

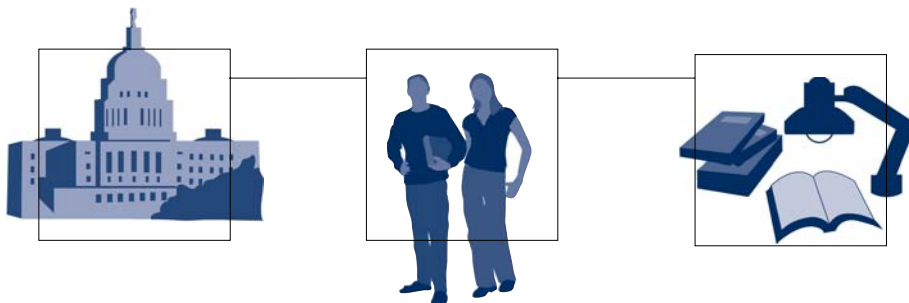
# Transforming the American High School:

Lessons Learned and Struggles Ahead

**Betsy Brand**

**December 2004**

BRIDGING YOUTH POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH



AMERICAN YOUTH POLICY FORUM



## American Youth Policy Forum

- Bridging Policy, Practice and Research

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) is a nonprofit professional development organization based in Washington, DC. Our mission is to bridge policy, practice and research by providing nonpartisan learning opportunities for professionals working on youth policy issues at the national, state and local levels.

Our goal is to enable policymakers and their aides to be more effective in their professional duties and of greater service—to Congress, the Executive Branch, state legislatures, governors and national organizations—in the development, enactment, and implementation of sound policies affecting our nation's young people. We believe that knowing more about youth issues—both intellectually and experientially—will help these busy professionals formulate better policies and perform their jobs more effectively. AYPF does not lobby or take positions on pending legislation. Rather, we work to develop better communication, greater understanding and enhanced trust among these professionals, and to create a climate that will result in constructive action for the benefit of the nation's young people and their families and communities.

Each year, AYPF conducts 35 to 45 learning events (forums, discussion groups and field trips) and develops policy reports disseminated nationally. For more information about these activities and other publications, visit our website at [www.aypf.org](http://www.aypf.org).

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## INTRODUCTION

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) was funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to help policymakers learn about and become more engaged in supporting high school reform efforts. From October 2000-April 2004, AYPF provided a variety of experiences for policymakers to help them gain knowledge of strategies to create more effective learning environments for youth, particularly disadvantaged youth, that lead to increased academic achievement and better preparation for further education and careers. AYPF conducted this work by organizing speaker forums, field trips, discussion groups, and roundtables and by producing a number of relevant publications for policymakers and practitioners. This report summarizes what we learned from these events.

### How to Use This Report

This report draws heavily on the material already written about the programs and sites we visited, as well as speakers at our forums, presentations at roundtables, and summaries of discussion groups, available on our website, [www.aypf.org](http://www.aypf.org). This report is not meant to summarize or encapsulate the entire knowledge of the field that exists on each topic or issue, but rather to describe some of the common approaches, strategies, and policies that reformers are using, as well as to highlight a number of unique strategies that we learned about.

Each topical area includes a brief description of programs, strategies, or policies that address that area. For example, under the topic of *Successful Transition of Underachieving Students to Postsecondary Education*, the report includes descriptions of various schools and programs that help students, ranging from the community-based Cleveland Scholarships Program to a unique charter school located at University of California San Diego, the Preuss Charter School.

The descriptions are meant to give the reader an idea of the range of strategies in place and

to demonstrate different approaches to solving a problem or dealing with a challenge. Descriptions are kept purposefully brief (1-2 paragraphs), with a web link to the full document on AYPF's website. This will allow the reader to access more detail and depth on the programs or strategies of greatest interest. Appendix A of this report provides a complete listing of forums, field trips, and other events conducted for this project and also contains web links to forum summaries, field trip reports, and other publications.

### AYPF's Learning Events

AYPF's goal is to help policymakers learn about what works to help youth be successful, and more particularly for this project, what works with regard to reforming high schools. As we share information with policymakers, we do not take positions or advocate for specific legislation or governmental programs. Rather we seek to find the common strategies that support youth and lead to their success. The principles and elements of effective education and youth programs that we believe in have been described in the [High Schools of the Millennium](#) report and our series of compendia that describe evaluated programs that

have positive outcomes for youth.<sup>1</sup> These principles help guide our work in determining what programs to showcase in our forums and field trips.

AYPF serves a diverse audience of national policymakers, including Congressional staff, Executive Branch aides, officers of professional and national associations, Washington-based state office staff, researchers, and education and public affairs media. We also include state and local practitioners, particularly from the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia areas, in many of our events.

Speaker forums, held on Capitol Hill, are AYPF's most popular and well-known learning events. At forums, research experts and innovative practitioners and educational leaders are invited to share their knowledge on reform strategies and approaches on a wide range of high school reform topics to help inform the policy dialogue. Forums are designed to allow for an interchange between audience and speakers, and this is often the most interesting part of the program, as policies are questioned and debated.

AYPF field trips, usually one to two days in length, provide a group of about 20 policymakers an opportunity to see reform efforts first-hand at the state, district, and school levels. Visits are made to schools, colleges, and youth and community programs and allow

participants opportunities to talk with students, teachers, parents, employers, educational leaders, and elected and appointed officials. During these visits, participants have a chance to see the realities that many urban schools face and better understand the challenges to high school reform. At the same time, participants learn about innovative programs and leaders and see what is possible given a willingness to change.

In addition to forums and field trips, AYPF organizes discussion groups and roundtables. Discussion groups are designed to allow a group of individuals to delve deeply into a complex topic, such as developing a vision for reformed high schools, or improved career and technical education. Discussion groups meet multiple times over a year or two, and allow for consideration of issues and consensus-building in a non-partisan, non-threatening manner. Discussion groups almost always result in a summary publication. Roundtables are one-day meetings that allow for a more in-depth examination of an issue than could occur at a regular lunchtime forum. Roundtables were held on issues such as new forms of student assessment, the value of contextual teaching and learning as an instructional strategy, detracking the high school curriculum, and the Schools for a New Society Initiative.

<sup>1</sup> *High Schools of the Millennium, Report of the Workgroup*. 2000. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum; *Some Things DO Make a Difference for Youth: A Compendium of Evaluations of Youth Programs and Practices*. 1997. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum; *More Things That DO Make A Difference for Youth: A Compendium of Evaluations of Youth Programs and Practices, vol. II*. 1999. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum; Jurich, Sonia & Steve Estes. 2000. *Raising Academic Achievement*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum; James, Donna Walker, Sonia Jurich and Steve Estes. 2001. *Raising Minority Academic Achievement: A Compendium of Education Programs and Practices*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum; James, Donna Walker and Glenda Partee. 2003. *No More Islands: Family Involvement in 27 School and Youth Programs*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.



## SUMMARY AND LESSONS LEARNED

Our work for the Carnegie Corporation of New York highlighted a number of policy issues, including strategies and policies that increase student achievement, particularly for low-performing students; help low-performing or disadvantaged students transition more effectively to postsecondary education; provide high quality career preparation; and create connections to caring and knowledgeable adults.

In addition to these major issues, participants in our events learned about communities that are creating a range of learning options from which youth can choose; youth employment programs for youth who have left school; alternative assessment strategies; contextual teaching and learning; the use of technology to improve teaching and learning; and financing and resource issues affecting high school reform. Other policy topics dealt with that deserve much deeper attention and discussion include community engagement and involvement in high school reform; helping English language learners and students with disabilities master rigorous curriculum; building stronger connections between high schools and alternative education programs; and ensuring that reform efforts include dropout prevention as well as dropout recovery. We were also fortunate to have several speakers, such as Deborah Meier, Vice Chair Emeritus, Coalition of Essential Schools and Paul Hill, Center for Reinvention of Public Education, University of Washington, who provided their own unique perspectives on high school reform.

The remainder of this section provides a summary of lessons learned by topical area.

### Improving Student Achievement, Particularly For Low-Performing and Disadvantaged Students

Improving student achievement and outcomes is obviously a priority for anyone involved in high school reform. Little by little, the public, policymakers, and educators have acknowledged the problems of academic performance of high schools. Reports like *Locating the Dropout Crisis*,<sup>2</sup> *Public High School Graduation Rates and College Readiness Rates in the United States*,<sup>3</sup> and *Projections of 2003-2004 High School Graduates*<sup>4</sup> highlight

the low graduation and high dropout rates at many schools and the realities that lead to them. The current focus on standardized testing, assessments, and high school exit exams has also helped raise the issue of poor student performance to a new level of prominence. Disaggregated data has led to a clearer understanding of which students do well and which ones do not and is leading to more focused intervention strategies.

Schools and districts are engaged in various strategies to help low-performing and disadvantaged students improve their academic outcomes. One of the more common strategies is to provide ninth graders with increased attention in smaller settings. Creating smaller

<sup>2</sup> Balfanz, Robert and Nettie Legters. 2004. *Locating the Dropout Crisis: Which High Schools Produce the Nation's Dropouts? Where are They Located? Who Attends Them?* Johns Hopkins University, Center for Social Organization of Schools.

<sup>3</sup> Greene, Jay and Greg Forster. 2004. *Public High School Graduation Rates and College Readiness Rates in the United States*. New York: Manhattan Institute, Center for Civic Innovation.

<sup>4</sup> Swanson, Christopher. 2004. *Projections of 2003-2004 High School Graduates*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

schools or groups of students with more personalized instruction based on student needs is also a common strategy. Many of these interventions include a laser-like focus on reading, literacy, and mathematics to ensure students have the basic skills to advance. Other strategies add more instructional time.

The **Talent Development with Career Academies** model is an education reform initiative that aims to improve the academic achievement of students in large, non-selective, comprehensive high schools. In operation at 33 high schools in 12 states across the country, the approach encompasses five main features: small learning communities, organized around interdisciplinary teacher teams that share the same students and have common daily planning time; curricula leading to advanced English and mathematics coursework; academic extra-help sessions; staff professional development strategies; and parent and community-involvement in activities that foster students' career and college readiness. One feature of Talent Development is the Ninth Grade Success Academy, a school-within-a-school organized around interdisciplinary teams designed to provide incoming ninth graders with a smooth transition to high school. In the Academy, students take a double dose (two periods) of reading (including a Strategic Reading course) and math, learn important study skills and are exposed to future career pathways through a Freshman Seminar, and remain with a small team of teachers and peers.

Another part of the Talent Development model is to provide "twilight" academies, alternative after-hours programs provided for students who have serious attendance or disci-

pline problems or who are coming to the school from incarceration or suspension from another school. Instruction is offered in small classes, and extensive services are provided by guidance and support staff. The Talent Development model recently received a positive independent evaluation<sup>5</sup> in terms of increased grade promotion and course completion for ninth graders.

