

Strategies for Transforming Rhode Island High Schools

A REPORT FROM

The Rhode Island High School Summit



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The Foundation for Change

High schools have a long and checkered history in America from their inception in the mid-eighteenth century to today. Originally limited to the elite of society, their enrollment over time has expanded to include virtually everyone. Complaints about high schools have been a regular occurrence throughout their history; and are as much a reflection of conflicts within the larger society about the purpose(s) of schooling in general rather than high schools in particular. While those who are ignorant of the past are often condemned to repeat it, the past need not be the sole determinant of the future. ¹ We believe that we are at a critical juncture in the history of Rhode Island where high schools can and must transform themselves to better serve the needs of their students and the wider society to which those students belong.

High Standards, High Achievement for All Kids

As the last decade began, educators in Rhode Island knew they needed to improve student and school performance. The key was setting high standards and ensuring that ALL kids, in ALL schools, had the opportunity, support and resources to succeed.

The Department of Education began by asking all citizens what students should know and be able to do. From across the state, the answers were loud and clear and they form the foundation for the statewide standards.

Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning created in 1995 has four major cornerstones specifying what Rhode Islanders believe all students need to know and be able to do upon graduation as they pursue a career or further studies:

- ◆ Communication – reading, writing, speaking, listening and conversing effectively
- ◆ Body of knowledge – acquiring ideas and skills that have been passed on by past generations and that form the basis for the future progress of society
- ◆ Problem solving – viewing learning as a lifelong process in which problem solving complements the body of knowledge by helping students acquire and apply new knowledge
- ◆ Responsibility – accepting responsibility for oneself, one's learning, and one's role in society.

¹ A solid one volume history of the modern American high school is [The Last Little Citadel: American High Schools Since 1940](#), Robert L. Hampel, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1986. It should be required reading for anyone seeking to transform today's high schools.

All of Rhode Island's subsequent plans and actions for school change are built upon this solid foundation.

The Comprehensive Education Strategy

In 1995, Governor Lincoln Almond and Commissioner Peter McWalters appointed a 60-member panel to develop an action plan for the fundamental transformation of Rhode Island's education system. The panel applauded the widespread efforts to improve student and school performance across the state. In particular, the panel was pleased to see that Rhode Island was already committed to high education standards. At the same time, they said our state needs nothing short of a revolution in our expectations for all students in all schools.

The result of the group's work, "All Kids, All Schools: The Rhode Island Comprehensive Education Strategy," was endorsed by the Board of Regents, the Governor, and the Legislature. The "Strategy" is the state's guiding vision for school change. To make this change real in every classroom across the state, we must ensure the use of the best instructional practices, support each school as it works to meet the needs of its students, and invest in education in an adequate and equitable manner.

Article 31

To take a giant step in implementing the approaches of the Comprehensive Education Strategy, the General Assembly passed, and the Governor signed, "The Rhode Island Student Investment Initiative," popularly known as Article 31 in 1997. The broad program and fiscal support provided in Article 31 targets investments to improve both student and school performance. These investments focus on accountability for student results as well as on the capacity of the system to support all schools.

Changing Rhode Island's Schools

Rhode Island has built a strong foundation for change in all its schools. But we are only at the "end of the beginning!" Most of the hard work and heavy lifting lies before us. Change must become real in every classroom --- and must be reflected in every student. Successes we have seen to date in student achievement have largely been at the elementary level.

As we enter the 21st Century, employers tell us that our high school graduates lack skills, adaptability, and effective team problem solving habits. A high school graduate today can expect to change careers at least three times in a working lifetime, sometimes to a job that has not yet been invented. It is time to re-focus on our high schools!

Rhode Island High School Summit

In response to the need to improve the performance of Rhode Island's high schools, the Rhode Island High School Summit was convened at the Newport Marriott Hotel, on November 15 and 16, 2000. The Rhode Island Department of Education and the Northeast Regional Lab at Brown University collaborated as sponsors for this venture. James DiPrete, Chairman of the Board of Regents and Peter Fornal, Vice President of Log On America, chaired the event for the purpose of rethinking and recreating Rhode Island's high schools in the 21st Century.

The goals of the Summit were:

- ◆ To confirm what Rhode Island students should know and be able to do upon graduation.
- ◆ To develop new approaches (strategies) to achieve the desired learning results.
- ◆ To determine what the obstacles are to achieving worthwhile change.
- ◆ To identify next steps for post-High School Summit activities.
- ◆ To propose recommendations for Regents' consideration regarding Rhode Island high schools.

The Summit planning team realized immediately that as many groups as possible should participate and that one gathering could not possibly account for all individuals interested in the Summit goals. To provide opportunities for many perspectives, an elaborate set of focus groups were conducted in October, 2000. The primary purpose of these sessions was to ensure that many voices were heard on the subject of creating better high schools in Rhode Island. Their collective voices and insights are summarized in the Appendix to this report.

Nearly one hundred individuals from key stakeholder groups attended the Summit meeting (see the Appendix for the participant list). The design of using focus groups proved invaluable during the November Summit sessions, as participants could continuously reference images of needed change. Those who attended the pre-Summit and the Summit activities developed a wide-ranging set of thoughts, ideas, and recommendations that can serve as a rich source for the creation of action steps at both state and local levels. The Appendix captures in full the ideas and deliberations of the two days. The text which follows highlights eight broad areas for transforming Rhode Island high schools, proposes a way of organizing the difficult but immensely rewarding work that lies ahead, and provides a set of recommendations for possible action by the Regents and other state-level entities.

New Perspectives, New Partnerships – Some Comments from the Summit

Education and business in partnership

The high school has been a concern of the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Regents. That institution has remained largely untouched by any outside influences or inside influences. High schools have done a good job at meeting the needs of some students, but have never been able to meet the needs of all students. The world has changed. We must change how we organize the high school and provide better opportunities for students.

James DiPrete, Chair, Board of Regents and veteran high school principal

Literacy is a major issue. Students are ill prepared for reading, writing, problem solving, interpersonal skills, working on teams – critical components of the workplace in the present and the future. In Rhode Island our size enables us to engage the business community and education in a true partnership, which must be affirmed by policies that will support change management.

Peter Fornal, Vice President, Log On America

Supporting every child to learn and to work

Organizing our educational system around the child is dramatic and necessary. The question is how do we organize ourselves to bring all students to standards so that every child will know how to learn? We know that no smooth continuum from high school to college to the workplace exists in our educational system. We do not have a mechanism for students to have a real world connection so that they are constantly setting out plans and revising those plans. This must become the experience of every child.

Peter McWalters, RI Commissioner of Education

We tell our kids that college is important and that there is a direct correlation between their education and their earning power. We don't tell them that many of them will not graduate from high school or that many who start college never finish. We can continue to let our kids stumble and fall, and brand themselves as failures. Or we can prepare them. Our kids will be our work force.

Dr. Lee H. Arnold, Director, Department of Labor and Training

Teaching and Assessment

Professional development and sustained dialogue among teachers of the same subject area as well as across subject areas will ensure that high school teachers understand the standards comprehensively and incorporate them fully into their teaching. On the local level we will need to work harder on development of quality assessment systems that document individual pupil growth.

Dr. Dennis Cheek, Director on Assignment for Research, High School Reform and Adult Education, RI Department of Education; Adjunct Professor of Education, University of Rhode Island

Eight Broad Areas for Transformation

The challenge of substantially changing high schools is daunting, complex, and uneven across the state. We suggest eight broad areas for focus as schools continue or begin their work on transformation.

I. Students Ready to Learn

At the center of the transformed high school are the students. The high school environment itself is only one of many worlds these students inhabit. The nutrition, health care, adequate shelter, general physical and emotional safety, family stability, and personal attention that occurs outside the school environment are integral to students' academic success in the high school years. We can no longer maintain separate conversations about these various elements since they combine to determine so much of high school students' readiness to learn in school.

Since high schools cannot afford to maintain the sort of staff that could meet all the health and social needs of their students, the schools should do the next best thing: Cultivate close working ties with agencies to which they can refer their students and allow the agencies to deliver some of those services in the school . . . The need for such social and health services as these is often inseparable from the support that students require for successful academic achievement Every obstacle removed from the difficult road that a youngster must travel toward obtaining educational credentials clears the way for the journey to continue and heightens the chances of the person reaching the point where he or she becomes a contributing member of society.

Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, VA, 1996, p. 91f.

