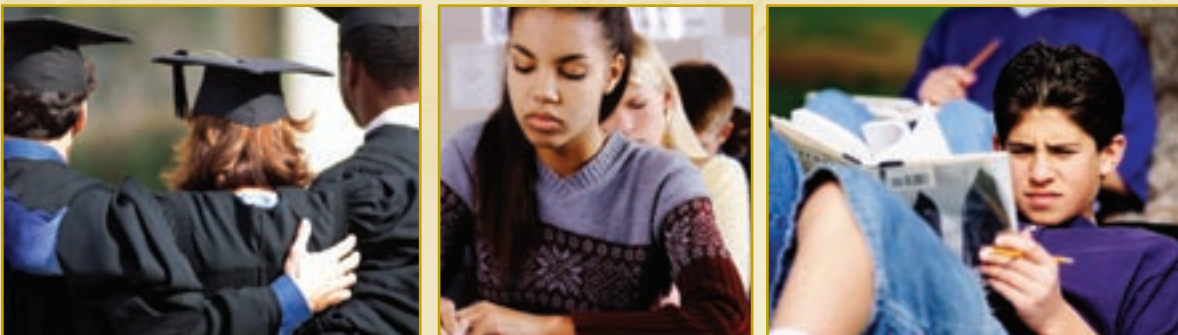


A Vision for Redesigned High Schools



Professional Development for State Policy Leaders

Overview

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), working with the National Conference of State Legislatures, is planning a series of field trips to help state policy leaders learn more about high school redesign. This project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, supports the Honor States Grant Program, an initiative of the National Governors Association (NGA), by providing hands-on professional development activities to governors, their staffs, members of state boards of education, and other education leaders.

Over the next two years, this project offers state policy leaders, who are involved in the NGA Center for Best Practices initiative, an opportunity to participate in strategically designed and intensive field trips, in which participants engage in substantive policy discussions and visit redesigned high schools.

Rationale and Strategy

The need to redesign high schools has been well documented by researchers and education advocates who are now calling on policy leaders to make high school reform a top priority. Many governors are answering this call by committing to improve high schools, but they have different levels of understanding about the characteristics of effective high schools and the policies needed to support them.

The trips will give participants an opportunity to see a vision for redesigned high schools. Over the past 12 years, AYPF has facilitated over 100 professional development trips for policymakers, revealing two important lessons: 1) Seeing examples of redesigned schools is one of the most effective ways for policymakers to envision the change process and build the political will to make successful reforms happen, and 2) Providing a well-constructed forum for policymakers to exchange ideas and debate policy approaches assists them in formulating and implementing policies and reform strategies back home.

Project Goals and Objectives

Field trips are carefully designed to accomplish three goals:

- expose state policy leaders to effective programs, schools, and districts from which they take away concrete, practical lessons;
- provide time to learn about successful policies that support high school redesign and discuss various approaches to complex and difficult problems; and
- encourage state policy leaders to benchmark their high school redesign efforts, share lessons learned, and build a network of information, resources, and contacts.

Dissemination

Following each field trip, AYPF will post a description of the trip to its website and disseminate the summary to participants. This summary will describe the programs and schools visited and the promising practices and policies that have been critical in transforming schools, increasing academic achievement, and engaging students. A final report will synthesize lessons learned and outline key recommendations for state policymakers working to redesign their high schools.

Schedule

TARGET DATES	
February 2006	January 2007
March 2006	February 2007
May 2006	March 2007
October 2006	May 2007
November 2006	September 2007

On each trip, participants will visit schools and meet with school-, district-, and state-level leadership. These professional development trips will take participants to a number of states, such as California, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, and Florida.

For more information, please contact:

Iris Bond Gill (ibgill@aypf.org), Senior Program Associate, at AYPF or visit <http://www.aypf.org/projects/statehsreformtrips.htm>

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional development organization based in Washington, DC, provides learning opportunities for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working on youth issues at the national, state, and local levels.



AMERICAN YOUTH POLICY FORUM

1836 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036 202/775-9731 ■ Fax 202/775-9733 ■ www.aypf.org