**Morris High School** was one of the lowest-performing high schools in **Bronx, NY**, and one of the hardest to reform. In 1997, only 80 students from a freshman class of 600 graduated, with half of the students already lost by tenth grade. The underlying problem was that the school was never designed to prepare all of its students for college or high-wage careers; rather, it was structured to help only high achievers. For this reason, the district leadership in the Bronx selected Morris as one of the first high schools to be transformed into small schools.

The Morris High School campus began its transition to smaller learning communities with the opening of the Bronx Leadership Academy II, High School for Violin and Dance, School for Excellence, and Bronx International High School in 2002. As the new schools were phased in, the remaining students in the comprehensive school formed a fifth school that will eventually be replaced by a fifth new small school. The transition from the comprehensive school to the new small schools is taking place over a period of four years, starting with the freshman class and adding a grade each year. There are approximately 850 students in the four new small schools on the Morris campus, with 700 students attending the "old" Morris High

<sup>5</sup> Kemple, James and Corinne Herlihy. 2004. *The Talent Development High School Model: Context, Components, and Initial Impacts on Ninth-Grade Students' Engagement and Performance*. New York: MDRC.

School program.

One sign that the small school design is having a positive impact is that the number of students graduating from the “old” high school has increased from 77 to 220. Staff believes that because the “old” high school is getting smaller, students are benefiting from the small school environment, and the culture of the school building is changing to one of high expectations and support for all students.

Each school has at least a 90 percent attendance rate, and the number of students who want to attend the schools has increased over previous years. The principals of the small schools agree that there are other positive changes as a result of moving to small schools: the building is calmer and quieter, even though there are more students; there is a better learning atmosphere and higher attendance; security problems have been alleviated; and security and administrative costs have been reduced.

**James Ford Rhodes High School, Cleveland, OH** began breaking into smaller learning communities in 1997 with the implementation of a ninth grade academy. The following year several other smaller learning communities were added for upper classmen, including a Naval Junior ROTC program and the Ford Academy of Manufacturing Sciences (FAMS). Now the entire school is being transformed into three themed schools, each with grades nine through twelve.

At Rhodes High School, a gateway program designed for ninth graders who are off-track and low in credits was also implemented. This program focuses on basic skills and offers no electives. In partnership with Johns

Hopkins University, the gateway program provides double-dosing of English and math, world history, and science. Another intervention, the Sylvan Learning Lab, offers remediation for math and English. These smaller environments allow teachers to assess the skills and abilities of each student more readily and to determine what individual assistance might be needed.

Some large comprehensive high schools, like **Mission Bay High School in San Diego, CA**, (1,600 student body) provide needy students with intensive literacy and mathematics instruction. Students who enter ninth grade reading at a third or fourth grade level take two English and two math courses each day, supplemented only by lunch and physical education. Classes use high interest texts for adolescents, and teach a variety of reading skills, from decoding to fluency to comprehension. While many high schools have moved to these intensive blocks of time devoted to reading and literacy, some schools still struggle with the most effective ways of teaching adolescents. Mission Bay has found that reading and literacy coaches are an effective way to help teachers in various disciplines learn how to support the teaching of reading.

The “Credit Recovery Program” and “Make Up” school at **Central High School, Providence, RI** seek to get students who fail ninth grade back on track by 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Ten percent (approximately 50 students) of the 2000-2001 freshman class at Central earned fewer than two credits. The Credit Recovery Program was designed to serve ninth grade repeaters, allowing them to engage in extended work after school, curriculum compacting (i.e., covering more course material by covering a subject during regular *and* after

school hours), and a community service component. Students in the Credit Recovery Program attend a double period of English and math. If successful after the first quarter, students are also assigned community service and journal writing. Community Service earns students additional credits to keep them on track for graduation. The “Make Up” school is offered to ninth grade students failing Algebra I or English after their first semester. Students attend a half credit make-up class to replace the failing grade they received during the first quarter and avoid repeating or going to summer school. Students in the program come to class immediately after regular school two nights per week for English instruction and two nights per week for math instruction. Students and their parents sign a contract with clear expectations and pay a \$20.00 fee, which is refundable if a student successfully completes the class. Students must be present during the day to attend the after-school program, and after two absences, students are dropped from the program.

At **Southwest High School, San Diego, CA**, the principal reported the most difficult aspect of his job was to cause a shift in the way teachers think about the abilities of their students and the way they think about their teaching. “Teachers can no longer be a content teacher; they must now be a reading and writing teacher in a content area. In other words, a chemistry teacher is a reading and writing teacher in the content of chemistry,” he said. This has changed the way students gain basic skills, as each class supports student growth in literacy and math. The school has also eliminated all remedial and lower level classes because they do not meet the California “A-G” university entrance requirements and has instead pushed students to take more rigorous classes.

**Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams)**, started in **Houston, TX**, is a holistic intervention that helps children when they are young and follows them through school into college by providing a range of supports to them and their families. Project GRAD consists of five components: summer institutes and scholarships for students; classroom management and disciplinary strategies; Move It Math, a specially designed math instruction; Success for All, a reading and writing program; and a Communities in Schools program that provides counseling, mentoring, tutoring, and help to families to keep students focused on their work. These components are placed in elementary, middle, and high schools in feeder systems to ensure consistency of effort across all grade levels.

Project GRAD has been implemented in three feeder systems in Houston, which affect 41 schools and approximately 26,000 students. For the past ten years, Project GRAD has conducted an evaluation of its effectiveness by collecting data on high school graduation and college attendance and student behavior, discipline, and achievement. The following are indicators of the program’s success:

- The percentage of college-bound high school graduates from the Davis High School feeder system has increased from an annual 12% to 45%, well above the national average of 37% for Hispanic seniors and 33% for African-American seniors.
- Students qualifying for the scholarships at Davis High School increased from 47% of graduates in 1992 to 60% of graduates in 1999.
- At Davis High School, passing rates on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) increased from 42% in 1994 to 79%

in 2000, and TAAS passing rates in reading increased from 51% to 82%.

- At Yates High School, TAAS passing rates in math went from 25% in 1996 to 71% in 1999, while TAAS passing rates in reading went from 63% to 83%.

**Menchville High School, Newport News, VA** is a large high school that provides personalization and supports to students in a variety of ways. The block schedule allows for a planning, professional improvement, and activity period so that teachers and students do not stay after school for co-curricular activities. Instead, after school time is now used to provide extra learning supports for students. A listing of extra-help opportunities for students is published each year and includes teacher tutoring schedules and other programs. A Smaller Learning Communities grant focused on improving the ninth grade transition, creating a more welcoming environment for these students as well as opportunities for upper classmen to serve as mentors. A decision was made not to separate the incoming students into a ninth grade academy, but to structure their experience so that upper classmen could mentor them.

The commitment to success and opportunities for all students is reflected in a curriculum that offers college prep, as well as occupationally focused courses in a non-tracked manner. This is achieved through a focus on providing multiple levels of supports for all students, open access to Advanced Placement courses (with the school district paying for the exams and opportunities for practice exams available at the school), and a counseling program that requires all students to develop a four-year plan so they know what courses are required to meet their career and postsecondary education goals.

A district-wide strategy to improve student

performance and reduce the achievement gap was showcased in a forum on the **Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN)**, a national coalition of multiracial, relatively affluent suburban school districts working together to study the disparity in achievement between white students and students of color. MSAN focuses on discovering, developing, and implementing the means to ensure the high academic achievement of minority students. MSAN argues against creating new programs and assigning specific staff members to address the gap so that only *some* people in the district are responsible for addressing the gap; all members of the district must be held accountable. One superintendent in the network indicated that eliminating the achievement gap is not about adopting specific programs, rather, it is about adopting a general approach and general principles to educational improvement. MSAN suggests four guiding principles for eliminating achievement gaps: acknowledge and report the gap publicly; believe that the gap can be eliminated; accept responsibility for making progress; and make elimination of the gap an important priority that is reflected in the plans of instructional leaders, schools, departments, and the school board.

One group of students that often garners special attention is English Language Learners, and several programs and small schools have been designed around the needs of recent immigrant students. The **Bronx International High School**, one of the small schools housed at Morris High School, Bronx, NY, serves an immigrant population from 30 different countries. Students who score at or below the 20th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery and have been in the U.S. less than four years are the target population. Students are allowed to use their native language as needed to help them understand content information. Students are usually

ready to move to full-time English instruction in five to six months. The key components of the school's design include: project-based interdisciplinary curriculum; English as a Second Language development methodology infused in all content areas; heterogeneous collaborative groupings; extended class periods in core academic subjects; and autonomous teacher teams that collaborate to serve small cohorts of students.

Students with disabilities often perform at lower levels than students without disabilities. The No Child Left Behind Act has highlighted students with disabilities as one of the key groups of students that need interventions in order to close the achievement gap. Yet many schools are still struggling with how best to serve students with disabilities, and many teachers lack the necessary skills to provide the required individualized instruction. Most schools are pairing special education teachers with regular education teachers as a way to improve teaching skills, and most schools were struggling to serve these youth. This is a key area that deserves increased attention.

## Successful Transition of Underachieving Students to Postsecondary Education

Another key issue AYPF examined was the successful transition of underachieving students to postsecondary education. No longer can students get by with a high school diploma; in today's knowledge-based economy, students need some postsecondary education in order to earn a family wage. While financial barriers are enormous for many students, other barriers, such as poor academic preparation and low family expectations, hold

many students back. The most successful programs dealt with easing multiple barriers to postsecondary access.

**AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination)** at Southwest High School (SWHS) in San Diego, is a national school-based college preparatory program for low-income and first-generation students that requires them to enroll in college preparatory classes, receive tutoring from college students, attend sessions with guest speakers from colleges and businesses, and participate in field trips to colleges and universities. There are four curriculum-based AVID strategies to help prepare students for postsecondary education: writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading. The material is designed to be rigorous, but also interactive and of high interest to adolescents. One of the cornerstones of AVID is improving study skills and using the Cornell note-taking system to help students become more organized. All AVID students participate in Advanced Placement (AP) or honors courses, and most students who take an AP course end up joining the AVID program.

SWHS is promoting rigorous college preparation for all of its students and is using the AVID model as the foundation for its reform efforts. As a result of the AVID program, the school has increased the number of students taking AP tests from 290 four years ago to 920 now, with about 350 passing scores.

