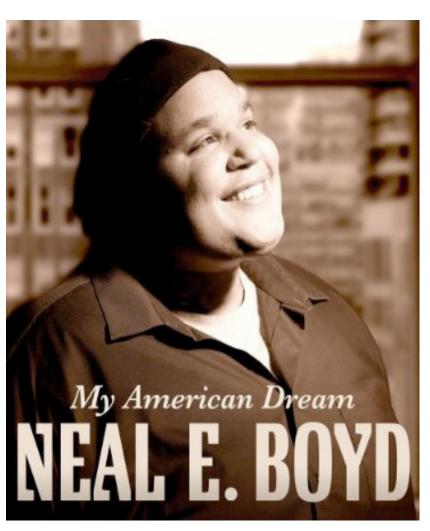
Student Success: An Interview with Neal E. Boyd

he unlikeliest of superstars, singer Neal E. Boyd won the hearts and votes of millions of fans when he appeared as a contestant on the wildly popular NBC show "America"s Got Talent." Now, with the release of his highly anticipated debut CD "My American Dream" on Decca (June 23rd), Neal is determined to make sure that his example and his music inspires others to succeed.

A struggling singer who has overcome a lifetime of setbacks, his journey is a true story of triumph over the odds, finding mega success in the unlikeliest of places. The decks were stacked against his success from the very beginning. For Neal, growing up biracial, overweight, and bullied in rural Missouri wasn't always easy. Neither was watching his single-parent mother struggle financially. But when Neal discovered opera by chance one day, a whole new world suddenly opened up to him.

Neal Boyd credits his readiness to succeed to many of the educators and mentors who believed in him and made a difference in his life. Boyd was his high school's student body president in 1993–94 and the president of the Student Senate at Southeast Missouri State University, where he was also a member of Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity.

Discover how Neal Boyd found his success path through an interview with by Dr. Swail. Neal Boyd will be a keynote speaker at EPI 2011 International Conference on Student Success in San Diego this coming June.



Growing up, what was it that you thought you wanted to do with your life? Did you always dream of being a professional artist and singer? Did you find it challenging to grow up as a minority?

Growing up in rural Missouri was a challenge. I was born in 1975. My brother Michael and I were mixed and therefore, it wasn't the easiest time for my mother. As we grew up, we realized the challenges we were going to face to be accepted in the town [such as getting into the] little league baseball team or anything like that. Yet, we tried to find our way. We grew up next to a park and we couldn't get a lot of kids to play ball with us, so we played with each other and we became really good. Our uncle was playing in the minor league at that time and eventually joined the major one. We competed with being like him. He was a heck of a pitcher, so Michael and I would practice baseball in the park on the tennis courts. We had a basket full of baseballs

because they weren't expensive. Overall, we just wanted to get good at what we could do. Overtime, I started singing and while my mom encouraged my brother to play sports, she encouraged me to keep singing without any idea where it would take me to.

But I did not have a dream of becoming a professional singer. I remember once my brother got in trouble at school, [he] came home and started playing "that" CD. I listened to it and was blown away by the volume of Pavarotti's voice. The first song I heard was Nessun Dorma and I remember saying, "This is unbelievable." A couple of weeks later, I went to school after I felt like I had mastered the CD -even though I couldn't understand a word of it - and started singing it in the hallway. I went to my first period class, and almost immediately got sent to the Principal's office. He took me into the choir room to audition for the freshman choir. I wasn't enthusiastic about it because my friends had told me it wasn't cool. I told the choir director that I wasn't really interested in it and he blackmailed me, giving me the choice between joining the choir or having the rest of the year in detention. Therefore, I decided to join the choir. I remember that when I would sing in the hallway, it was so loud and high, that everybody would just stop for a second to process what had just happened. Once I realized it silenced everyone, I would turn around and walk away. My friends were





Neal Boyd is congratulated by judges Piers Morgan and Sharon Osbourne, host Jerry Springer and judge David Hasselhoff after winning the NBC talent competition, "America's Got Talent" in 2008.

already laughing at me.