Middle schools also have a key role to play in advancing high school transformation. They prepare students for this next phase of learning and frequently do so in the dark about what specific expectations high schools have for incoming freshmen. Conversely, high schools often know little in the way of

specifics about the middle school curriculum, middle school practices, and middle school culture. This mutual ignorance results in many conflicting and confusing signals to young adolescents about their roles, adult expectations of them, and the differences to expect as they head into ninth grade.

At the center of the transformed high school are the students. Their needs should drive the delivery system. Many of the following elements are typically found at the core of current school systems as key factors influencing decisions rather than the needs of students:

- ◆ Scheduling
- ◆ Extracurricular events and activities
- ◆ A prevailing and ever-changing curriculum fad
- ◆ A 180 day timetable
- ◆ A 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM school day
- ◆ Teacher contracts
- ◆ Transportation

Putting the needs and abilities of students at the center of the delivery system makes students the customers. Professionals who can honestly ask, and answer the question, “How is our system not meeting students’ needs?” will produce a host of innovative, inertia-shattering solutions to the current problems facing high schools.

State Role

The State must continue to accelerate its efforts to create a coordinated system that provides quality services for Rhode Island’s neediest families. Child Opportunity Zones established by the Children’s Cabinet (a federation of state agencies serving RI children and youth), the school-based health centers, and the One Stop System (Network RI) of the Department of Labor and Training should be further strengthened and continuously improved. This will require the systematic collection of data from populations served as well as regular independent evaluations.

Community Role

Communities should map out their disparate systems of services to families and work to create tightly coordinated integrated responses to family needs. *(Here and throughout this report, “Community” includes the local school district, the school committee, local government, local civic organizations, and local business and industry.)* Personal and job-related counseling, immunizations, general health care, support groups, and other services should be provided in a triaged approach that recognizes that families require differentiated levels of support and that all needy families benefit from some support, however modest. In some cases a targeted but modest level of support

is all that is needed to get a family back on track. Other families require much more extensive and sustained intervention.

School Role

High schools, drawing upon SALT Survey data and other locally derived sources of evidence, need to improve their understanding of students' needs that transcend the school curriculum. This ongoing evaluation should be carefully integrated with student personalization strategies and efforts to build and expand community support (see below).

II. Basic Literacy Must be a Priority

Far too many high school students enter the freshman year reading well below their grade level. The inability to read well, write well, and express oneself orally are one root cause of high school failure in academic subjects, marginal job opportunities during and beyond the high school years, and many school discipline problems. Students who cannot read, write, or express themselves honestly, experience of low self-esteem, mounting frustration and depression. Summit participants highlighted the urgent need for a coordinated, statewide effort to dramatically improve ninth grade literacy.

Literacy – an individual's ability to read, write, and speak English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential.

National Literacy Act of 1991

State Role

The reading initiative launched within the past two years to improve literacy dramatically in the earliest years needs to be replicated at higher grade levels to attack this critical problem facing RI high schools. The best national thinking and experience must be sought and effective strategies quickly developed and implemented that will positively impact every high school in the state. The sustained involvement of college and university faculty, practitioners from various disciplines, and the support of state leaders in government, higher education, K-12 education, and the broader community is critical to achieving success. All future high school teachers must leave college with the skills to effectively teach reading, writing, and speaking within their respective subject matter areas.

Community Role

School committees and the broader community must unite around the critical need for greater literacy on the part of the substantial number of students who read well below grade level. Community “ramp-up” programs that provide focused literacy help before and after school and throughout the summer must become far more widespread if the current literacy crisis is to be eliminated. School committees should obtain quarterly reports from school officials about actions being taken locally to address this problem and vest themselves deeply in the success of this effort.

School Role

“Reading is fundamental” must become the by-words of every member of the high school administrative, teaching and support staff. Every adult in high school must be a teacher of reading, recognizing that teaching via modeling is every bit as important as direct instruction. We can no longer declare that teaching students to read, write, and speak well is the specialized and sole responsibility of the English Department, reading teachers, or educators of special needs students. While all of these specialists have much to contribute to this Herculean task, they can only succeed if every adult in the high school joins in this effort.

III. Students Must Learn What Matters

Every high school student spends on average a total of 4,300 hours within the high school itself. Only about 2/3rds of this time is spent directly in learning activities. Even some of this time is wasted, learning things that will not matter in the student’s future. The smorgasbord high school curriculum with its à la carte menu of choices results in too few students being exposed to the kinds of challenging academic topics they need for future academic and career success. Challenging content standards that specify what students need to know and be able to do, coupled with performance standards that clearly define what mastery of particular standards entail, are essential to high performing schools. Each student needs full exposure to a core curriculum before branching off into further specialized studies. The active involvement of discipline specialists from area colleges and universities is required to help ensure that the content is current and accurate. It should promote higher order thinking skills consistent with content standards that have received widespread endorsement (e.g., New Standards Reference Examinations performance standards from NCEE, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards, state English Language Arts framework, industry created standards for specific career clusters). We must teach what is important and students need to learn what matters.

“Knowledge work” is replacing low-end, low-wage jobs. In 1950, 80% of jobs were classified as “unskilled”; now, an estimated 85% of all jobs are classified as “skilled.” A telling example is found in machine tooling. The operators of today’s computer-numerically-controlled (CNC) manufacturing technology now need sophisticated skills, commonly including computer programming and knowledge of calculus.

Before It’s Too Late. A Report to the Nation from the National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century, Washington, DC, 2000, p. 13.

How well students are doing against specific standards needs to become a hallmark of the high school experience. Each student should have a personal learning plan that shows what standards have been mastered and the level of mastery. While a certain set of standards applies to all students, some individuality is necessary so that a student’s plan reflects some of his particular interests in specific fields.

As much as humanly possible, all learning within the high school should be real world and contextual. Learning must not be limited to the four walls of a classroom, but instead, the concept of the classroom must be expanded to embrace work-based learning environments, community-based learning opportunities, service learning and real world tasks that both benefit the local community and contribute to student learning. This shift will require reconceptualizing “who” is a teacher, recognizing that an expert in a particular field or sometimes a student peer is a far more effective instructor than a classroom teacher. While overall supervision of the “learning environment” must remain with certified educators, we must expand the students’ world of schooling to the many others who can help them learn via mentoring, peer tutoring, internships, guest speakers.

At the Area Career and Technical Centers and in career and technical studies offered in comprehensive high schools, specialized studies in various industry clusters must be firmly anchored and supported by relevant businesses. Curriculum should be well-designed within these clusters and constantly updated to reflect the vibrant, ever-changing American workplace. Students studying within a cluster must experience a sequence of learning experiences extending beyond the high school to post-secondary degree or certificate programs that are industry-endorsed and recognized.

State Role

Existing connections between New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation standards and visits and the School

Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) process, including school SALT visits, must be fully integrated and complement one another. School course offerings should be identified using a common labeling system, preferably the one recently promulgated by the National Center for Education Statistics. Monitoring of the extent and nature of these offerings can then be quickly and easily obtained at local, district, and state levels.

The State needs to define clearly what constitutes an Area Career and Technical Center worthy of state support. Centers that do not conform to these criteria should be devolved to their respective districts. Simultaneously with this effort, the State needs to support more fully its Area Career and Technical Centers consistent with the recommendations of the Career and Technical Education Task Force Report recently endorsed by Governor Almond. Career and technical programs, no matter where they are offered, must meet industry-endorsed state standards, and programs not meeting standards must not receive state dollars.

We believe the State has a major role to play in promulgating content and performance standards and helping districts and schools in their implementation. This approach should recognize that while the outcomes are common, the ways to reach those outcomes may vary considerably from one high school to another. The state, through its accountability reporting function, needs to help policy makers and the general public know what particular efforts are making a difference in transforming high schools.

High schools currently grant a graduation diploma to any student who has “passed” a requisite number of courses (usually minimally defined) and not substantially violated the school’s general rules of conduct. Steps must be taken to strengthen the components that lead to the granting of a local high school diploma. These steps might include student construction of a portfolio of evidence that indicates mastery of certain core content and skills standards such as that created by the Rhode Island Skills Commission as a Certificate of Initial Mastery.² Another step might be to significantly increase the course requirements for graduation beyond the current state minimum and/or mandating specific and challenging courses to satisfy state-mandated requirements.