**Preuss Charter School** is a middle/high school, grades six through twelve, chartered under the San Diego Unified School District and located on the campus of the University of California – San Diego (UCSD). Preuss Charter School was created in response to California Proposition 209 which prohibits using affirmative action in higher education admissions. UCSD felt that a program

designed to prepare low-income students, particularly students of color, for college would help ensure campus diversity. Students are selected through a lottery process and must be eligible for free or reduced price lunch, demonstrate that they are motivated to attend college, and be a first-generation college student. The school provides a very rigorous curriculum designed to allow all students to exceed the “A-G” university entrance requirements. Many students, given their backgrounds, need various supportive services to succeed, so Preuss offers a range of supports such as tutors, a longer school day, a longer school year, Saturday and summer school and other extended learning opportunities, and a mentor program. All the members of its first graduating class attended postsecondary education.

**Garfield Alternative High School**, San Diego, CA, is a school for students who have very few credits or no plans to graduate from a regular high school. Students are encouraged to take college credit classes at San Diego City College (SDCC) where a middle college high school program exists between the college and Garfield. The program is a blend of secondary and postsecondary classes and experiences, which challenge students to realize goals and responsibilities they may not have been aware of before. High school students spend two weeks in an orientation program, six weeks in college classes, and two weeks as “interns” with business organizations in San Diego. The internship allows close observation of highly skilled workers in an industrial or commercial environment and also involves mock interviews and a mentorship component. The ten-week program is focused on at-risk students and operates with funding from the state. SDCC waives the \$10/class fee for Garfield students, and funding from the school district provides opportunities for the high school and college

faculty to develop the program and curriculum. While many traditional middle college high school programs have focused on higher-ability students, Garfield is demonstrating that credit-deficient students can succeed in this type of program as well. However, students need a higher level of reading than many of them have to be successful. Thus, they work a great deal on their literacy skills at first and take classes that are preparatory to college work. These courses are not transferable for credit to SDCC, rather they prepare students to take courses for credit at a later date. By physically locating some of the preparatory classes on the college campus, students become acclimated to college and begin to see that enrollment in postsecondary education is possible.

Once the students finish the required preparatory coursework and the internship, they can take regular classes at SDCC for credit. According to the program director, the program has been a success: a group of 175 students that participated in the middle college high school program completed a total of 200 more college classes than a comparable group of students who did not participate in the middle college program.

**Cleveland Scholarship Programs (CSP)**, Cleveland, OH, a private non-profit organization, addresses four barriers students face in accessing college: preparedness, affordability, matriculation, and retention. To help students prepare for college, CSP emphasizes core curriculum and postsecondary choices beginning in the first grade. Early awareness activities continue in grades one through eight. CSP also works in ten middle schools, because they have learned that students who participate in CSP activities for an entire year have a higher promotion and attendance rate. CSP is also working to change the school curriculum to align with their goals of ensur-

ing that all sixth graders are taking the appropriate curriculum that will allow them to do higher level work in middle and high school and that all eighth graders take pre-Algebra classes.

With regard to affordability, CSP advisors help students and families apply for financial assistance, and they disbursed nearly \$2.7 million of their own “last dollar scholarships.” For every scholarship dollar that CSP awards, they leverage another \$12 in student aid. CSP helps students matriculate by funding an advisor for each high school to assist with all aspects of college enrollment, such as researching institutions, applying for admission, securing financial aid, and encouraging parental involvement in the college planning process. As a retention strategy, CSP advisors meet with their scholarship recipients at least once a year and provide a toll-free hotline that students can call whenever they need help. Another strategy is for CSP students who are already in college to mentor incoming CSP students.

**LaGuardia Community College’s Middle College High School**, Queens, NY, is a high school that collaborates with a postsecondary institution to offer students who have traditionally been underrepresented in postsecondary education the opportunity to earn college credit at the same time they earn a high school diploma. The middle college high school model, which is evolving into the early college high school model, helps make connections for youth on a college campus. In addition to academic acceleration, high school students benefit because they do not pay tuition for college classes.

Challenges of the program have been preparing students for college level work, helping them adjust to the “world” of postsecondary education, and dealing with the personal

issues of many at-risk students. To help ease the transition, students are grouped in cohorts, and MCHS provides a coach for each cohort of students. The coaches provide students with on-going support and advice as they make the transition to higher level classes. Each student is also assigned a mentor as part of a four-year advisory program. Despite these efforts, there is a continued need for enhanced academic and affective supports because students continue to have difficulty in mastering academic material and making the transition to and succeeding in postsecondary education. In addition, financial barriers continue to keep many students from completing postsecondary education.

The early college high school model is designed to allow students to earn a high school diploma and two year’s worth of postsecondary credit within a five-year period, a variation on the middle college high school program. Extra support is provided to help students master the high school curriculum, prepare for postsecondary experiences, and enroll in college, at no expense. College tuition is waived and college textbooks are provided for all students in the early college program. While the middle college model allows students to take college classes when they desire or are ready, the early college model is structured with the intention of helping students earn a high school diploma and two years of postsecondary credit in five years. Therefore, the course structure and student supports are much more defined.

**Diploma Plus**, started in **Boston, MA**, is an educational initiative that re-thinks how educationally disadvantaged teens and young adults can best learn, finish high school, and transition to postsecondary education and careers. Diploma Plus (DP) has three interrelated goals: (1) to raise standards and expectations for high risk youth; (2) to



demonstrate that with the right mix of challenges and supports, many such young people can succeed academically at high levels; and (3) to assist significant numbers of these youth to earn their diplomas and successfully make the transition into postsecondary education and careers.

There are two stages to the program. The first stage emphasizes instruction and assessment tied to clear standards or competencies, individual and group projects, the development of a portfolio, and strong guidance and support. To enter the second stage – the Plus Year – students must show a high level of academic readiness, as determined by attainment of specific competencies, portfolio assessment, teacher recommendations, and college placement test scores. In the Plus Year, students work on intensive, year-long projects and develop college success skills in a small Senior Seminar. Students also participate in an internship that is structured according to a work-based learning plan. Finally, Plus Year students enroll in one or more courses, for credit, at local community colleges. Outcomes from all the Diploma Plus sites in MA include:

- 70% of 1999 and 2000 graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions upon graduation.
- Average grade level increased 1.69 in math across DP sites.
- Approximately 75% of DP students have higher academic/career aspirations now than when they began the program.
- 96% of Plus Phase students say they are more interested in attending college after participating in DP.
- At the Boston Adult Technical Academy DP site, 26 of 31 of the first class of graduates went on to two-year college.

## Quality Career Preparation

With regard to quality career preparation programs, AYPF helped participants learn about a number of different efforts. While career and technical education (CTE) has not always been as academically rigorous as it needs to be, many schools are infusing stronger academics into their occupational programs. Also, many high schools have decided to organize smaller learning communities and have chosen to use career themes, career clusters, or career academies as the organizational framework. Joint professional development and planning time for teams of career education and regular teachers, and integrating academic and occupational curriculum and instruction are other common strategies in use.

**Brighton High School** in **Boston, MA** has been restructured into four career-themed learning communities, including the School of Business and Technology; the School of Health Professions; the School of Law, Government and Public Service (which includes Teach Boston); and the School of Media, Arts, and Communication. It also contains a ninth grade academy which provides a rigorous academic program that allows students to transition successfully from middle to high school. The school undertook an extensive outreach process working with teachers, students, parents, and employers to identify and design the four career clusters. Despite the two-year design process, there was a great deal of concern on the part of teachers and parents about the proposed design. For example, all the English teachers wanted to join the media/communications pathway, and all the history teachers wanted to join the government pathway. But the plan called for each cluster to have college entrance requirement courses, so disciplinary groups were split up

across all pathways. Parents were concerned that the pathway courses would crowd out preparation for college. Five Advanced Placement courses (English, History, Biology, Chemistry, and Calculus) open to students from all pathways were added, and parents' fears were allayed when they saw the range of classes being offered. Because of the need for math skills among all students, math is not connected to a pathway, so students share math classes across pathways, grouped by ability. Early data shows that students have higher grades, fewer absences, and better college placement, and for the past several years increased numbers of students have passed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System tests.

Ten years ago, **Frankford High School, Philadelphia, PA** organized into career academies to help students learn about possible postsecondary education and high level careers, resulting in the current configuration of seven small learning communities, each with about 300 students located in a specific area of the school. The academies include: Arts, Music & Performance; Business; Health; Law & Government; Industrial Technology; Science, Engineering and Computers; and Travel & Tourism. Each small learning community program requires 23 credits which meets college preparation entrance requirements.

The Law and Government Academy is designed to expose students to a variety of careers in the fields of law and government. In the ninth and tenth grades, students spend one day in the community volunteering in "real work" situations. This service-learning experience gives students an opportunity to work in a specified area of interest as well as earn extra credit towards graduation. In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, students are given the opportunity to work in law enforcement agen-

cies, law firms, local and state government agencies, and schools. These paid positions are available to students who maintain a C average or better, and display good attendance and behavior.

The Industrial Technology's Building Engineer Program is helping to train future employees of the school district. Instructors stressed that this is "not the industrial arts of the 1950s." In addition to the core academic program, students take courses in Computer Assisted Design (CAD), graphic arts, and building management and cost. Students have opportunities to gain experience in a number of trades, manage people, problem solve, apply mathematics and computer skills, and learn OSHA requirements. They are able to apply their lessons in service-learning and work-based placements in the school building, other schools, and in the community. Before being eligible to participate in the work-based program, students must make passing grades in their other courses. They also must make up any missed work while on their one-day per week work-based assignment.

**Michael DeBakey High School for Health Professions (DeBakey), Houston, TX** provides students with a college preparatory curriculum in the context of health careers and an internship at the Texas Medical Center or Baylor Medical College. DeBakey was established in 1972 as a partnership between the Houston Independent School District (HISD) and Baylor College of Medicine (BCM). The first school of its kind in the nation, DeBakey was designed to increase opportunities for all students to gain access or enter careers in medicine, science, and the health professions. DeBakey, a magnet career academy that draws students throughout the HISD, has grown from 45 students attending classes in the Baylor College of Medicine facilities to a

current enrollment of over 700 students in grades nine through twelve. The curriculum is solidly academic: four years each of mathematics, science, health science, and social studies are required. Even in Physical Education, students must write essays on health topics. Students in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade participate in clinical externships at the Texas Medical Center or BCM. One hundred hours of community service are also required of students, but they say it is easy to meet that requirement because so many clubs and activities are focused on service. Being on a block schedule allows the teachers more flexibility in scheduling project-based work and labs. The schedule also gives students the freedom to pursue internships and other career-based activities.

Currently, 99% of DeBakey's graduates enter postsecondary education. A follow-up study of the 2,033 students who graduated from DeBakey between 1975-1987 indicates that the school had successfully prepared students to access postsecondary education and careers in the health-related and scientific professions. Respondents indicated that they:

- had accessed postsecondary education in large numbers (92%);
- were doing well in their respective undergraduate programs, averaging slightly over a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale;
- had maintained interest in and were pursuing studies leading to careers in the health sciences (56%); and
- preferred medicine as a first career choice (30%).