You have a bachelor's degree in speech communications from Southeast Missouri State University, a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a master's degree in management from the University of Phoenix. You also had plans to attend Yale University, but never got to them. What led you to pursue such an education path and then shift directions to become an artist?

My mother didn't make it an option. College wasn't a choice. College was a goal for us because my mom never really got to go (she got kicked out because she got pregnant with my brother). My biggest fear, though, was "How?" Even as a [high school] freshman, I didn't think I was college material. My grades were okay. I was probably about a 2.0 or 3.0 average, but it wasn't what my friends had -3.5 to 4.0-. I figured it would be a great experience to go to college, but I not only didn't think I could get in, I also didn't know what I would want to do if I went. My sophomore year, I established myself so much with singing that my grades in science and math slipped and I had to rebuild myself to get my GPA up. I didn't realize they started taking scores in freshman year. I was just a lazy kid. But once I became a junior, I knew that I wanted to make it to college because I really wanted to teach music. My voice was just growing and growing and was getting bigger and bigger and bigger. I got to a point where I started to apply for some local scholarships and after I started getting some positive responses, I thought, "I think I am going to be okay." But my mom did not feel that way. I recall myself saying, "Oh, I'll go work down the street or something," and her responding, "No, you have too much potential and too much going for you." She pretty much had it figured out. Southeastern State University is where I went.

I thought about becoming a music teacher when I was in tenth grade. I went to college and got a degree in speech communications and political science, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Mizzou. I went to Southeast to finish up my speech degree for 4 ½ years and then, I decided that I wanted to go back into music. Therefore, I was in school for 2 ½ more years to get a music degree at Mizzou. I graduated in both degrees in the same month in 2001. So, I actually have two B.A.s. After attending Mizzou and winning the National Collegiate Vocal Championship, I became a

music teacher. I did this for one year. I was wait-listed to go to Yale, so I went home and taught music in my hometown of Saxton. In the meantime, I auditioned for another school which was the New England Conservatory of Music.

What were the greatest challenges throughout your ascension to success? How did you overcome these challenges?



There are hundreds of thousands of people auditioning for these shows like America's Got Talent. I know my season had 232,000 people auditioning. In my particular location, there were about 20,000 people. My first audition was in Chicago and [it was] a two day process for most people. I couldn't tell you how many people I was in line with, but it was wrapped around Navy Pier. What gave me the guts and strength to do it was that I had been watching these shows for years and was in awe of the process. I just took a chance and said, "If I really want an opportunity, here is one staring at me. Go do it." It took me a couple of years to get the guts to do it.

Once in line, I wasn't sure if I had a chance of passing the audition. I wanted it though. There is no doubt about that. It was the same as when I went to school and I didn't know what was going to happen. The closer I got to the door, the more I had people to support me, and I didn't want to lose that. I just wanted to be able to say that I gave it my best shot and I was absolutely determined. There was no two-ways about it. I was in it to win it.

There were rumors that we weren't going to get to the door and that they'd stop auditions in the middle of the day. So I told

myself, "If I actually get to the room, I'm going to give it everything I have." And that is exactly what I did. I can't tell you how [I did it]...it was adrenaline. I gave everything to prove to these people that I was at least talented, even if they didn't take me.

I was in line for hours just to get registered and finally, when I got up there, I saw people crying all around me who had already been eliminated. It was chaotic. You lose hope before you even get into the room. A friend of mine said, "They don't do what you do as well; do what you can do." I went in with 15 other people and I decided I would just sing like there was nothing left to sing, as if it was the last song ever to be sung in the world and I was going to blow it away. I did Billy Joel's New York State of Mind and they told me I had 45 more seconds and could sing something else. I told them I had promised some people that I'd sing a little bit of opera. So, I sang the Bridge to the Prayer by Andrea Bocelli and I sang it so big and loud that all the noise that was coming from next door in the other auditions and the hallway behind the door went silent. As I was walking out of the room [the judges] said, "Sing something else because that was awesome." So I did. I was then sent to the executive producers who told me I was going to Los Angeles. The rest of the story is what everyone saw on television. I was there with my then-girlfriend and a bunch of friends. I had about six people