Finally, we recognize that the State needs to take a lead role in commissioning, financing, and supporting networks of high schools that can engage in the transformation process together, rather than the isolation that is the norm. High schools educators need one another and the best thinking and practices available across them if they are going to succeed in this worthy venture.

² Certificate of Initial Mastery, Version 2, Rhode Island Skills Commission, Providence, Spring 2001.

Community Role

Fundamental responsibility for the learning of every student resides at the local level. School committees and local government must reinforce to their high schools the need for clearly articulated standards, consistent assessment and evaluation processes aligned with those standards, and support systems to ensure that every student meets or exceeds the standards. Boards need to take a more active interest in the actual “lived curriculum” of the high school as it plays out in the lives of different groups of students. The goal is that all students enjoy the same core curriculum as a foundation for solid high school and life achievement. The final two years of high school should allow for specialized studies in a manner that expands, rather than limits, future student opportunities.

Area Career and Technical Centers need to have their own Boards of Trustees, similar to the Davies’ model, so that proper oversight for these Centers is maintained and their programs improved. This change needs to be coupled with full state support for the students and programs within these Centers; otherwise, they will continually fail to realize their potential.

School Role

High schools must clearly signal, from the principal to the paraprofessional on staff, that standards matter. Summit participants recognize that individual teachers will teach in differing ways and sequence their own curriculum. At the same time, we call for better attention to common learning within given courses and within different subject areas. An introductory course in biology, for example, should have the same content standards regardless of who teaches the course. While schools may set differentiated performance standards for the same course, participants believe that high schools in Rhode Island currently provide far too many “learning tracks” and that many of these tracks are paths to nowhere. We call for a complete and systematic revisiting of the issue of the high school curriculum in light of standards.

IV. Communities Must Support High Schools and their Students

Rhode Island has a long history of communities seeing a need and rallying widespread support to change outcomes. This “can-do” attitude must be more evident when it comes to transforming high schools. Typically, communities express high dissatisfaction with high schools in general but substantial satisfaction with their particular local high school(s)! While community pride is valued, we must see much wider levels of dissatisfaction with the status quo of high schools in each community if real transformation is going to occur. Partly this is because substantial and lasting change is quite difficult to achieve in any arena, education included. High schools can no longer simply play around the edges of change. Yet change, by its very nature, is threatening since it upsets the current power structure, destabilizes long-running ways of interacting, and

takes all of us down paths whose ultimate outcome is uncertain. Widespread community support for substantive high school change needs a much more supportive environment for it to thrive and not be dashed by the inevitable critics before it has any hope of succeeding.

Community Expectations and Support

Every community has a right to expect that its high school(s) provide engaging, meaningful, and life-changing learning for its oldest adolescents. High schools should be required to report regularly to community-sponsored forums their progress on community-endorsed learning outcomes. Communities have a right to know what they are getting for what they are contributing, and schools must systematically recognize and respond effectively to this demand. Education of ALL high school students is far too important to be left to any one group, and far too vital to leave out any group in deliberations and actions. We all have a stake in how our high school students perform in school and in life. Communities have a right to expect great things from their high schools and an obligation to fulfill their responsibilities to provide adequate levels of support and direction. Too often we have expected high schools to achieve the impossible with the improbable and the unattainable. Similarly, we must all recognize that truly worthwhile changes take time and cannot occur within 1-2 years. Dramatic changes that occur within short time periods are almost always inconsequential, short-lived, or impossible to scale up to the entire school.

One of the most pressing problems that our schools face today is the barrage of competing and often conflicting demands to do all things for all people. . . . What is missing from this complex mix of divergent pressures is any coherent vision at the local level about what schools should be accomplishing. The challenge is to structure a coherent vision around students and what it means for them to become successful learners. Although a climate for this can be encouraged at the national and state levels, the specifics must be left to the teachers and communities who best know the needs of their own students.

Mandating Academic Excellence: High School Responses to State Curriculum Reform, Bruce L. Wilson, Gretchen B. Rossman, Teachers College Press, NY, 1993, p. 194.

Higher Education Involvement

Colleges and universities have a long history of criticizing the work and products of high schools. Some of this criticism is undoubtedly well-deserved. However, the time has come for colleges and universities in our state to make an

institutional commitment to the transformation of Rhode Island's high schools – a commitment that transcends individual faculty who have a long record of involvement and single departments or colleges within these institutions. We further believe that the engagement of faculty and staff well-beyond those in colleges of education is essential. High schools need content discipline specialists in all fields of human endeavor from community colleges, liberal arts institutions, and comprehensive and research universities.

Business schools for example, can undoubtedly help RI high schools transform their operations and procedures in ways that benefit students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Research (including non-teaching) faculty can open their investigations to high school teachers and qualified students to provide cutting-edge perspectives and new vistas of learning for both students and teachers. Competitions, on-line learning communities, virtual field trips, invitations to professional conferences and campus seminars, are just some of the many opportunities that currently are known to only a few high school teachers and/or schools. Faculty can assist high school teachers in conducting action research into instructional practices, curriculum design, and assessment of student learning.

Similarly, high school educators can assist in developing better student assessments, correcting academic learning to real-world contexts and engaging students in collaborative work.

The path to progress [higher education and K-12 education reform] will not be smooth. There is still apathy and misunderstanding on campuses, and cynicism and anger among school reformers and practitioners. The truth be told, higher education has not even been asked to do much in many communities; and perhaps for this reason, its leadership has not yet given the issue a central place or high priority, either in rhetoric or reality. Yet, higher education can itself be neither effective nor equitable unless schools improve their capacity to educate all children regardless of ethnic background, socioeconomic status, or ability. We will succeed only when the members of our two estranged communities behave, by conviction and by incentive, as through they must hang together, or, as the saying goes, hang separately.

Higher Education & School Reform. Eds. P. Michael Timpane, Lori S. White, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1998, p. 13.

Business Involvement

Every community has a base of local business and industry. Historically, high schools have been production facilities, producing entry-level workers for

local businesses. High schools have historically viewed local business and industry as consumers who are not deeply vested in the broad educational mission of schooling. This troubled relationship is changing in specific ways across Rhode Island. Business increasingly recognizes and accepts that schools do not exist solely to produce entry-level workers and that the new economy requires very highly skilled individuals who can solve complex problems, work effectively in teams, and engage in higher order thinking and decision making. High schools' principal products are student learning and the ability to learn throughout life. A growing number of RI high schools are learning to welcome business perspectives about the worth of the contemporary school curriculum, especially in areas related to working in groups, problem solving, and skills-related learning. Schools also are benefiting from business insights into ways to improve school business processes and administrative functions.

“. . . employers and educators have often been at odds over precisely what teachers should be teaching and students should be learning to achieve these goals. Some of their differences can be attributed to a lack of agreement about the specific academic, employability, and technical skills that new workers should bring to the workplace when they leave the classroom for the office or the job site. Creating a common understanding of this issue is a major goal of the standards-based curriculum movement. . . . widely accepted integrated standards based on academic, employability, and technical skills can be an effective tool for developing rigorous curricula.”

Building Linkages: Making Integrated Standards Work for Education and Industry, Paula M. Hudis, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC, January 2000, p. 7.

Over the past few years, a number of vibrant partnerships among schools and RI businesses have emerged from the statewide School-to-Career effort, Perkins programs, and individual school and business initiatives. These partnerships have resulted in equipment donations, teacher externships (formal placements in corporations), student internships, job shadowing, career exposure, and improved high school curricula. Federal Perkins funds have supported the creation of industry clusters and a first generation of industry-specific skills standards for RI high school students as they pursue particular career pathways. Currently, the state School-to-Career Office and Industry Field Coordinators report that there are more openings for varied student experiences in RI companies than there are requests from schools to place their students in these work-based learning environments. The challenge before us is to ensure that every school enjoys the fruit of such joint ventures.

State Role

The State's multiple efforts at workforce development and education need to become more integrated and seamless with clear system outcomes identified and tracked at the state level. The Human Resource Investment Council, Department of Labor and Training, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and institutions of higher education, must continue and accelerate their work on coordination. A major goal is to consolidate the current plethora of funding initiatives and "drivers" within the RI educational system into just a few key efforts, using an 80-20 strategy (80% of the impact comes from 20% of the effort – focus on doing the 20% really well). This system approach is especially important at the high school level, since too much time and effort is currently expended within districts to meet the varied and frequently divergent demands of these disparate programs. Success will require in-depth planning, detailed action steps, and ongoing evaluation framed around desirable and measurable outcomes.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Board of Regents should continue its requirements related to School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) as a common anchor point for high school transformation across the state. RIDE should continually seek ways to build community capacity to interact effectively with their high school(s) and for high schools across the state to interact effectively with one another in the interest of promoting worthwhile change.