One AYPF Forum explored how technology contributes to academic and career preparation at **Wakefield High School**, Arlington, VA. Wakefield's mission is to prepare students for college and the high tech

economy of Northern Virginia by providing students with instruction supported by state-of-the-art computer applications and a comprehensive and inclusive technology program. All students are enrolled in a technology course, including the many newly arrived immigrant students. Wakefield High School's principal and faculty are dedicated to changing the way employers view their students as potential employees. School leaders want employers to see how much high school students have to offer. A career education specialist coordinates the intern program at the school and aggressively promotes students to local businesses, securing 200 paid student internships a year.

The **High Schools That Work (HSTW) Initiative**, managed by the Southern Regional Education Board, helps high schools integrate academic and vocational programs that prepare students for success in both postsecondary education and careers. HSTW has found a bevy of support strategies that states, districts, and schools can use to help career-oriented students meet more demanding course requirements. First, HSTW advocates integration of math, reading, and technology into career preparatory programs that have historically lacked rigorous academic standards. Second, it proposes continuous career and college guidance for all students from ninth grade until graduation, pointing out that school guidance resources have often been focused on students in college preparatory tracks. Third, it suggests that longer blocks of time for core classes, such as reading, during the ninth grade could help lower-performing freshmen catch up. Fourth, HSTW pushes school systems to require Algebra by the eighth grade, so all students are prepared for advanced mathematics in high school.

AYPF also held a discussion group on the future of career and technical education,

resulting in *Rigor and Relevance: A New Vision for Career and Technical Education, A White Paper*. The paper recognizes that every high school student must meet higher academic standards in secondary and postsecondary education to be prepared for the challenges of work, continued learning, and citizenship. Therefore, CTE must be integrated with rigorous academic work, all students must be exposed to and learn about career opportunities, and students need to have smoother routes to postsecondary education.

As a strategy to help improve CTE, the report recommends that federal funding be used to develop and build the capacity of states, school districts, and schools to offer and support high quality CTE *programs of study*. A CTE program of study is defined as a multi-year (grades nine through fourteen or sixteen), well-planned sequence of courses that integrate core academic knowledge with technical and occupational knowledge leading to an industry certification or associate's or bachelor's degree, with the following elements:

- In grades nine and ten, courses would focus primarily on academic foundations using the context of careers to help make the core curriculum relevant and meaningful.
- In grades eleven and twelve, students would continue to take the required core curriculum, as well as technical electives and integrated, contextual coursework in their chosen career field.
- Pathways between the high school and postsecondary institution with the option for dual enrollment and credit attainment would exist.

- Internships or work-based learning opportunities would allow students to explore careers.
- Early and ongoing college and career exploration and counseling is available.
- Students and schools are held to high standards consistent with NCLB requirements, and programs measure labor market outcomes.

This report has been used as a reference by many Congressional staff as they work on the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technology Education Act, as well as by numerous state education agencies as they seek to upgrade the academic rigor of their CTE programs and make high school studies more relevant for students.

## Creating Connections for Youth to Caring and Knowledgeable Adults and to Community Resources

Another issue AYPF studied was how to create connections for youth to caring and knowledgeable adults and to community resources for high school aged students. Research consistently demonstrates that one of the most important factors for youth to be successful is a relationship with a caring, capable adult.<sup>6</sup> Part of the movement to smaller learning communities is to allow for more relationship building between youth and adults, but these relationships can be accomplished by having youth work with employers in internship positions, engaging in service learning or community service along with

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 1 for list of AYPF compendia that discuss these factors.

involved adults, or by creating stronger relationships between schools and their communities.

The **Preuss Charter School**, San Diego, works hard to ensure that their students are well-connected to adults or older youth during their school years. The school's partner, UCSD, provides approximately 150 student tutors per semester – one for each classroom. The school also draws upon retirees, community volunteers, and university personnel to serve as mentors. Advisory programs (cohorts of students paired with a teacher or staff from sixth grade to graduation) help high school students learn how to prepare for college and about student financial aid. These cohorts also help students develop a social support network and create positive peer pressure to perform well academically. As a small school with an average class size of 25, learning is personalized, and adults know the students well.

Preuss offers other significant supports to its students, both in terms of connecting students to adults at many points in their lives, and by reaching out to the community to help provide some of the services, such as:

- A Head Counselor provides academic, social/emotional, and college counseling and works closely with parents and faculty to monitor and support academic progress. A second Guidance Counselor serves students in grades six through eleven.
- A Dean of Students provides support for students who are experiencing behavior and citizenship problems.
- A partnership with the UCSD Healthcare Department supported by a foundation grant allows access to medical care on a referral basis. The services of an adolescent physician and a Nurse Practitioner on

adolescent health are also available. A school nurse is on site five days a week.

- A Resource Specialist serves students with Individual Education Plans and an itinerant Resource Specialist serve students with speech, hearing, and physical disabilities.
- A district psychologist is available one day per week for testing and counseling, and a private psychologist sees students on-site in a therapeutic relationship.
- Regular problem-solving sessions with Preuss teachers, students and families are held.

A very different approach to helping young people connect to adults and the community they live in is provided by **Civic Works**, in **Baltimore, MD**, a comprehensive youth development and community service organization. Its mission is twofold: to provide critical community services that would otherwise go undone and to enhance the work, education, and citizenship skills of young people. Civic Works corps members serve on teams with an adult supervisor on various projects, including renovating low-income homes, building community parks and gardens, boarding up vacant houses, reforesting stream buffers, and tutoring and mentoring school children. Civic Works collects data on program and student outcomes annually. Among outcomes documented in 1998: nine different community improvement projects were initiated; corps members tutored 1,000 students with special needs; 31 corps members worked with 10 different Police Athletic League centers on behalf of children and teens; and 50 percent of corps members receiving GED instruction passed the GED exam. Corps members have opportunities to be helped by adults who participate in these programs, but they also learn that they can help younger children, building even more connections to

the community.

The **Youth Opportunities (YO)** program in Philadelphia, PA, is designed to improve the lives of youth in the neighborhoods of its Empowerment Zones where poverty and dropout rates are the highest. The YO Centers look and function as community centers and provide a range of activities to young people such as:

- classes in dance, computer skills, arts and crafts, video and CD production;
- clubs, such as Author's Lounge designed to increase members' comprehension skills and interest in reading, Masters of Destiny-College Bound where members plan and complete paperwork necessary to research and enroll in higher education or training schools;
- workshops such as Community Building designed to bring about cultural and communal awareness, and Employability & Job Readiness, an eight-part series with discussions of why people work, career exploration, preparing a resume, recognizing and developing professional skills, etc.;
- a learning lab where youth can participate in individual tutoring, individual and small group project-based activities, Pre-GED coursework, and a variety of interest driven and functional assignments; and
- recreation and sports.

Each of these activities is staffed by caring, trained youth workers, who often work one-on-one with youth and who also provide advice and guidance along the way. Many young people will credit a staff person, who is often a young adult, with helping them set goals, see the value and purpose of their lives, and get involved in positive activities, education, or training, as opposed to drug or gang activity.

A small, innovative school, **The Met**, in **Providence, RI**, has developed a unique approach that personalizes each student's learning, places students in internships in the community, and draws upon the resources in the community as students work on required academic and skill building. "Learning Through Internship" (LTI) allows students to serve a meaningful internship two days a week with an employer who is committed to mentoring and helping the student learn new skills. Students also design a self-directed course of independent study and work closely with an advisor who helps students determine where and when over the course of the four years the students will develop required competencies. Students are able to pursue independent study, work with a group of students from their advisory on projects to learn certain skills, take college courses, primarily at Rhode Island Community College and Johnson and Wales University, and learn through the internship experience. Advisors with certain content knowledge engage in small tutorials with students to address certain subjects. The majority of the advisors' day is spent connecting their students to resources, individually coaching them in their work, helping them develop projects, and communicating with their mentors and parents.

Advisors work closely with a student and employer to determine what skills have been learned and what additional learning is needed. The Met philosophy also includes helping the families of students and addressing issues affecting students outside of school. In some cases, parents of Met students have taken GED classes at the Met.

**Menchville High School**, a High Schools That Works site, has established a career advising and support program for at-risk students, called the "Bridge," that matches an adult mentor in the building to a student and is

designed to ensure that an additional adult is looking out for that young person all four years. Mentors also counsel students on college and career plans. Several times a year, activities are held with the mentors, such as a dinner where students are acknowledged for their achievements and receive awards.

## Creating More High Quality Educational Options and Choices for Youth Throughout the Community

The issue of creating more educational options for youth has emerged as an important topic, as communities struggle with ways of serving the varying needs of students. As we examined this issue, we encountered multiple reasons for providing more and better options and choices for youth. First, the traditional high school does not suit all young people – they need learning options that speak to their interests, talents, and future goals. Many high schools are too large, and students feel lost or disconnected. Others find the coursework irrelevant to their interests or future plans. Second, many students, both high- and low-performing students, drop out or leave traditional high schools for various reasons, yet want to continue their education in a different venue. However, there are generally very few high quality options open to youth who want to return. Third, most communities have exciting and rich opportunities for learning (museums, zoological parks, public health institutions, employers), if they are organized appropriately. But most school districts rarely look beyond the school house walls or think

of providing education in different physical locations. Lastly, allowing students and parents to choose their school appears to increase the attachment and satisfaction of the student and family to the school.<sup>7</sup> A few communities are experimenting with broader school choice and creating new options for students, but most are implementing a narrower approach by adding a few new programs at the traditional high school setting.

One alternative to high school has been provided a group of schools known as **Community Based Organization (CBO) Schools**. These are public secondary schools operated by a community based organization that offer a diploma-granting academic program. About half of CBO schools are in large urban school districts where the regular public high schools have very high dropout rates. Because so many urban high schools are failing students, CBO schools provide another option for students to be successful. CBO schools have adapted both curriculum and school structure to the idea that young people learn best in relationship to caring adults who engage them and have high expectations for them. Youth development is a critical part of CBO schools. In some communities, youth development is seen as something that happens, if at all, outside of school, and education happens within the school from 9 AM – 3 PM. In CBO schools, youth development, education, and good pedagogy are synonymous and aligned. Some communities allow public school funding to follow students who have left the regular high school to go to a CBO school, but most of them rely on private and foundation funding.

A visit to Boston, MA allowed us to learn about the **Boston pilot schools**, a unique part-

<sup>7</sup> Gill, Brian P. & P. Michael Timpane, Karen E. Ross, and Dominic J. Brewer. 2001. *Rhetoric Versus Reality: What We Know and What We Need to Know About Vouchers and Charter Schools*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

nership among the Boston Mayor, School Committee, Superintendent, and Teachers Union. The pilot schools opened in 1995 to promote increased choice options within the school district, largely in response to 1994 state legislation creating charter schools and the subsequent and potential loss of Boston students to area charter schools. The pilot schools were explicitly created to be models of educational innovation and to serve as research and development sites for effective urban public schools.