the easiest way to get success based on, maybe, the mistakes they have made. They also have gained a lot of knowledge over the years that you may not understand yet. But, for instance, you may have a music teacher who has performed before and they may tell you about the industry and the business. You have to really take in the knowledge that they give you. They've been there. You also have to stay grounded. If you follow music, you have to continue growing, you have to learn new repertoires, new songs. You have to grow the voice and you have to train. You have to stay motivated in any way you can, and if that means watching a show like Glee or discovering new artists every day, so be it. You have to stay motivated in the business and understand that music is not easy. What we do is not easy and you have to keep surrounding yourself, regardless of whether it is in the genre that you do or in a different one, with people who have been there and know the business. They know how to do what you do, and have been successful in doing what you ultimately want to be able to do.

What advice do you have for those students who are trying to find themselves and want to have their own success?

with me.

The main advice is that you have to listen and learn from the teachers, and realize that they have been in your shoes previously. Teachers don't just give out advice, they are trying to guide you and to teach you



The Computing Alliance for Hispanic-Serving Institutions

A Success Story from The University of Texas at El Paso

ounded in 1914 as the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy, the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) is the second oldest academic component of The University of Texas System. As the only doctoral/research-intensive university in the nation that serves a predominantly Mexican American student population (75 percent), UTEP offers 86 bachelor's degrees, 86 master's degrees, and 17 doctoral programs, among which 10 are in STEM. According to the Hispanic Outlook Magazine (May 2009), in 2007-2008, UTEP ranked 3rd in the nation in bachelor's degrees awarded to Hispanics and 5th in master's degrees. From 2002 to 2006, the University ranked 7th in the U.S. as the baccalaureate institution origin of Hispanic STEM doctoral recipients. Hispanic Business Magazine identified UTEP's College of Engineering as the fourth best engineering school for Hispanics in 2008, after having ranked it 1st in the previous three years. The magazine says that UTEP "is changing the face of engineering and producing highly trained graduates heav-

ily recruited by the industry's leading companies."

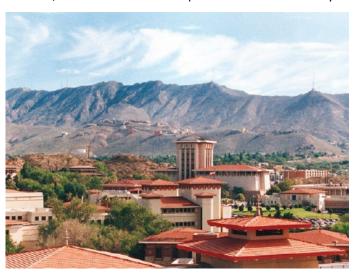
Yet, UTEP, like many other institutions, is confronted with retention and student success challenges. Many of UTEP students are first in their family to attend college, which can result in higher predictors of departure. "Students need role models of people who are like them and who have overcome obstacles to succeed in challenging courses and to graduate from college," says Ann Gates, Associ-

ate Vice President of Research and Sponsored Projects at the University of Texas at El Paso.

In order to address such challenges, UTEP has developed strategies and programs that have improved student success and retention. The University of Texas at El Paso has built a "college-going" culture, and has tried to convey a message

relating the importance of graduating from college in a region with high rates of first-generation college-going students. UTEP also implemented college readiness programs to provide the students with the academic skills needed to succeed in higher education, developed program to increase awareness and resources to support financial needs, and provided robust academic and personal support systems. In addition to the programs implemented at the school, UTEP is also a founding institution of the Computing Alliance

of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (CAHSI). Started in 2004 and formalized in 2006 through funding from the NSF Broadening Participation in Computing (BPC) program, CAHSI is a consortium of ten institutions that focuses on the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Hispanics students in computing. The goals of the CAHSI are to (1) increase the number of Hispanic students who enter the computing workforce with advanced degrees; (2) support the retention and advancement of Hispanic students and faculty in



computing; and (3) develop and sustain competitive education and research programs. In order to meet these goals, UTEP has a three-fold strategy: promote interventions that address recruitment, retention, and advancement; promote social science research; and promote dialogue that leads to collaborations and consolidated efforts.