A series of well-coordinated networks of high schools needs to be formed using a combination of state and local leadership and resources. These networks, while working independently of one another, will benefit from cross-coordination and the same quality standards for participation and action. External evaluation of these networks must be in-depth and continuous so that constant improvements can be made as the work progresses.

Community Role

One or more local champions for high school transformation must step forward in each community if change is going to succeed. These champions should be viewed as positive contributors to the local community who command wide respect and are viewed as impartial in their efforts. Working in concert with many others across the community, each community should define clear outcomes for its high school(s). These outcomes should be framed in a manner that takes adequate account of state content and performance standards, NEASC accreditation standards, and progress in other high schools around the state in the change process. Management and other structural elements of the system must be reengineered in light of these locally articulated outcomes to accelerate their realization. Local leaders must commit themselves to working in a long-term relationship with the high school to realize the transformations that

are envisioned. Regular “audits” of specific programs at the high school should be conducted as part of the community’s role to promote incremental as well as systemic improvements.

School Role

“No school is an island” must become a watchword for the transformation process. Schools need to adopt practices and orientations that allow the community to become further involved in the process of school change. Each high school should have substantial community representation on its School Improvement Team (SIT) and these representatives should have the full endorsement of the Town Council or other local appropriate body, e.g., local Chamber of Commerce, in addition to the School Committee. This linkage builds broader community ownership of both the problems and the solutions. Each school should also be part of a formally operating network of high schools committed to the transformation process so that mutual learning and reinforcement can occur on a regular and systematic basis.

V. High Schools Must be Adolescent Friendly and Challenging

The Commission heard from a broad range of students and educators. They, in general, described Maine secondary schools that are academically focused but rarely exciting or challenging, social but strangely impersonal and sometimes hostile, orderly but ill-suited for learning, predictable but lacking application to life. These schools do not support all young people in attaining ... skills and knowledge.... Instead, too many reward students more for being compliant than for being self-directed and informed, more for memorizing information than for using it to solve problems, more for allowing routine than for making decisions responsibly or for being creative, more for functioning in isolation than for being collaborative community citizens.

Promising Futures: A Call to Improve Learning for Maine’s Secondary Students, Maine Commission on Secondary Education, 1998, p. 3.

Monday mornings across Rhode Island are currently greeted by far too many high school students with apathy, since it means heading off to high school for another boring week. High schools often fail to exhibit the challenging, stimulating, and invigorating environments sought by older adolescents. A random walk through a typical high school and glancing into classrooms reveals many students completely disengaged from activities in those classes and a few even sleeping! We acknowledge that it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to make all subject matter interesting for all. The standards movement challenges us to jettison some topics that are currently served up in high schools across the state and concentrate on learning fewer things in much greater depth. Project 2061 of

the American Association for the Advancement of Science, for example, has found that when its Benchmarks for Science Literacy are applied to a standard high school science textbook, that more than a third of the book disappears! (RI has adopted this national document as the core of its state science framework.) This increased focus holds promise of making the learning more real world and contextual. Success at this venture will only occur if partners outside of the school are brought fully into the effort to redesign the school curriculum. Post-secondary institutions also need to participate fully in this dialogue since far too many entering college students spend the first two years of postsecondary education in remedial coursework.

But more than just the curriculum must change. Schools must be organized for learning rather than for convenience. Teaming, interdisciplinary lessons and units, block scheduling, exploratory programs that are offered for short periods of time to expose students to broad range of ideas and experiences, and various other strategies must become commonplace in high schools across the state. Every student should be viewed as a partner in the learning enterprise rather than just a passive consumer. Curriculum must be far more than a transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next. Students need to be directly involved in planning for their own learning and helping to decide what to learn. Personalized learning plans for students are the hallmark of a transformed high school as it attends to the unique learning needs and interests of all of its students while ensuring that certain fundamentals are not missed by anyone. Multi-faceted assessment of student learning must be designed in such a way that it communicates to students, teachers, and parents each student's progress toward attainment of standards.

High school students also have personal and social needs that the high school must address. Each high school student should be known well by at least one adult within the high school. This will require formal and informal opportunities for small groups of students to regularly meet with adults within the building where the focus is not the curriculum but the students themselves.

Make the high schools smaller, more focused, more challenging with higher standards and authentic assessment, more interesting places to work and study, and more friendly and fair to *all* students and to their parents. High schools need to be more connected with the real world and with adult mentors, provide more resources – especially technology, be staffed with well-prepared and dedicated teachers, be more responsive to the communities they serve, be more accountable relevant to their mission and goals, and just be more tuned in to teenagers and their learning and career goals, needs, styles, and problems.

New Directions for High School Career and Technical Education in the 21st Century, Richard L. Lynch, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, No. 384, Columbus, OH, 2000, p. 52.

High schools need to experiment more fully with new ways of grouping students, altering time for learning, and utilizing a wider range of space and learning options not limited to the physical grounds of the school. There are no “magic bullets” or “one-size fits all” models that can simply be transferred *in toto* from one school to another. Each high school should engage in “proof of concept” trials of educational innovations and new ways of doing things to determine what works well in their school. Effective strategies and models should then be thoughtfully implemented throughout the areas of the school or its curriculum where appropriate with adequate support and time for all relevant staff to learn and succeed with the innovation(s).

State Role

Standards, both academic and those that are oriented towards career clusters (industry skill standards), are at the core of the new high school. These standards include the many facets of social and emotional competency and character development. The state not only needs to ensure that all schools have access to content standards but also to develop or provide access to tools and models which enable practitioners to make sense of and apply the standards.

Community Role

School committees and towns need to create extended opportunities for high school teachers in the summer to conduct curriculum audits, mapping their existing learning materials to content standards. Identified gaps in the learning materials must be addressed and materials that are not aligned with standards need to be replaced by those that are. Time also needs to be provided for teachers to learn useful techniques to help students explore their full potential, maximizing their strengths and attending to their weaknesses. While classroom teachers cannot and should not become full-time counselors to individual students, better strategies need to be learned and employed to make high schools more personalized for students.

Finally, summer externships for teachers in business, industry, and other organizations where subject matter knowledge is deployed need to become the norm rather than the exception. Every teacher needs to see how the skills and knowledge they are seeking to impart and improve among students actually “works” in the real world. This effort will not only result in a more contextually-centered teacher but also enable many teachers to obtain state of the art knowledge within their particular field of study, e.g., a chemistry teacher working all summer at a chemical company or a research lab.

School Role

Principals must exercise a strong leadership role and model the need for all staff to come to know at least a few students very well. Principals also must be

first, and foremost, instructional leaders in their high schools. They must know and understand key content standards in the various subject areas and organize efforts for the school to revisit systematically and purposefully their curriculum and associated learning materials in light of standards. This cannot occur under the existing system constraints where much of the principal's time is occupied by routine administrative matters, business concerns, and mundane operational tasks. Schools must find other ways to complete and maintain these necessary, but non-instructionally related, functions.

VI. High Schools Must Develop Cohorts of Leaders

The high schools that Rhode Island needs cannot be created nor sustained solely by the actions of charismatic leaders. While charisma is certainly required and sometimes lacking, new concepts of leadership that do not depend on isolated heroes and heroines are needed. Entire cohorts of school-based leaders need to be developed in high schools across the state. Responsibility and accountability must be shared if high school faculty and staff are going to seriously transform the "usual way" of doing things. Command and control structures that have often worked well in the past will not do for the present and the future. Leadership is widely acknowledged in the world of business, the military, and government as the new challenge for this millennium. High schools must also respond to this challenge with new concepts, new models, and above all, a new mindset.

State Role

RIDE, working in collaboration with colleges and universities, professional associations, and business leaders, needs to support extensive and targeted leadership development activities. These learning opportunities must not be limited to administrators but should embrace a wide spectrum of job responsibilities so that leadership becomes a distributed and shared enterprise in high schools.

Community Role

Communities need to stabilize district and school leadership through the innovative use of resources and incentives in order to obtain and retain quality leadership. The community must also signal in a clear manner to the high school that leadership must extend far beyond a single person and embrace a wide cast of high school faculty and staff.