These public schools are unique in that they have autonomy over budget, staffing, governance, curriculum, and the school calendar. These autonomies provide increased flexibility to organize schools and staffing to best meet students' needs, while operating within the economy of scale of a large urban public school district. These conditions have been found to be critical in creating successful urban schools, and in particular, improving the achievement of low-income students and students of color. Currently, there are 17 Boston pilot schools spanning grades K-12 and serving approximately 5,750 students, or about 9.5% of the total Boston public school enrollment.

One pilot school, **Fenway High School**, groups students into three "houses" or learning families, each of which has its own faculty and student support staff. Students typically remain in the same house throughout their four years at the school, and they become well known by their teachers and form strong bonds with their classmates. Most students want to come to Fenway because of the safe and smaller environment, the strong focus on social justice, and the opportunity to work in the community as part of their learning.

As described before, San Diego's **Garfield Alternative High School** is an option for stu-

dents who have not been successful in traditional high school. Once at Garfield, students have several programmatic options to select. In addition to the middle college high school already mentioned, students at Garfield can select the Oracle Independent Study Program. Students in this program are expected to fulfill the same requirements as they would in a traditional high school, but have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a teacher who specializes in customizing courses to fit the student's diverse educational needs and goals. Garfield also offers the Pregnant Minor program for pregnant teens and teen mothers. (Fathers are welcome to participate in the program, but most work or are in school, so it is hard for them to attend.) The self-contained program has about 30 students, with three teachers. The girls come from all over the district when they learn they are pregnant, and often after the birth of their baby, they return to Garfield to finish their studies. Courses are offered in parenting, language arts, and science. Still another program, the Hospitality Restaurant Program, introduces students to a range of hospitality career opportunities in San Diego's tourism industry and is very popular with the students. Each of these programs is small and personalized and allows students to select the one that fits best with their aspirations, interests, and situation.

At **James Ford Rhodes High School, Cleveland, OH**, teachers found that many students needed alternatives to the regular day classes for various reasons. While the school provided a twilight academy with individualized learning and small classes for disruptive and low-achieving students, they decided to expand it to any student who needed help outside the regular classroom structure. This includes students who transfer from other school districts and are on grade level but need to make up credits because of the transfer. The twilight academy is structured to



allow students flexibility to take one, two, or three classes, and if they want to take more credits, they can take a class from the regular schedule.

Another take on expanded options for high school students is the use of distance education. The **Florida Virtual School (FVS)** is a state-funded school established in 1997 that serves students in grades eight through twelve. The school offers courses delivered over the Internet to students from Florida public schools, home-schoolers, and students from other states and countries. The school's motto, "Any time, any place, any path, any pace" helps describe the school's philosophy. The purpose of the school is to provide students with additional opportunities that may not otherwise be available, rather than to replicate or replace traditional schools and face-to-face instruction. FVS and other virtual schools offer flexible schedules, enhanced course selection, the opportunity to earn needed graduation credits, and individualized instruction. Access to online instruction has proven to be particularly valuable to home-schooled students and students from rural or low-performing schools may have limited access to a broad selection of high-quality courses.

One of the school's strengths is its capacity for individualization of instruction; students can move through course material at an accelerated, traditional, or extended pace. Teachers are also able to teach to multiple intelligences, use multiple forms of assessment, and take advantage of the interactive features of the Internet to emphasize real world applications of academic content. These characteristics may contribute to the school's high course-completion rate and high student-satisfaction ratings.

Lastly, a series of discussion groups held on

finance and resource issues that impact high school reform dealt with the topic of **allowing public school funds to follow students**. Generally, there was consensus that funds should follow students if they leave the high school and continue their education in another public setting, although concerns were expressed about transferring funding from high school when funds are already short. Given the large number of students who leave traditional high schools, the group encouraged efforts to increase awareness of the value of alternative education programs and the need to support high quality programs, equitably distributed throughout the community so all students have access to them.

Many school districts, however, do not have a clear and consistent policy for how to handle funding for students who transfer from a traditional school to an alternative education setting. In those districts that have few or no procedures for transferring funding from a student's home school to an alternative setting, a financial burden is often placed on the receiving alternative school. Tracking the movement of students more frequently and using that information to allot the per pupil expenditure funds on a more regular basis might alleviate this problem. A uniform student identifier might also be used to track students so that funds can be allotted readily.

Another suggestion to improve the system was to provide alternative schools an allotment based on their average daily attendance from the previous year rather than attendance in September. Most alternative schools start off with a low number of students in the beginning of the year, and while the number grows throughout the school year, they only receive funding based on the small numbers at the start. It is also hard for alternative schools to prepare the school's budget without knowing how many students will be at the school.

In **Philadelphia, PA**, Twilight Schools (not to be confused with the Twilight schools in the Talent Development Program) began at two high school sites in 1997 as an alternative educational program designed to meet the needs of students ages 17 through 24 who are not likely to graduate high school through a traditional program or who have already dropped out and want to return to earn a high school diploma.<sup>8</sup> A minimum of approximately 10 credits is required for admittance and 21.5 to 23.5 credit units are required for graduation. These schools provide alternative and flexible means of earning credits and multiple entry-points throughout the year. All twilight graduates receive a Philadelphia School District diploma and are permitted to participate in all senior class activities and the graduation ceremony. Students attend classes from 2:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m., Monday through Thursday, accumulating credits through core academic courses (taught by teams of two teachers); elective independent/cooperative projects (developed by the program coordinators); life experience, including community-volunteer service, work experience, and GED test preparation; and Cooperative Community Partnerships (e.g., advanced credit education at community college, continuing education programs, Job Corps, community agencies, etc.). Instruction is presented in four 9-week cycles. The success of these alternative programs has created increased demand and warranted a scale-up each year to its current 18 sites.

While public school choice remains controversial in some locations and political circles, there are actually a fair number of school dis-

tricts that allow open choice between public schools. **New York City** allows its students to select the high school they want to attend. Students and parents are provided a lengthy catalogue that describes all the high schools (the traditional ones and the growing number of new small schools) and then submit a list of their top choices. While not all students get their first choices, the system does allow for many students to attend themed schools they want outside of their neighborhood. Overall, students and parents seem pleased with the system, but wish there were more high quality choices in certain neighborhoods of the city.

## Community Engagement in Reform Efforts

As high school reform unfolds, it becomes clear that the community has critical and multiple roles to play, yet is often not engaged in a meaningful way. The community can organize to become one of the loudest voices for change, particularly when equity issues are involved; it can help keep the pressure on, when education leaders start to falter; it must provide input on what it wants its schools to be like; and every community, regardless of its economic condition or geographic location, has a variety of resources to lend to the schools. Key to community engagement is the importance of including youth in a meaningful, respective, and responsive manner.

The **Schools for a New Society (SNS) Initiative**, funded by the Carnegie

<sup>8</sup> The model has been revised as the Educational Options Program for students in grades 10 through 12 to meet the requirements of graduation by attending classes in 27 designated sites from 3:30 - 6:00 p.m. Students, who must be at least 16 years old, can use this opportunity for either credit recovery or to accelerate their graduation from high school. To maximize options for young people and to recapture dropouts, the Companion Program, operating with WIA funds to community based organizations, targets out-of-school youth who need to work wholly or partially outside the traditional high school setting to attain an Adult Basic Education Diploma, Alternative High School Diploma or GED. Here, young people, ages 17-21 can receive basic education instruction, participate in internships, life skills and specific training for employable vocational skills from 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and also accelerate their graduation through participation in the Educational Options programs at the high schools from 3:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Corporation of New York, supports districts and communities as they engage in the process of high school reform and redesign. School and community representatives (students, teachers, parents, school officials, business and civic organizations) jointly redesign their outmoded comprehensive high schools to help all youth develop into well-educated and productive citizens. Participants in this process from several cities indicate that for reform to be successful, it is essential to involve all stakeholders from the beginning. Educators often feel more or less alone as they do the difficult work needed to implement reform; the community can add value by pressing for reform. Parents who are outraged by the poor performance of their students can help create the demand and climate for change and support ongoing reform efforts. The depth of community engagement is key to reform efforts, and school leaders must commit to a serious campaign to help parents understand how they can and should be involved in improving their child's school in concrete ways. Students, too, are essential to the reform process. Students have an inside understanding of the schools they attend, yet too often this perspective is overlooked, and they are left out of the conversations about reform.

Another unique feature of the SNS Initiative is that the grant funds are given to the community partner, not the school district, to manage, which creates a different dynamic and pushes towards stronger school-community collaboration.

The **San Diego, CA**, school district, one of the cities participating in the SNS Initiative, started its high school reform conversation by sharing student outcome data with the broader public. San Diego has approximately 9,000 ninth grade students, but only 6,000 of them graduate. When the community learned about

this situation, people wanted to come together to solve the problem. Student and parent focus groups were held to learn what their needs are compared to what they are getting, and this feedback was then provided to principals and teachers. The district also asked teachers and the business community for their input and feedback. The voice of the students, however, was one of the most important and led to creating schools that are more engaging and academically rigorous.

In **Providence, RI** (another SNS city), the partnership between the school district and the Rhode Island Children's Crusade for Higher Education has led to success that could never have been achieved alone. The community partner has helped with much of the work, and according to the district superintendent, "it's been a relief to have a partner to help out. Also, the core partner can say things that need to be said, especially with the teacher's union." Community partners have also helped when changes in leadership occur by making a commitment to stick with the reform effort and keep focused.

Reaching out to and engaging the community are not simple tasks and can slow down reform efforts as relationships and communication are established. The **Cleveland, OH** school district experienced this difficulty and learned the importance of developing a trusting relationship with parents and the community. The district started working with East High School, which had very poor student performance and outcomes and extremely low expectations for students. Their first step was to install a new leadership team and stronger security team. The new school leadership team wanted to focus on making the curriculum more rigorous and academic, but they ran into opposition from the community members and parents, who wanted a vocational focus for the school, as they considered it the best

“training” for their children. Faced with this standoff, the district used a process known as the Appreciative Inquiry Process (a way of communicating about difficult change) and worked with community leaders to help them see the potential of a more academically rigorous program. Despite a great deal of ongoing outreach to the community, it took a year for the community and parents to feel comfortable with the proposed changes, which has delayed progress.