UTEP has taken some major initiatives in order to accomplish its strategy and goals. For example, the CS-0 course is intended

to help CAHSI institutions recruit and retain more Hispanics into the computer science major. CS-0 focuses on adoption of a three-unit pre-CS course that uses graphics and animation to engage and prepare students who have no prior experience in computing. Students learn the basics of programming concepts and develop problem solving and reasoning skills, while becoming familiar with a programming environment. To date, evaluation has shown that CS-0 students experience an increase in interest (74%) and outcome expectations (88%), augmenting as a consequence the perceived value of studying computing. Another initiative is called Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL), a proven strategy for retention, which provides an active learning experience for students and creates leadership roles for undergraduates. The PLTL model (Aló et al. 2007) engages teams of students in learning course material guided by a peer leader to boost their confidence and knowledge. PLTL creates support structures, including role models, which are essential for retention and advancement. Results of this initiative show a statistically significant effect favoring PLTL, with a 10% increase in course completion after PLTL was introduced. Undergraduate research is a proven method to increase retention and graduation rates for students. The Affinity Research Groups (ARGS) model emphasizes the deliberate and intentional development of technical, team, and professional skills and knowledge required for research and cooperative work. Research offers students funding opportunities and exposure to research as a career path. CAHSI ARG students were twice more likely to

author journal articles/papers (13%) and three times more likely to present papers (51%) than a sample of over 500 Research Experience Undergraduates participants. Professional development workshops are another means to increase retention and advancement of Hispanic students at UTEP. Development Workshops are tailored for Hispanics (students and faculty) by providing them with opportunities to develop effective skills for career and academic success. These workshops are purposefully designed to address all the aforementioned issues and barriers. Several other initiatives have been developed such as the Mentor-Grad, the Fellow-Net or the Paper-Net, to enhance students' preparedness for research and opportunities for building success. Faculty and student interaction via CAHSI initiatives provides role models to Hispanic students, which is particularly important for students who may have limited social and cultural capital as they enter higher education, especially when family members or peers have little or no college experiences. Importantly, CAHSI activities and initiatives allow for students to develop social networks of academically-minded computer scientists and engineers among their peers at their university and beyond. Even though UTEP still encounters challenges nowadays, the worst is behind them. The biggest challenge was forming the alliance—it takes time to build trust and to become a functioning system.

They maintain regular contact—meeting at least three times a year- to discuss successes and challenges and plan for the coming months.

To date, CAHSI has been recognized as a successful and efficient program. The Alliance was named in the 2010 Examples of Excelencia as an effective national initiative that accelerates student success at the baccalaureate level. But, above all, it is important to notice that since 2002, bachelor degree production rates in Computing Sciences in North America have decreased by 39%, while seven CAHSI campuses have increased their CS graduation rates by 25% over the same time period,



CAHSI Hispanics graduate at a rate almost three times the regional average.

Dr. Ann Gates, Associate Vice President of Research, and Dr. Elsa Villa, Research Associate, will both be at the 2011 international conference on student success in San Diego this June to present the CAHSI program. To learn more about the CAHSI program, we encourage you to join us in San Diego.



The EPI-DAS: Supporting Data-Driven Decision Making

o date, there are few quality studies that illustrate the success or failure of pre-college outreach programs. Considering the billions of dollars that are spent nationally on these issues, including \$1 billion per year on the TRiO and GEAR UP programs alone, this is a critical issue for public policy in the United States. Important questions include: what do these programs do? Who do they serve? How much support do these students get? And what is the link between inputs and academic outputs along the pathway to college?

In 2009, EPI developed a new longitudinal data management system — the EPI Data Analysis System, or EPI-DAS — to help pre-college outreach programs answer these questions and quantify their inputs and outputs. Originally designed for GEAR UP partnerships and state projects, EPI-DAS is a versatile system that facilitates data collection, descriptive analysis, and reporting. This web-based tool allows for easy data entry, analysis, and reporting by project administrators and other key stakeholders. The system can also be utilized for long-term benchmarking, comparative analysis, and/or gap-closing analysis.

The EPI system not only collects and prepares data for the federal APR (Annual Performance Report), but also helps the client assess its implementation and progress toward prior stated goals. In addition, the system also allows for a counter-factual comparison (i.e., comparison group) to determine the impact of GEAR UP on students.