School Role

Principals must learn how to use effectively a shared leadership model. They must learn to equip and empower subordinates to take greater accountability for leadership within the school coupled with real authority. They

need regular opportunities to problem solve situations that arise with colleagues and mentors. Business and industry leaders who have succeeded at flattening their organizations and leveraging change through leadership should be sought as mentors.

VII. High Schools Must Teach for Tomorrow

The pace of change is dazzling in the modern world. Patterns of induction into the profession of teaching need to undergo yet further transformation if high school teachers are to be prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. Preservice programs for high school teachers must reflect extensive exposure to actual high school classrooms, quality high school teachers, and real-world experiences. Professional development schools, located within existing high schools, are one of many ways by which this goal may be realized. Extended placement within schools early on in their pre-service programs and continuing throughout them is another strategy. Another option is to create quality teacher academies in high schools that identify talented students with potential to become good teachers.

The first-year experience of the high school teacher must be one of continuous support, ongoing education, and room to fail. High school teachers for the initial three years of practice should have the benefit of a quality mentor and an adjusted teaching load that allows time for reflection, planning, and learning – including observations of exemplary teaching.

Greater focus must also be placed on the learning and mentoring of support staff. The needs for professional growth among this group of practitioners may be even greater than that of new teachers. Since many of these individuals interact substantially and substantively with high school students, it is in the interests of everyone that there be a focus on quality and continuous learning.

School improvement happens when a school develops a professional learning community that focuses on student work and changes teaching . . . In order to do that, you need certain kinds of skills, capacities, and relationships. Those are what professional development can contribute to . . . Any school that is trying to improve has to think of professional development as a cornerstone strategy.

Michael Fullan, quoted in *Revisioning Professional Development. A Report of the National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching*, National Staff Development Council, Oxford, OH, 1999, p. ii.

This report has already highlighted the need for leadership training for a diverse group of high school leaders. Principals and other administrators also need targeted learning opportunities that focus on other key issues such as instructional practice, curriculum and assessment, time management, crisis intervention, long-range planning, program evaluation, supervision, mentoring, asset protection, and security. Learning opportunities to date, while growing in number and breadth, still fall far short of what is required if we are to succeed on this most challenging venture.

All learning opportunities for administrators, teachers, and support staff within the high school should, as much as possible, be job-embedded. External workshops, outside of the school environment, while serving a useful awareness function, can never supplant or affect the change that job-embedded learning within a living school can supply. External exposure to new ideas and approaches must be coupled with opportunities to try them out in a supportive environment within the high school. Follow-up activities to share challenges and insights with one's peers has time and time again also been shown to be effective.

State Role

The state should formally require quality mentoring programs for new teachers that cover three years of initial experience in the high school. Resources should also be sought and/or redirected to support a broad range of professional development experiences for teachers, support staff, and administrators.

Community Role

Contracts for teachers, support staff, and administrators must build in clear expectations and support for ongoing learning and personnel development. Some new resources will be required since the learning demands are much greater than current resources can possibly fulfill. Greater resources need to be coupled with compelling accountability around the things that matter rather than issues unrelated to improving student learning. Extensive mentoring relationships need to be cultivated throughout the high school involving not only persons within the school but also individuals from the broader community whose expertise and insights can be invaluable.

School Role

“Learning for ALL,” must be the new mantra for all administrators, faculty and staff in high schools. The sweeping transformation sought for the high schools of Rhode Island can only be achieved if everyone increases his/her knowledge and skill base. Time for reflection, learning, sharing, and changing behaviors must be reflected in school budgets and supported by the community

for substantial change to occur. A balance of external and internal learning activities for professionals must be attained and maintained. The capacity building envisioned here may require a fresh look at infrastructures for learning across an entire community, not just its schools.

VIII. High Schools Help Students Embrace Learning as the Business of Life

We have been called the “knowledge society.” Students can no longer graduate from high school, obtain an entry-level position, and then forget about formal learning. Virtually every sector of American business and life reflects the insatiable demand for knowledge and ever-broadening and deepening skill sets. World-class companies routinely invest about 10% of their profits on training. Students need to know that learning is the business of life.

Another way to increase student motivation for learning is to encourage young people to guide their own learning. Studies tell us that students see purposeful work as one of the things that is missing from their lives – in the classroom, in the community, on the job, and in the social organization of the school itself. Many high school students work a lot of hours at minimum wage jobs that teach them little. Many others engage in volunteer and paid activities that give them real learning opportunities on the student newspaper, in hospitals, in youth centers, in courtrooms, and in other community agencies.

The Lost Opportunity of Senior Year: Finding a Better Way, National Commission on the High School Senior Year, Preliminary Report, Washington, DC, January 2001, p. 23.

All graduating seniors will inhabit a world where formal and informal education will continue throughout their working lives. Post-secondary education is no longer an option; it is an essential ingredient to a quality job and future. This education may take a wide variety of forms, including but not limited to four-year and two-year degree programs, certificate programs (with or without academic credit), competency-based learning (validated through testing), registered apprenticeship training, and on-the-job training and authentication.

The wide range of options available to students must become more well known and more easily accessed as students consider their post-high school options.

State Role

The state should coordinate the compilation and accessibility of post-secondary education options for students.

Community Role

Local businesses need to share their insights and knowledge about careers and learning opportunities with local high schools. Community-wide job shadowing days should be organized, promoted, and well attended.

School Role

The freshman and sophomore years of high school should expose all students to a wide range of career and future education options. The junior and senior years should provide opportunities for in-depth exposure to a few careers of interest to specific students. These experiences however, must not be seen as separate activities and yet another add-on to the school curriculum. They must be interwoven to become part of the fabric of helping all students achieve at high levels on clearly articulated and widely embraced content standards. Community representatives who typify these various opportunities should become regular fixtures in high schools. All students should be formally introduced to the range of tools available on the Internet and in other media whereby career and learning opportunities can be investigated. Each student should have an identified, knowledgeable adult available in his/her high school with he/she they can discuss these options. Guidance counselors within the high school alone cannot successfully perform this task.

Organizing the Change Process

The strong consensus of Summit participants is that the type of transformation we are seeking will not come quickly, easily, or by working in isolation. We value and respect the long tradition of decentralization that characterizes our state. The local high school *is* the fundamental unit of change for the transformation that is required. It is vitally important that administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff all be involved in the process of transforming schools. Due to the vital role that teachers play in student learning, it is paramount that large numbers of teachers be substantially and continuously engaged in the transformations envisioned by this report.

To the degree that teachers are out of the policy loop in designing and adopting school reforms, it is not surprising if they drag their feet in implementing them. Teachers do not have a monopoly on educational wisdom, but their first-hand perspectives on schools and their responsibility for carrying out official policies argues for their centrality in school reform efforts. As “street-level bureaucrats,” teachers typically have sufficient discretion, once the classroom doors close, to make decisions about pupils that add up over time to de facto policies about instruction, whatever the official regulations. In any case, then, teachers will make their imprint on educational policy as it becomes translated into practice.

Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform, David Tyack, Larry Cuban, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1995, p. 135.

We firmly believe that every high school needs to be part of a learning and support network of other high schools within the state. All high schools need to accept and work with similar content standards and the state has already set performance standards in key subject areas. These performance standards (e.g., those of the New Standards Reference Examinations) cannot and should not comprise the total content of the high school curriculum. High schools are urged to consider thoughtfully the more numerous content standards found in the state curriculum frameworks and national standards documents in various disciplines. Not all of these content standards can, or should, be addressed by a single high school or by every single student. Yet all high schools and teachers should be able to clearly relate their curricula and their individual lessons to clear and compelling content standards (what students should know and be able to do).

Our ability, as a people, to uncover the liberating opportunities concealed within daunting tasks is what defines the American genius.

Before It's Too Late. A Report to the Nation from the National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century, Washington, DC, 2000, p. 6.

The Department of Education, RI Office of Higher Education, Department of Labor and Training, and Human Resource Investment Council, teacher unions, among others, must be fully engaged with our high schools in the transformation process. High schools cannot do it without them, but neither can the state simply command, fund, reward, and/or condemn. We need a working partnership on a level never witnessed before, where the state is a full partner in the process but does not seek to overdetermine the work or its outcomes.