A unique approach to engaging the community has been pioneered by **New Visions for New Schools**, in New York City, with their initiative, New Century High Schools (NCHSI). NCHSI is a groundbreaking program to rethink secondary education and provide New York City’s students with small, effective high schools that help them meet high standards of academic and personal success. Each New Century High School has its own identity, yet all combine rigorous academic programs with innovative teaching, personalized learning environments and deep ties to the local community. Each school is created through a partnership between educators and community organizations, who work together on every aspect of the school’s design and operation. One new school, the Fire Department of NY (FDNY) High School of Fire and Life Safety has the FDNY Fire Safety Education Fund as the lead agency and community partner. The lead partner for another school, the Performing Arts and Technology High School, is Nia Theatrical Production Company, Inc.

**Mott Haven Village Prep High School**, one of the New Century High Schools housed at South Bronx High School campus, partners with the East Side House Settlement (ESHS), which provides a counselor and social worker and support services during the school day and after-school activities, such as homework

assistance, tutoring, and recreation. ESHS also provides a weekly workshop with outside speakers on the importance of college, as a way to raise the students’ expectations of themselves and prepare them for college. ESHS pays for exploratory college visits and provides grants and support to students once admitted to college to help them persist. The close relationship between the school and ESHS is exemplified when the leader of ESHS steps in to act as principal on the days when the official principal is gone.

## Professional Development and Capacity Building

If there has been one consistent message about high school reform, it is about the need to provide teachers and school leaders with high quality professional development and capacity building opportunities to change and improve classroom instruction and student achievement. Teachers need help understanding and translating rigorous content material and standards into classroom-based curriculum and instruction, in manageable ways. Instructional coaches are an increasingly popular strategy, as is giving teachers opportunities to come together to share, analyze, and reflect upon student work, team teaching, common planning time, and teacher-directed professional development. Helping principals become instructional leaders is another common strategy. Districts have a large role to play in setting up appropriate professional development and capacity building for teachers and school leaders.

In **Providence, RI**, the district is using teacher coaches as a major reform strategy. Content-focused coaching is a long-range professional development practice that trains coaches to work individually with classroom

teachers to design, implement, and reflect on rigorous, standards-based lessons that promote student learning. The coach and teacher work together during a pre-conference to refine lesson design, during the enactment of the lesson in which both the teacher and coach are co-accountable for student learning, and during a post-conference in which they reflect on evidence of student learning and plan for subsequent lessons. Coaches are former teachers who possess deep knowledge about a range of issues central to lesson design and delivery in their content areas, including theories of teaching and learning, standards, instructional practices, assessments, and curriculum resources.

Literacy coaches (called instructional coaches at high schools) have been assigned to each high school in Providence, and work with the ninth grade teachers across all disciplines. Providence plans to have coaches for other subjects, like math, but have not yet instituted it. For teachers in other disciplines, professional development is focused on developing more rigorous content as the first step. One way to help teachers develop more rigorous coursework is for them to look at student work as a team. To continue the process of development, the lead teachers from each high school in a discipline meet to discuss the quality of student work as they move to the same level of rigor across the system.

At **Glenville High School in Cleveland, OH**, the principal and her staff indicated that ongoing professional development has been a key ingredient to ensure staff support for the reform efforts. The school uses outside experts and has sent staff to visit other schools to learn about new models, but “the best resources are in-house.” Teams of teachers review student work and share information and insights on why students are succeeding or failing, and they are improving their under-

standing of how to use assessments, such as the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), to improve instruction. When staff was asked how they learned about research on small schools, they replied they were “gently guided” to research-based and best practices by their principal and that she constantly shares information with them.

Staff at Glenville also said they learned a great deal from having the opportunity to visit small schools with block scheduling in Baltimore and Philadelphia. Many staff members also visited James Ford Rhodes High School in Cleveland, which had already switched to block scheduling and ninth grade academies. However, teachers were mainly convinced about the need to change by hearing from students about how much better block scheduling and small learning communities are for their learning. They said the student voice was most convincing.

Professional development and time for teachers to plan in teams is built into the **Brighton High School** week. All pathway teachers in grades ten through twelve meet three times per week for a total of 180 minutes in interdisciplinary Common Planning Time (CPT) meetings. In one meeting each week, teachers and representatives from student support services and special education discuss the students’ academic and behavioral challenges and strengths and formulate plans and interventions using a case management approach. The two other CPT meetings focus on best practices and looking at student work. There is also an instructional leadership team composed of teacher volunteers, teacher facilitators from each pathway, administrators, and coaches. The purpose of this team is to improve teaching practices in the classroom so that all students can achieve at high standards. At these meetings, teachers are invited to present their best practices or their “best

challenge” on which they would like advice.

One of the benefits of small schools, according to a small school principal, is that just as a small class size helps teachers know the students, a small faculty allows the principal to know and work closely with the teachers. “With a small school and fewer faculty members, you can get coherence in school that pushes for student achievement.” One goal for the principals of the small schools at the **Morris High School** campus is to make sure teachers are talking about instructional practice and student work on a regular basis. Morris High School staff indicated that once an open culture is developed, teachers and administrators begin to trust each other, and it is easier to share teaching practices, what works, and what does not. There is not a large amount of outside professional development brought into the schools; rather, ongoing discussions and review of student work and instructional practice is becoming the fabric of the school. Teachers indicate what they want to learn and work collaboratively to do so.

The **New Century High School Initiative** is also exploring new models of professional development for teachers, especially when a new school is created. A focus on classroom structure and instructional practice and how to create connections between them is critical. But rather than outside professional development, reflection on the work is the most profound professional development, but difficult to determine how best to allow that to happen. NCHSI also holds a principal leadership academy focused on relationships between the principals of small schools in a building. Each principal is provided a mentor, and weekly meetings with building principals are held to encourage open communication and discuss resource sharing and best practices.

**New Visions for New Schools** is also work-

ing systematically in New York City to create a support system for the new small schools. The organization works with the regional offices in the city to help build their capacity through technical assistance, and it provides professional development and advice on clarifying the role of the community partner and how to effectively engage the community in the design and implementation process. New Visions also recognizes the challenge of developing a cadre of qualified leaders for the new schools and assigns each principal a mentor as well as hosting networks to allow principals to share information across the city. Each region is also provided funds to support an office for small high schools, which is staffed with experts in community engagement, partnerships, and curriculum.

As part of its work on high school transformation in Ohio, the **KnowledgeWorks Foundation** provides technical assistance to the urban school districts with which it works. The foundation helps districts develop stakeholder advisory groups to provide input on the conversion process; offers a leadership institute three to four times a year; has created a small schools leadership network; provides school change coaches (22 experts from around the country who are on call) to the schools; matches up veteran principals and superintendents as mentors for the school leaders at the conversion schools; and identifies “centers of strength” within the community upon which the school and district can draw. KnowledgeWorks Foundation also sees itself at a statewide center of strength, in that it is constantly introducing teachers and school leaders to research and strategies to improve student achievement.

**First Things First (FTF)**, a comprehensive high school reform model, changes relationships (between students and teachers, teachers and administrators, schools and communities,

and among students themselves) by creating small learning communities with smaller groups of students and teachers that stay together across the school day and school years. The three critical features of FTF are: (1) equip, empower and expect all staff to improve instruction (the goal is not to replicate the brilliant but transform the typical); (2) institute flexible allocation of available resources including people, facilities, time, and money; and (3) assure collective responsibility for student outcomes, looking at such outcomes as attendance and persistence, respectful and safe behavior, progress toward graduation, proficiency on standards, and success on high stakes tests. This collective responsibility includes the small learning communities, the building leadership, district leaders and support staff, students, parents, and community members.

To change teaching and learning, FTF helps teachers build a repertoire of effective strategies and places a strong emphasis on professional development. It also supports standards-based learning activities, so that teachers' efforts are aligned with standards, it creates opportunities for a deeper dialogue among teachers to improve instruction and discuss student work, and it allows for common planning time every day.

Professional development in the system of schools supported by the **U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) Education Activities** receives high priority and attention. DoD operates 224 elementary and secondary schools (155 are overseas and 69 are in the United States) that enroll about 112,000 students. Of the students, 50% are white, 20% are African American, 9% Hispanic, 15% Bi/Multi Racial, and 6% Asian. Students who are white, African-American and Hispanic each scored well compared to their counterparts in other states and the gap between the

performance of white students and that of African-American or Hispanic students was narrower than this gap in the 50 states. Elements of the system include a large number of highly qualified teachers and professional development programs that include a systemic focus on the strategic plan as well as meeting the unique needs of local schools. DoD schools tailor professional development teacher by teacher, carefully structured to enhance a teacher's identified deficiencies or needs, and sustained over time.

Many schools, particularly small schools, continue to face challenges in serving students with disabilities. As schools integrate and mainstream students with disabilities and help them meet higher standards as required by No Child Left Behind, teachers are being asked to serve such students with little or no preparation. Small schools are generally too small to offer any self-contained classes, putting a larger burden on regular education teachers. Repeatedly, we learned about the need for all teachers to be given pedagogical skills and strategies to help students with disabilities and to develop effective teaming strategies that integrate special education and regular curriculum.

## District Leadership

The central office in the school district plays an important role in helping high schools reform and in creating a high performing system. Districts can have a huge impact on how finances and resources are allocated, the professional development provided, how leaders are selected and held accountable, and how much flexibility and autonomy schools are given. On top of that, districts need to make certain the community (including youth) is appropriately informed, engaged, and involved; collect and share outcome data; and hold schools accountable for performance.

No small task and no wonder many districts struggle with pieces of this complex puzzle.

A discussion group **report on finance and resource issues in high school reform** held by AYPF managed to touch on many items related to district leadership. The group felt that districts must ensure that their plans for standards-based reform are accessible and understood by the larger community, but particularly by individual schools. Districts must also play a key role in helping school leaders align their resources with district reform goals, but ensure that schools have enough flexibility to target resources based on the needs of the student population.

Districts also need to be creative in exploring ways to share resources among schools and with community organizations, postsecondary education institutions, and local businesses. Districts can support schools that arrange to share employees, such as allowing a teacher to work half-time at two schools or to allow students from different schools to participate in shared course offerings at one location.

How much autonomy schools need or can manage is a matter of great debate at the district level. More frequently, district leaders are giving schools with strong and capable leadership greater freedom to meet reform goals, while holding them accountable for improved student outcomes. For schools in which the leadership capacity is limited, districts are providing more hands-on and direct intervention to help school leaders change the way resources are allocated and used to improve student outcomes. In these cases, districts often required lower-performing schools to use specific and detailed instructional strategies and curriculum frameworks. The concept of local school autonomy or site-based management is often discussed and sometimes initiated, but most districts are

not ready to move to a fully autonomous system.

Frequent changes in district leadership are another challenge and make it difficult to develop coherent, systematic, and effective plans that lead to meaningful and lasting improvements. To the extent possible, where districts have been able to maintain and support particular reform strategies over time, there has been a greater impact and the community has been involved in pushing for reform. Districts should also keep longitudinal outcome data to determine the effectiveness of particular reform strategies.