Why EPI-DAS?

For several very important reasons. First, and primarily, is that we live in the age of accountability. Officials need to know the data behind the programs

The student unit-record data management system you've been looking for is right here.



Engineered by EPI

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they are funding. Good data is key to future funding. EPI-DAS provides that foundation. Second, you need these data to understand how well your program is working and how much progress you have made toward stated goals. Third, EPI-DAS keeps your data in a nice package that is easy to access, easy to update, and provide simple outputs for reporting and presenting. Lastly, EPI-DAS is easy to use and comes with great support from EPI. We're here to help you.

How Does EPI-DAS Work?

As mentioned, EPI DAS is a web-based data system, so you can access it from any internet-connected system in the world. And most importantly, it is uber-secure—NO ONE can get to your data but you. We take data security very seriously, and we can report that our system is as secure as it gets. Your

data is safe with EPI. Here are some key features of EPI-DAS:

Data Entry. The user-friendly screens of EPI-DAS enable data entry of program service information for students, parents, and teachers. Academic and participation data may also be batch-loaded directly into the system from Excel spreadsheets. Online survey data can be directly loaded into this system. Data can be exported from EPI-DAS in the form of .CSV spreadsheets for uploading into statistical software programs such as SPSS.

Analysis & Reporting. EPI-DAS provides both pre-formatted and client-defined reports. Tabulations of program participation and student outcomes data are easily produced through the EPI-DAS reporting function. Users can display data tabulations at the program, region/district, and school level. The

APR feature allows users to generate real-time reports in Word format at the click of a mouse.

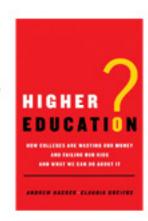
Technical Support. EPI provides a high level of technical support for EPI-DAS, including on-demand technical assistance and online training. Helpdesk services are provided to all GEAR UP clients in the form of telephone and online technical support to include: identifying and resolving data collection and management issues; uploading data files from other sources; updating user access privileges and account information; and copying and transitioning data to new school years. On-site training services are provided upon request.

EPIBookClub



May 3 at 2:00 pm EST

& Claudia Dreifus, authors of Higher Education? How colleges are wasting our money and failing our kids - and what we can do about it?" to our Virtual BookClub meeting.





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through Premier Membership; The EPI Book Club, read a book and talk with the author (six times annually); The Journal of Student Success (bi-annual e-journal); only available through Premier Membership Professional Networking Resources Access to an exclusive network of professionals with whom member can associate and use as professional resources;						
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The Educational Policy Institute, a non-profit research think-tank dedicated to the study of issues related to educational access and opportunity, has launched a premier membership level to give professionals access to a wide assortment of materials and services from EPI. Compare below benefits included in EPI Premier Membership:

Feature	Details	Free Membership	Premier Membership
Education This Week	Weekly summary of the week in education with commentary by EPI's Watson Scott Swail and other guest perspectives.	/	1
Access to Limited EPI Publications & Reports	Download a limited number of EPI publications & reports on a wide variety of topics relating to access to educational opportunity, student retention, and related issues.	1	1
EPI Book Club	EPI Webinars are an ongoing series of interactive online presentations focused on a variety of educational topics in the areas of early childhood, secondary and post-secondary education.	✓	1
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Student Success Magazine	Quarterly publication devoted to issues about postsecond- ary student retention, persistence, and graduation. Student Success includes articles from practitioners and policy experts, interviews with people of interest, book reviews, and best practices.		1
Journal of Student Success	Biannually e-journal focusing on issues ready to K-12 and postsecondary education. The peer-reviewed journal provides articles from around the globe on relevant policy and practical issues related to helping students succeed in education.		✓
The Swail Letter on Higher Education	Bi-monthly e-magazine on important and timely issues in higher education.		1
DataWorks	Bi-monthly e-magazine on important and timely issues in K-12 education.		1
Event Admission Discounts	15% off on entry to all EPI events and webinars.		1
Professional Networking Resources	Access to an exclusive network of professionals with whom members can associate and use as professional resources		1
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