We propose that networks of high schools be formed with some attention to geography, similarity, prior history, and individual choice. What is non-negotiable is that high schools commit clearly and fully to a network. A network may be formed by any nonprofit organization or LEA but all networks must include representation from at least four school districts and include at least seven high schools. High schools may propose to join a network that exists outside of Rhode Island but must provide evidence of how their involvement with that particular network will result in at least as much possibility for change and support as envisioned here. It is recommended that any high schools pursuing this path consult with RIDE as they consider this option. Any network that desires support from RIDE, HRIC, DLT, and/or EDC must meet the following criteria in order for it to be recognized and supported:

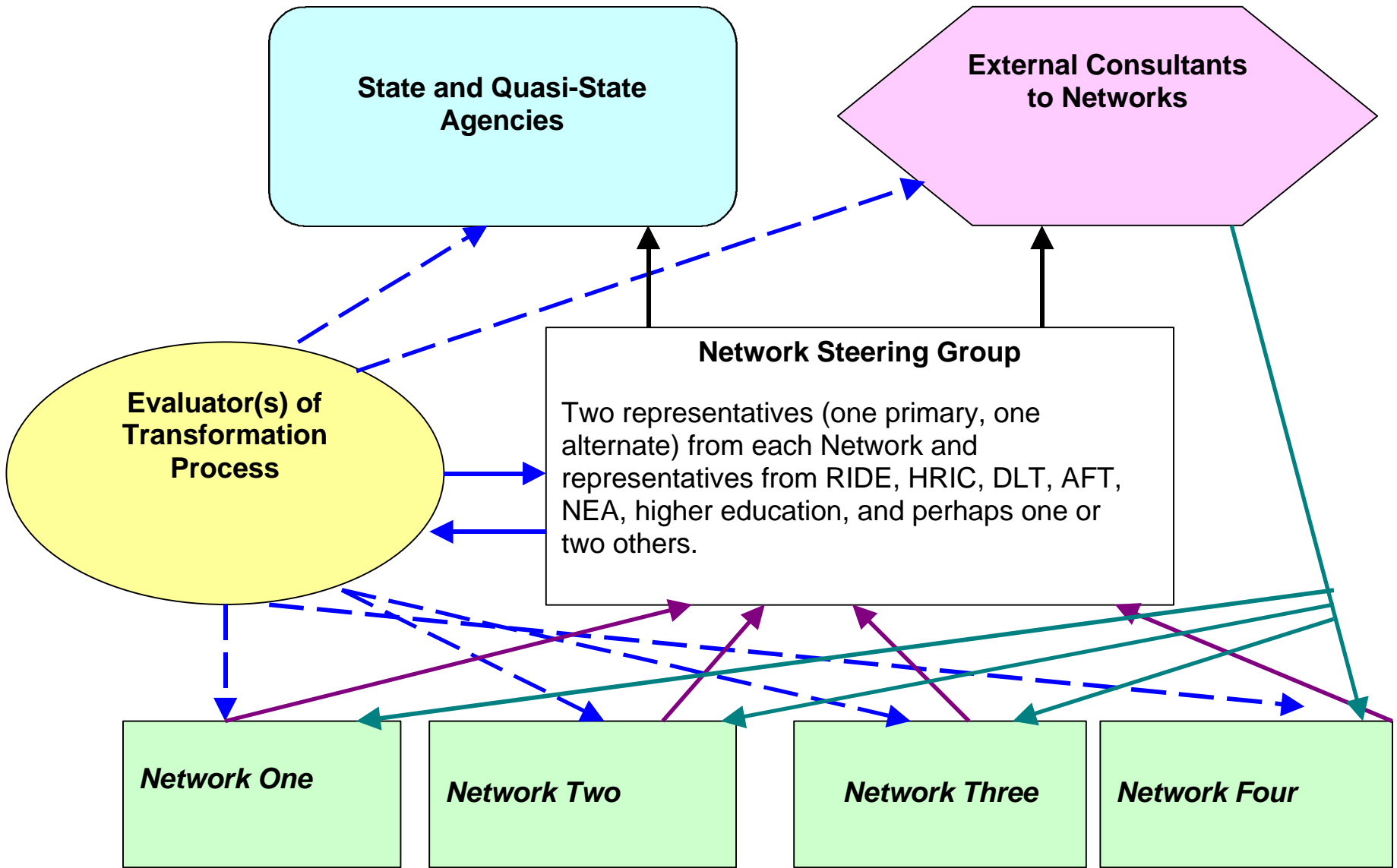
1. At least one major business partner who agrees to provide informed personnel to the effort in an on-going basis. In most cases this will not be a

full-time assignment for a particular company employee but a shared responsibility coordinated by the CEO or designee.

2. A commitment on the part of the participating high schools to experiment, collect evidence, engage in sustained evaluation, and alter time, space, and resources as their insights suggest. At least 75% of the faculty and staff must signal by a signed agreement their commitment to this transformation process.
3. The formal endorsement of the School Committee, Superintendent, Principal, and other appropriate local organizations (e.g., teacher unions, local businesses) for the high school's involvement in the network.
4. A commitment to come into full compliance with NEASC accreditation standards with or without a NEASC visit.
5. A set of goals and action plans must be identified and agreed upon by members of the Network. These goals should directly lead to improved student learning for all students in a high school.

The distributed organizational structure of the accompanying figure is suggested as a way for the various networks to communicate, share their challenges and learning, and pool their resources for external assistance. It maximizes the freedoms of each particular network to pursue its own self-determined path while linking the various networks into an organized whole. As common needs surface across the networks and are brought to the steering group, it can help leverage resources within or outside the networks to derive the system support that is needed. Similarly, insights or approaches pioneered successfully in one or more networks may be of interest to other networks and the steering group can serve as a means of sharing knowledge across networks. The steering group will employ the services of one or more expert evaluators to assist it in documenting strategies that are working, identifying network problems as they emerge, and delineating organizational and structural issues that require problem solving and action. All networks must agree to participate in regular external evaluation activities conducted by these system-wide evaluators. Regular written reports of evaluator findings will be shared across the network as well as regular updates from the steering group of progress and challenges.

A Structure for Transformation



POSSIBLE ACTION BY RIDE/REGENTS OR OTHER STATE LEVEL PARTNERS

I. STUDENTS READY TO LEARN

Require each school district to develop a policy for involvement with families. This policy will put into place a comprehensive system of community and school-based supports to students who are identified as being "at risk" or are in danger of dropping out. This change would be best accomplished by extending current inter-agency agreements and expanding human service networks to include community partners. These policies would insist on monitoring and follow-up with each student and family so identified. Incentives should be given to districts that reduce their dropout rates and maintain the "holding power" of their schools.

II. BASIC LITERACY MUST BE A PRIORITY

Every district would be required to develop a specific "LITERACY LEARNING PLAN (LLP)" for students who have not acquired an appropriate level of reading, writing and math proficiency by the beginning of seventh grade ("Proficiency" to be defined). These Literacy Learning Plans would be at the center of each district's "educational safety net" which targets students who need support to acquire necessary levels of literacy to succeed in a rigorous high school curriculum. The LLP would accompany the student at least through grade 10 and be reviewed and updated quarterly. A statewide taskforce on high school literacy would convene immediately to determine the details of how to implement this support system.

III. STUDENTS MUST LEARN WHAT MATTERS

High schools must be directed to review their existing curricula, course-work, and delivery of instruction to ensure high standards and high expectations for all students. Program offerings need to be reviewed to determine that the core instructional program for every student possesses "rigor and relevance." Course-work would be analyzed to ensure that career preparation and post-secondary preparedness are embedded in each program offering. Each district would adopt the New Standards Reference Examinations high school content and performance standards as the core of their curriculum standards (supplemented by additional standards) for ALL students. As a basic graduation requirement, a senior demonstration project (capstone project) and at least one work-based learning experience would be required of all students. Fulfillment of this requirement can be modeled after the work of the RI Skills Commission on the Certificate of Initial Mastery. The work-based learning experience would be part of the wider regional career programs offered by the School-to-Career partnerships, Career and Technical Centers, Career Clusters and the One-Stop

System (Network RI). Community service activities might also be required. School systems should validate performance based on skills and proficiency rather than solely time-based authentication (Carnegie Units) when considering their graduation requirements.