In **San Diego, CA**, the reform effort is based on three guiding principles: (1) principal leadership development; (2) personalization of the learning process; and (3) academic rigor. Rather than force schools to use pre-packaged reform strategies, the district has heavily invested in the development of current principals as instructional leaders, as well as developing the knowledge and capabilities of new principals. Principals have mandatory training one day a month, and the school district can remove principals if they are not focused on improving instruction. The district describes their work as transforming principals from being a “plant manager” to an instructional leader. Principals are also provided training on how to assess their teachers to determine how instructionally effective they are. In-service helps the principal analyze instructional practice and then determine what to do about changing it. The high school principals have developed a strong sense of collaboration from this ongoing professional development, and they support each other and share a common vision and vocabulary, yet have the freedom to implement reforms that meet the needs of their particular student body. The role of the district in creating this cadre of skilled princi-



pals has been essential.

In **Cleveland, OH**, the district is engaged in how best to design and structure the leadership component for the newly created small schools. The district would like to have completely autonomous small school leaders, but it is unclear whether the small schools need a whole building leader or campus manager, and if so, how to structure these relationships. With support from the Cleveland Education Foundation, the district is bringing the principals of the nine conversion schools together to discuss leadership issues and to study ways to develop new leaders and structure new relationships. One approach the district will most likely pursue is to have some of the more senior current principals become mentors or advisors to work with schools that are just beginning the conversion process. This will allow current principals to work with the school district in a new leadership position and share their expertise with others.

**Houston Independent School District (HISD)** is a data driven system that rates every school by dropout rates and academic performance on standardized tests. HISD uses data to track student performance at the classroom level to determine what teachers are doing right and where teachers might need help. Also, HISD requires low-performing schools to hold community meetings to help raise awareness of their outcomes, needs, and how parents and community members can help support their students and the school's efforts. Performance contracts are in place for principals and assistant superintendents, who are held accountable for student performance, but who are also given flexibility to carry out their work. Principals' salaries are negotiated based on their performance and special needs of the school. Resources are redistributed and concentrated on the lowest-performing, neediest schools.

**New York City's Department of Education (DOE)** considers the school to be the agent of change, but the central office must support their work. The goal of the reform agenda is to give all schools and the teachers and principals in them the necessary resources and support to improve instruction. To meet the city reform's goals, the central office is working with other groups, such as New Visions for New Schools and the New Century High Schools Initiative and funders like the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help schools:

- develop highly qualified teachers;
- create systems of internal and external accountability;
- support schools where students are known well by adults in the building;
- provide rigorous academics, continuous assessment, pathways to postsecondary education and careers, and ongoing professional development;
- encourage a strong youth voice; and
- engage parents.

The district has also been concerned about students who have been pushed out of high schools because they are not able to pass the Regents exams. DOE now monitors all schools and requires them to have an explicit process in place for documenting what happens to each student and to maintain and share that documentation with the district office and the public.

## Intangibles

In every school we visited that seemed to be moving ahead successfully with its reform efforts, there was an atmosphere and culture of respect, equity, and a commitment to youth.

In these schools, students said they felt respected by teachers and staff; teachers were interested in their opinions and views; they were treated fairly and equitably by all adults; and that staff cared about them and, in some cases, were like family. The teachers and staff indicated that students were equally respectful of them, and there tended to be few incidents of students speaking out of order or being disruptive or rude. No policy can mandate this culture of respect, but good leaders can nurture and support it. School leaders need to understand the importance of creating a culture of equity and respect.

Successful schools also hired adults that like adolescents. While we assume that high school teachers select that profession because they like adolescents, unfortunately, it is far from true. Too often, on classroom visits or in meetings with school leaders, it was clear that some teachers and staff just did not like the young people with whom they were working. It is somewhat shocking to think of teachers spending 40-hour workweeks with students they do not like or enjoy. But it happens more than we admit. In the successful schools we

visited, we met teachers and school leaders who clearly relish being with adolescents, and they fully appreciate their growing intellects, their curiosity, and their attitudes and interests. Most of these teachers seemed to understand the principles of youth development intuitively and worked them into their classroom routines. Students know in a heartbeat which teachers want to work with them, and which ones are thinking how nice it would be to teach if there were no students in the class.

While it seems obvious that high schools should only hire teachers and staff that respect and like adolescents, there are almost no policies to enforce such practices. Having students participate in an interview team might be one way to gain student input, but very few traditional high schools (or teachers unions) allow this. An occasional alternative program, built on the principles of youth involvement and input, will have youth sit on an interview committee, but more can certainly be done to involve young people in the day-to-day business of schools. Careful hiring of adults who enjoy being with students is very important but rarely acknowledged.

## LEVERAGE POINTS

In the previous pages, we have described many policies, strategies, and programs that are being tried in an effort to improve outcomes for high school aged students. Without a great deal of research on many of these efforts, it is difficult to say which ones are truly effective and which ones might be most effective with certain groups of students. Lack of empirical evidence notwithstanding, it does appear that there are indeed certain points of leverage that need to be considered as schools, districts, states, and national organizations press for high school reform. What follows is an attempt to summarize these leverage points at various levels of governance.

### High School Level

The focus at the school level must be on helping each student succeed by improving instruction and tailoring instructional strategies to each student's strengths and needs. To do this, teachers need on-going professional development opportunities to:

- ensure strong content skills and academic rigor;
- understand the basics of teaching adolescent literacy;
- use a variety of assessments and outcome data to determine student success and failure and adapt instruction based on assessment data; and
- teach a heterogeneous grouping of students, including students with disabilities and English language learners (although the burden for these students cannot fall solely on the regular education teacher).

Professional development must be part of daily practice, include time for reflection and discussion of student work, and help each teacher gain the skills he or she most needs. Teachers need time for individual planning and as part of a team of teachers. Master teachers should serve as mentors or coaches to new or less skillful teachers.

The principal (and other school leaders) must create an environment and culture for high and equitable expectations for all students and ensure access to rigorous curriculum to allow all students to be prepared for postsecondary education and high wage careers. School leaders also must create a culture of respect between adults and youth and actively seek out the student voice and act upon it. School leaders also need to work with parents and community members to seek their active input and involvement in the reform process and to access community resources to support student learning.

### District Level

The central office must determine the appropriate level of support and autonomy for each school, based on the capacity and ability of the school leaders and teachers. For higher capacity schools, more autonomy should be allowed. Districts also need to ascertain when schools need help and in what areas. For instance, every high school in a district might need help dealing with low level readers, but only some schools might need help on an issue like helping teachers use student assessment data to improve classroom instruction. Districts should also create more choices and options for students and parents by ensuring a variety of themed schools, alternative settings and venues, encouraging funding mechanisms that support students as they move to different

public school settings, and options for accelerated coursework at the postsecondary level. Districts need to establish disaggregated data collection systems and hold schools accountable based on student progress for all subgroups. The data needs to be shared with the public and used as the basis for continuous improvement strategies. Districts should ensure that students have multiple options and choices and that high quality alternatives to the traditional high school exist. Lastly, district leadership needs to engage the community in reform efforts and draw upon its resources in offering educational services.

## State Level

States play an important role in supporting high school reform. Perhaps most important is to develop and establish clear and realistic standards or high school exit exams to determine what skills and knowledge high school students possess. High school exit standards should be aligned with college entrance standards. States can also support dual enrollment programs that allow students to earn college credit while in high school by considering student eligibility criteria, funding levels and support, and participation of postsecondary institutions. States have a responsibility to develop data systems that can determine the outcomes for students, including longitudinal outcomes that cross the K-16 system. Lastly, states can begin the process of researching and developing a performance- or competency-based system, rather than one based on Carnegie units or seat time.

## Federal Level

The federal government is limited by what it can do to support high school reform. Focusing on standards and accountability is right, although the current structure under No Child Left Behind could be changed to recognize more value-added improvement. From a research perspective, we are limited in what we really know works to reform high schools and improve student outcomes, especially at large, urban high schools. We need more research and evaluation at the federal level to determine what policies and practices lead to higher student achievement and improved outcomes of high school graduation, postsecondary access and success, and even longer term outcomes like wage rates and employability levels. Without this type of longitudinal data, we will never truly understand the impact of reform efforts. The federal government can also support the development of new strategies through selected demonstration efforts. Working with several school districts or one or two states on developing a competency-based system would advance the field greatly, for example. Finally, the government needs to promote data collection systems that span the K-16 educational system and across funding streams.

## ISSUES NEEDING MORE ATTENTION

One could say that all of high school reform needs much more attention and research – and it does. But there are a number of important issues that have been neglected, yet may hold the key to significant improvements for many students.

First is helping improve outcomes for students with disabilities and other needy students by determining the most effective instructional and supportive strategies to integrate and mainstream them into regular classes and to meet higher expectations and standards. Low level readers and English language learners fall into this category.

A second area is to experiment with large scale competency or performance-based systems, as opposed to requiring students to earn a certain number of course credits. While a number of small, innovative schools are using competency-based instruction and assessment, translating such a system to a large scale is daunting.

Third is to find ways of creating choice and options across a district, and using the full resources of the community to do so. While some school districts have created open choice within the district, or allowed students to select the high school they want to attend, most communities have only scratched the surface in creating a full spectrum of learning opportunities that meet the needs of many types of students across many different venues, locations, and durations.

Fourth is to ensure that all the pieces of the puzzle get put together. High school reform requires synchronization of many discrete efforts. Some reformers are good in one area – say, for example, putting in a standards-based instructional system. But they may have paid little or no attention to other important matters, like personalization of the school, creating relevance for young people,

engaging the community in the reform efforts, or linking to postsecondary education. What makes this work so difficult is trying to get all the pieces right and then getting them to fit together nicely, or as nicely as possible. Only a few innovative small schools have been able to manage these multiple dimensions of reform.

Fifth and last, youth need to play a larger role in the transformation of secondary school education. While many schools, communities, and reformers have taken youth input, it is often limited to the student council members, class officers, or other “bright” young people. There is certainly nothing wrong in having those young people involved – it is a good thing. But often, these youth do not truly represent the full range of students at a school. It is rare for the silent girl or boy, who rarely speaks up, to be asked for her or his opinion. It is rare for “C” student to be asked to escort visitors around the school and explain the changes the school is going through. It is rare for a disruptive student to participate in meetings with parents or other school leaders. It is rarer still for schools to reach out to students who have already left. Yet, these are the voices we are missing as we proceed in our quest to redesign an institution that they will use.

Many exciting possibilities exist for transforming the high school as we know it into a high performance, flexible, personalized, rigorous, relevant, and equitable learning environment for every student. It is clear that successful transformation will be dramatic, for maintaining the status quo and merely tinkering around the edges will not be sufficient.

