



# Ready, Willing, and Able: A Developmental Approach to College Access and Success

By Mandy NULL Savitz-Romer NULL, Suzanne NULL Bouffard NULL

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## Ready, Willing, and Able: A Developmental Approach to College Access and Success

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How can an understanding of adolescent development inform strategies and practices for supporting first-generation college goers? In *Ready, Willing, and Able*, Mandy Savitz-Romer and Suzanne Bouffard focus on the developmental tasks and competencies that young people need to develop in order to plan for and succeed in higher education.

These include identity development, articulating aspirations and expectations, forming and maintaining strong peer and adult relationships, motivation and goal-setting, and self-regulatory skills, such as planning.

The authors challenge the predominant approach of giving young people information and leaving it to them to figure out how to apply it. They show how well-intended college-access efforts can miss the mark—for instance, by focusing on students who already see themselves as college material, rather than working to help all students develop a “college-going identity.” In addition, most college-access programs and practices focus almost exclusively on providing academic preparation and financial support.

In *Ready, Willing, and Able*, Savitz-Romer and Bouffard call for a new approach: one that emphasizes the key developmental tasks and processes of adolescence and integrates them into existing college-access practices in meaningful ways. Rather than treating young people as passive recipients of services, they argue, adults can engage them as active agents in the construction of their own futures.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“This is a persuasive book that should be required reading for those interested in new ways of improving college access.” — **Mark Rohland**, *Teachers College Record*

#### From the Back Cover

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“*Ready, Willing, and Able* is a must-read for everyone (and I mean everyone) who believes that there is more to helping young people become ready for college, work, and life than improving reading competency and mastering the FAFSA application. This book helps explain and address the missing piece: supporting adolescent development. I can’t remember the last time I read a professional book that taught and inspired as masterfully as this one does. I read it cover to cover and made notes in the margin. Thanks to the authors, help for young people is on the way.” — **Karen J. Pittman**, cofounder, president, and CEO, The Forum for Youth Investment

“Savitz-Romer and Bouffard have written a much-needed book that captures and highlights the intersections of adolescent development, community-building, and college readiness. This book should be read by all educators, particularly school counselors and K-12 school-based college counselors, interested in helping youth reach their academic potential. Well done!” — **Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy**, professor and vice dean of academic affairs, School of Education, Johns Hopkins University

“How do we get our kids to and through college? For starters, read this book! For too long we have tried to help our students without understanding the profound developmental changes they are going through. This important work illustrates the complex challenges that adolescents face and offers important strategies and insights to help them flourish.” — **Jeffrey C. Riley**, superintendent-receiver, Lawrence (Mass.) Public Schools, and former chief innovation officer, Boston Public Schools

**Mandy Savitz-Romer** is a faculty member and director of the Prevention Science and Practice Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. **Suzanne Bouffard** is a researcher and writer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## About the Author

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**Janice Wilson:**

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