IV. COMMUNITIES MUST SUPPORT HIGH SCHOOLS AND THEIR STUDENTS

Currently each district is required by Article 31 to have a strategic plan that is the product of widespread, broad-based community participation. Though many plans are of high quality, meeting the spirit of broad-based community involvement, they simply are not being supported at the community level. Community ownership of those plans must be ensured so that support encompasses all aspects of the community. In a sense, a community "compact" must be created in all thirty-nine cities and towns which includes all stakeholders investing in the strategic plan. Each district would report to its municipal governing body on progress in achieving the objectives in its strategic plan.

V. HIGH SCHOOLS MUST BE ADOLESCENT-FRIENDLY YET CHALLENGING

High schools need to examine their environment (climate) to ensure that every appropriate measure is being taken to create safe, healthy, and nurturing schools that accommodate students' diverse learning styles and interests. District policies should require that student advisories be developed in each high school so that small groups of students can meet with adults and every student is known well by one adult in the building. Small Learning Communities could also be founded as an academy structure or other learning structures that may extend beyond the standard school day or school year. The structure of the day (or school year) for both teachers and students would be altered based on the need for additional time and curriculum mastery. Teachers would participate in curriculum work that assists the school in changing to this system of flexible scheduling.

VI. HIGH SCHOOLS MUST DEVELOP COHORTS OF LEADERS

Leadership preparation for principals should be dramatically changed. RIDE, in conjunction with higher education, administrative organizations and other partners, should quickly modify existing program requirements to be more competency-based and integrated with current statewide reform expectations.

Practicing principals, aspiring principals and assistant principals should be required to participate in statewide professional support networks and professional development training opportunities which keep their skills current and build capacity in their leadership effectiveness, rather than the optional participation currently practiced. Teacher leadership should also be a critical

aspect of these leadership opportunities and development programs. Leadership preparation should emphasize transformational leadership. These training opportunities would undergird every high school principal's instructional leadership capacity.

VII. HIGH SCHOOLS MUST TEACH FOR TOMORROW

Teachers need to be given the tools to succeed. Each district should be required to complete an "audit" of existing professional development opportunities for its high school staff which examines recent training, professional time requests, and development of a professional development plan (which is reviewed as part of the school improvement plan). Mentoring needs to be in place for all first- and second-year teachers to promote retention of new staff and teacher effectiveness. SALT visits to high schools should carefully review these professional development plans to determine if ALL staff are involved with adult/professional learning opportunities.

VIII. HIGH SCHOOLS HELP STUDENTS EMBRACE LEARNING AS THE BUSINESS OF LIFE

Graduation requirements should be revisited in each high school to ensure that all students are proficient in use of technology and can demonstrate key competencies that can be used in the pursuit of higher education and careers. Articulation agreements between high schools and post-secondary institutions on program offerings should reflect preparing students for the 21st century and embrace 4-year, 2-year and 1-year institutions. Students and families should be made aware of these expectations in elementary and middle school. Tax incentives for Rhode Island businesses might be provided so they open their doors to a much wider range of students and focus on helping those students acquire and exhibit job-related skills, aspirations, behaviors, and competencies (i.e., SCANS competencies).

APPENDIX

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Pre-Summit Planning and Focus Groups

The Summit Planning Group was comprised of: Lee Arnold, Dennis Bouchard, Colleen Callahan, Doreen Corrente, Joe DiMartino, Jim DiPrete, Diane DiSanto, Ken Fish, Todd Flaherty, Pete Fornal, Gerry Kowalczyk, Dennis Littky, Bob Mackin, Sharon Osborne, Harry Potter, Rocco Rainone, Mary Ellen Sacco, Linda Soderberg, Elliot Washor

1. Union Representatives Focus Group Session

Date: October 16, 2000

Place: Davies ACTC, Lincoln, RI

- 1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?
 - Nothing works for all students
 - Having high expectations and generally accepted standards has both raised expectations and awareness
 - Implemented a study skills program in Language Arts and mathematics that is mandatory for all students
 - Have double period (English and Social Studies) programs and integrated math programs. Much more integrated and interdisciplinary courses and subjects.

- 2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?
 - Building leadership does not possess the strong leadership skills needed to move/lead a building
 - Will for standards based reforms
 - Safety nets for students who are not meeting standards or expectations – concepts are out there but no political will to implement them
 - Having set time frames for courses (i.e., full year, half year) is not working for many kids
 - Alternative learning programs for low achieving and disruptive kids are missing
 - What new approaches are needed?
 - Teacher training in all areas – standards, instruction, methods, etc.
 - Restructuring the school year/school day to include longer days, Saturday courses, flexible starting/ending times
 - Having 39 separate districts needs to be rethought

- 3) What are the obstacles to change?
 - The limited state funding to support the state agenda – the local burden that falls on more affluent communities leads these communities to ask “why

should we buy into the agenda or do 'optional' things without financial backing”

- It is not the distribution of money it is the pool of money distributed and how it is inadequate to push the state agenda at the local level
- Reluctance of school boards to end social promotion means there is no teeth in reform standards
- The colleges and universities are not producing graduates that reflect changes in education
- General lack of understanding among public (and sometimes teachers) about the amount of effort and commitment required to implement change and the overall need to change – “It looks good enough for me”

4) What next steps should be taken?

- Financial commitment to support the educational system the public professes to want
- Multiply the per pupil expenditure by 4 to make the amount spent comparable to the cost of a college education so we can deliver that quality education for all kids
- Get off the reliance on the property tax

5) What recommendations should apply to all Rhode Island High Schools?

- It is important for the union to take a pro active role in educational reform and be seen as an agent for change not maintaining the status quo
- Have active leaders (union personnel) to spread the work or serve as a resource for needed changes at the state level
- It is important to have language that allows individual schools or groups to try things not permitted or addressed in the district wide contract

2. Teachers Focus Group Session

Date: October 23, 2000

Place: Hope High School, Providence, RI

1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?

- Small class size
- Personal connection between teachers and students
- Increased time on task (scheduling, time)
- Extracurricular activities (sense of belonging)
- Creating a safe environment
- Computer literacy for all students
- Support for professional development
- Faculty has general commitment to school improvement
- Recognize the need for change

- Smaller learning communities
 - Motivated students respond well to our efforts
 - Community support
 - Nothing is working for ALL students
(much variety, seems unique to each school)
- 2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?
- Large class size
 - Lack of parent involvement and supplies
 - Schools lack of purpose in minds of students
 - Social promotion
 - Large schools
 - Testing (state level) – teachers and students don't buy into it
 - Lack of connection between teachers and students
 - Concerns about at risk students
- 3) What are the obstacles to change?
- Allocation and use of money
 - “fads” – too many educational fads
 - Lack of time for teachers to work together
 - Lack of time for personal development
 - Support from administration
- 4) What next steps should be taken?
- Small classes – including guidance and support staff
 - Eliminating social promotion
 - Develop career plans
 - Attracting good people to education
- 5) What recommendations should apply to all Rhode Island High Schools?
- Teachers directly involved in agendas for personal development training
 - Important for teacher voice to go to school committee
 - Teacher become more reflective in their work

3. Superintendents Focus Group Session

Date: October 16, 2000

Place: Davies ACTC, Lincoln, RI

- 1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?
- Personalization
 - Safety nets for those not usually high achievers – writing/reading lab, accelerated literacy (during school day)

- Instruction focused on real life situations
- 2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?
 - Way we track – what the tracks mean (college bound, comprehensive, etc.)
 - Our system of watching out for unsuccessful kids – inadequate safety nets, lack of personalization
 - Ways we assess students, especially norm reference assessment – not a growth model vs. criteria referenced tests
 - 3) What new approaches are needed?
 - Reorganization of time and space in work day – more time for faculty to work with one another during school day (e.g., contractual time permits this)
 - More personal contact between teachers and students
 - Shift in balance between what is best for adults to what is best for students
 - Commitment to meaningful integration across subject areas – opportunities each subject area presents for connections
 - Articulation across K – 12 – time for those teachers to communicate/articulate curricula, instruction
 - 4) What are the obstacles to change?
 - Departmentalization of subjects taught in high school
 - Contracts
 - Those least well served (i.e., whose needs are not being met) are least system savvy about what needs to change to meet their needs
 - 5) What next steps should be taken?
 - Ensure that we've taught all kids to read
 - Establish a state curriculum with explicit goals and objectives (i.e., results)
 - Remove obsolete laws and regulations, especially those regulating inputs not outputs
 - 6) What do you see as your role in bringing about changes which are needed?
 - Responsible for establishing the systems to allow staff to function more effectively for students – we are more “interpersonal” in RI than “systemic”
 - Model, model, model – facilitation skills, questioning/coaching skills for staff and faculty
 - Nurture a leadership culture where constructive dialogue is accepted