We need to have the courage to completely rethink the traditional high school and our ideas about educating youth, opening the high school box wide and pulling it apart. This report demonstrates that there are successful

schools, practices, and policies that have already tossed out the old high school model, yet there is much more to be done to ensure that every student receives a high quality, supportive, and relevant education.

## APPENDIX A

### List of Forums, Field Trips, and Discussion Groups for Carnegie Corporation of New York October 1, 2000 - April 30, 2004

Click on a link below to read the summary of the event.

#### Field Trips:

**Michael DeBakey High School a New American High School, and Reform Strategies in Houston, Texas**, with visits to Michael DeBakey High School for Health Professions, Project GRAD, Wheatley High School, and a discussion with representatives of the Houston Independent School District. October 26-27, 2000

**High School Reform and Workforce Development in Baltimore, Maryland**, with visits to Patterson High School, A Talent Development High School, Lake Clifton Eastern High School (career academies), Civic Works (service and conservation corps) and meetings with the Mayor's and Superintendent's office to learn about school reform in Baltimore. March 22-23, 2001

**How Does a City Effectively Serve All Its Youth, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**, with visits to Edison High School, University City High School to learn about service learning initiative, Frankford High School (career academies), Change Charter School (formerly YouthBuild Charter School), a Youth Opportunities site, as well as meetings with representatives of the Philadelphia Office of Education for Employment and representatives of the Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council. May 10-11, 2001

**School and Community Reforms for Student Achievement in Boston, Massachusetts**, with visits to Fenway High School (pilot school), Brighton High School (career clusters), Diploma Plus program at Boston Adult Technical Academy, and Boston Excels Full Service Community School visit to Ellis Elementary School. June 4-5, 2001

**A View of Exemplary Practices in Two Virginia Cities – A Nationally Recognized High School in Newport News and Youth Development and Comprehensive Youth Programming in Hampton**, featuring a visit to Menchville High School, a New American High School, and insights into Hampton's commitment to comprehensive programming for youth with a focus on youth as assets. October 18-19, 2001

**Interventions for Youth in the School and Out-of-School Hours in Denver, CO**, focusing on Colorado's Small Schools Initiative and high school reform, including a visit to Manual High School, community schools and extended learning opportunities, Cole Middle School, the site of a Beacon Neighborhood Center, and a Youth Opportunity Grant site. April 24-26, 2002

**High School Redesign and Innovation, Providence, RI**, with visits to The Big Picture Company and The Met, Rhode Island Children's Crusade for Higher Education, Central High School, Mt. Pleasant High School, and meetings with state and district officials. May 13-14, 2002

**Comprehensive High School Reform and Extended Learning in New York City**, with visits to Morris High School, South Bronx High School, Harlem Children's Zone, Adlai Stevenson High School, and Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics. November 18-19, 2002

**Effective Practices in Alternative Education and School Accountability in Austin, TX**, with visits to American YouthWorks Charter School, Health Center and AmeriCorps and YouthBuild programs; Austin Independent School District leaders; and Garza Independence High School. December 3-5, 2002

**High School Reform in San Diego, CA**, with visits to High Tech High School, Mission Bay High School, Garfield Alternative High School, and Southwest High School, and meetings with officials from the San Diego City Schools, Patrick Ainsworth, Director, High School Leadership Division, CA State Department of Education, and Doris Alvarez, Principal, Preuss Charter School. May 21-24, 2003

**High School Reform in Cleveland, OH**, with visits to Glenville High School, Success Tech Academy High School, James Ford Rhodes High School, Cleveland Scholarship Program, Cuyahoga County Workforce Development Board, and representatives of KnowledgeWorks Foundation. December 2-3, 2003

**High School Reform in New York, NY**, with visits to Morris High School and South Bronx High School to learn about the transformation of large high schools to small high schools, LaGuardia Community College's middle college high school programs, and to meet with the Core Group Governing Team of the New York City school reform effort. January 8-9, 2004

## Forums:

**Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams): A Multi-Intervention Approach In Urban Schools Shows Success**, with Fred Doolittle, Vice President and Deputy Director, Manpower Development Research Corporation, Robert Rivera, Associate Director of Project GRAD Houston, TX, and Tycene Hicks-Edd, Lucent Technologies, Murray Hill, NJ. October 6, 2000

**New Rules, New Roles: Preparing All Young People for a Changing World**, with Gene Bottoms, Senior Vice President, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, GA; Hilary Pennington, President, Jobs for the Future, Boston, MA; David Stern, University of California, Berkeley; Jim Kemple, Senior Research Associate, Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation, New York, NY; Ephraim Weisstein, Vice President, Center for Youth Development and Education, Corporation for Business, Work and Learning, Boston, MA; Dorothy Stoneman, President, YouthBuild, Somerville, MA; and Kathleen Selz, President, National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, Washington, DC. January 30, 2001

**High Schools that Work** with Gene Bottoms, Senior Vice President, Southern Regional Education Board. May 11, 2001

**It Takes A City: Getting Serious About Urban School Reform**, with Paul Hill, Center for Reinvention of Public Education, University of Washington. May 14, 2001

**Wakefield High School: How Technology Contributes to Academic and Career Success**, Marie Djouati, Principal, students and teachers from Wakefield High School, Arlington, VA. June 1, 2001



**Reinventing Youth Corps for the 21st Century, A Successful Model for Serving Youth**, with Kathleen Selz, Executive Director, National Association of Service and Conservation Corps; David Archie, graduate of The Work Group; Lori Godorov, Development Director, The Work Group; Sally Prouty, Chief of the Ohio Civilian Conservation Corps; and Bryon Skeel, Ohio Corpsmember. June 15, 2001

**First Things First, a District-wide School Reform Model** with Jim Connell, President, Institute for Research and Reform in Education, Philadelphia, PA, and Steve Gering, Executive Director for Instruction, Kansas City, KS Public Schools. November 9, 2001

**Community-Based Organization Schools**, with Richard Murphy and Jean Thomases, Academy for Educational Development, Daniel Grego, TransCenter for Youth, Milwaukee, Perry Price, Minneapolis Urban League Street Academy, and Arnaldo Rivas, former student, Shalom High School, Milwaukee. November 16, 2001

**Can Policy Keep Pace with Changing Practice in Our High Schools?** with Mike Cohen, Senior Fellow, The Aspen Institute Program on Education in a Changing Society, Adria Steinberg, Jobs for the Future, and Tim Knowles, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Boston Public Schools. April 5, 2002

**March Toward Excellence: School Success and Minority Student Achievement in Department of Defense Schools**, with Claire Smrekar and Debra Owens, Peabody Center for Education Policy, Vanderbilt University, and Taffy Corrigan, Assistant Associate Director for Education, U.S. Department of Defense Education Activities. April 26, 2002

**Closing the Achievement Gap in Urban Schools**, with Mike Casserly, Executive Director, Council of Great City Schools, and Fred Doolittle and Jason Snipes, Manpower Development Research Corporation. June 7, 2002

**The Rapid Increase of Young People in GED and Adult Education Programs**, with Alan Werner, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction and Student Services, Office of Adult and Continuing Education, Schools and Programs, New York City Board of Education, Edith Gnanadass, Deputy Executive Director of Turning Point/Discipleship Outreach Ministries, and Martha Kamber, Director of Supportive Services, Sunset Park Adult and Family Education Program. July 26, 2002

**Florida Virtual School: The Future of Learning?**, Julie Young, Executive Director and Debbie Adams, American Government teacher, Florida Virtual School, and Ron Skinner, Project Director, Tech Counts, Education Week. October 18, 2002

**In Schools We Trust: Creating Communities of Learning in an Era of Testing and Standardization**, Deborah Meier, Vice Chair Emeritus, Coalition of Essential Schools. November 13, 2002

**Minority Student Achievement Network**, with Robert Smith, Superintendent, Arlington Co., VA Public Schools, Allan Alson, Superintendent, Evanston, IL Public Schools, and Rossi Ray-Taylor, Superintendent, Ann Arbor, MI Public Schools. November 22, 2002

**A Place to Grow: Evaluation of the New York City Beacons**, with Constancia Warren, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Peter Kleinbard, Fund for the City of New York,

Tracy Calderon, Beacons Director, and Jonathan Guity, student. February 21, 2003

**Creating Equitable High Schools: Strategies to Eliminate Tracking and Ability Grouping**, with Kevin G. Welner, Assistant Professor, University of Colorado, Boulder School of Education, Carol Burris and Delia Garrity, Rockville Free Union School District, Long Island, NY, and Tom Ledue, Principal, Noble High School, North Berwick, ME. December 12, 2003

**Schools for a New Society: Systemic High School Reform in Three Cities**, with Constancia Warren, Senior Program Officer and Director, Urban High School Initiative, Carnegie Corporation of New York; Rochelle Nichols Solomon, Academy for Educational Development; Jesse Register, Superintendent, Hamilton County Department of Education, Dan Challener, President, Public Education Foundation, and Cheri Dedmon, Principal, East Ridge High School, all from Chattanooga, TN; Melody Johnson, Superintendent, Providence Public Schools, Mary Sylvia Harrison, President and Executive Director, Rhode Island Children's Crusade for Higher Education, David Andrews, Director for High Schools, and Cheryl Gomes, Principal, Classical High School, all from Providence, RI; Richard Owen, Associate Superintendent, High School Improvement, Sacramento City Unified School District, Deanna Hanson, CEO LEED-Sacramento, and Kelly Young, Professional Development Consultant, all from Sacramento, CA. February 4, 2004

## Discussion Groups:

- Financing and Resource Issues in High School Reform ([link to report](#)). 7/12/01, 10/29/01, and 11/13/01
- Perkins Act Reauthorization Discussion Group ([link to report](#)). 12/18/01, 1/29/02, 3/4/02, 4/25/02, 7/24/02, and 2/5/03

## Roundtables:

- Roundtable on Improving Teaching and Learning Through Assessment ([link to report](#)). 5/9/02
- Roundtable on Instructional Strategies and Structures for Improved Learning in High Schools ([link to report](#)). 7/23/02

## Publications:

- *Rigor and Relevance: A New Vision for Career and Technical Education, A White Paper*, 2003.
- *Finance and Resource Issues in High School Reform*, 2003.
- *Essentials of High School Reform: New Forms of Assessment and Contextual Teaching and Learning*, 2003.
- *Local Intermediary Organizations: Connecting the Dots for Children, Youth, and Families*, 2002, co-funded with Academy for Educational Development, Institute for Educational Leadership, The Finance Project, Jobs for the Future, and New Ways to Work.
- *All Over the Map: State Policies to Improve the High School*, 2002, co-funded with a consortium of organizations for the National High School Alliance.



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