4. Students Focus Group Session

Date: October 23, 2000

Place: Hope High School, Providence, RI

- 1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?
 - Extracurricular activities – sports, clubs, after school organizations, etc.
 - Teachers – caring, open to student ideas
 - Technology – computer labs available to students
 - Hands on learning and teaching
 - Friends

- 2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?
 - Rules with no meaning – suspension, detention
 - Lunch
 - Teachers – lack of dedication, lack of respect
 - Overcrowded classrooms
 - Scheduling – start time, passing time

- 3) What are the obstacles to change? (no answers)

- 4) What next steps should be taken?
 - Need more technology per classroom to be used (Providence school)
 - Improved facilities which are conducive to learning (Providence school)
 - Improved heating/cooling systems
 - More natural light
 - Better windows
 - Cleaner bathrooms
 - Allow faculty to get together as a department for curriculum development
 - Smaller class size because it will offer more individualization, personalization, and better instruction
 - More money – teachers, supplies, books, facilities
 - Upgrading classroom materials; recognizing each students' individual talents
 - Reorganize schedule to include longer lunch, increased passing time, and a locker break
 - Student/teacher assembly each month – guest speakers, leader address actual high school topics
 - More hands on learning (field trips) that are course/content related. Currently there are few, if any, field trips
 - More technology
 - Elective gym for senior year, seniors could take a different class instead of gym
 - No smoking in bathrooms, better ventilation
 - Reallocation of funds
 - Decrease the student to teacher ratio
 - More extra curricular activities for career center students
 - Personalizing education
 - Change current attendance policy which rewards and punishes students for attendance – grade incentives for good attendance, prohibited from attending social events if students has been absent a certain number of days

- Teachers need to change their presentation techniques when instructing students – more hands on and less lecturing
- Clearly designed and communicated grading rubric for each class to be communicated at the beginning of the year
- Update technology in all programs so that they are aligned with industry

5. Special Education Directors Focus Group Session

Date: October 16, 2000

Place: Davies

- 1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?
 - Transition to work
 - Flexibility of scheduling a.m./p.m. rotation
 - Recognition of the need to incorporate standards into IEPs
- 2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?
 - Willingness on the party of staff to make modifications and accommodations
 - Lack of appropriate behavioral interventions
 - Failure to create student independence
 - Lack of differentiated instruction
- 3) What new approaches are needed?
 - Acceptance that all students belong and can learn
 - More professional development on site/after school e.g., differentiated instruction; behavioral interventions
- 4) What are the obstacles to change?
 - Over identification of special education (students)/over dependency on special education
 - Systemic approach to education vs. a dual system (general/special education)
 - Effective leadership
- 5) What next steps should be taken?
 - Diversified instruction for students
 - Develop new mental models to change the culture of high schools
 - Increased collaboration between regular education and special education teachers
- 6) What recommendations should apply to all Rhode Island High Schools?
 - Serve as a wealth of information and resource for differentiated instruction

- for all students
- Leadership to help everyone understand that every student must be accepted
- Serve as advocate for an ALL KIDS agenda
- To build the capacity of regular education

6. School Committees Focus Group Session

Date: October 16, 2000

Place: Davies ACTC, Lincoln, RI

- 1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?
 - Student involvement in decision making
 - Staff development
 - Curriculum/standards – making it more meaningful
- 2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?
 - Evaluation process for teachers
 - Scheduling – not flexible
 - Union contract
 - Instruction not individualized – not using a variety of methods, stagnant
- 3) What new approaches are needed?
 - Integrating curriculum
 - Better cooperation with teacher unions
 - Writing across curriculum – all grade levels
 - Integrating technology throughout instructional program
- 4) What are the obstacles to change?
 - Lack of professional development
 - Union contracts, management prerogatives
 - Funding
- 5) What next steps should be taken?
 - Fully integrated curriculum to meet individual needs
 - Individualizing instruction to meet needs of each student – teach to strengths
 - Equitable state funding
- 6) What do you see as your role in bringing about changes that are needed?
 - Set policy
 - Be a champion of education in all forums
 - Support administration

7. School Improvement Teams

Date: October 16, 2000

Place: Davies ACTC, Lincoln, RI

- 1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?
 - Strict guidelines on attendance – students strive to meet them
 - Raising the bar has resulted in use of different teaching strategies and using various assessments so that every child will succeed
 - Fiscal autonomy – supplies can be delivered immediately
 - Board of directors, school leadership is site based
 - Academic policies linked to extracurricular activities
- 2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?
 - Time constraints for students – 40 minute periods, lack of rotating schedule, inflexibility of current schedule
 - Parent involvement is not what they would like it to be
 - Lack of recognition of different teaching styles – using the “same old” teaching strategies
- 3) What new approaches are needed?
 - Investigating best practices across the state
 - Different kind of scheduling options
 - Put the student first
- 4) What are the obstacles to change?
 - Change in philosophy – focus needs to be on students and student achievement
 - Consistent standards, CIM, NCEE, RI frameworks – too many sets of standards
 - Funding of education – should not be tied to individual towns
- 5) What next steps should be taken?
 - Helping teachers learn to examine and reflect on student work
 - Flexible schedules – to support all the changes
 - All school have school to career
 - Individualized learning plans for students before they enter high school
 - Significantly extend the daily hours and length of school year

- 6) What do you see as your role in bringing about changes which are needed?
- Connect student performance to teaching and learning based on data
 - Leadership
 - Communication

8. High School Principals Focus Group

Date: October 11, 2000

Place: Cranston West High School

1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?

- Personalization – personal relationships
- Alignment of curriculum with standards

2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?

- Traditional organizational structure
- Lack of quality teachers
- Lack of flexibility in structure of time
- Lack of resources – time (teacher/teacher, principal/teacher, professional development, time with kids), money, and materials

3) What new approaches are needed?

- Opportunity for success – build success out of failure
- Individualization, personalization – more student centered, students understand their capacity

4) What are the obstacles to change?

- Inertia of traditions
- Lack of shared vision
- Union – adversarial relationship between stake holders
- Time
- Resources
- Public perception

5) What next steps should be taken?

- Flexibility of organizational structure – authority must match responsibility
- Alignment of curriculum

- Integrated, collaborative culture

6) What recommendations should apply to all Rhode Island High Schools?

- Role as Principal – keeper of the vision, instructional leader, allow risk taking, freedom to lead

9. Curriculum Directors Focus Group Session

Date: October 16, 2000

Place: Davies ACTC, Lincoln, RI

1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?

- Mandatory writing class for all 9th graders in addition to English
- All students doing better when/where teachers implement performance based assessment with rubrics
- Study skills courses are integrated in content areas
- Tracking down to 3 from 6 groups
- Professional development

2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?

- Departmental and individual isolationism
- Best practices – some kids are exposed some are not
- Tracking
- Too much energy spent covering too much material

3) What new approaches are needed?

- Greater emphasis on application and problem solving
- Student centered/design lens for program planning
- Examination of pedagogues around the world for teachers – use the effective research
- Lack of time and money – “We are trying to paint an airplane while it is flying”

4) What are the obstacles to change?

- Politics – all levels conflicting definitions of professionalism
- Lack of professional reading, understanding of research by all educators

5) What next steps should be taken?

- Smaller schools/schools within schools – teachers and students know each other, a belongingness
- Eliminate tenure
- Performance based job assessment
- Flexible school year, based on students' achievement
- Focus on what is quality engagement – classroom instruction

- Align reporting and grading to assessments and curriculum
- 6) What do you see as your role in bringing about changes which are needed?
- Inform, guide, support the curriculum process
 - Resource for people, facilitators, as change agents – a true advocate of school improvement
 - Bridge – make what’s out there understandable, useable, efficient
 - Very involved with community and parents in change process

10. Rhode Island Seafood Council - Industry Focus Group

Date: October 17, 2000

Place: RI Seafood Council, Wakefield RI

1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?

Reading and math preparation (to some degree)

Internships/work-based learning opportunities

Interactive learning

Teacher buy-in to change process

Application of curriculum

Highly motivated educators

Practitioners network - sharing best practices and replication in classroom

2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?

Relevancy

Lack of expertise in subject matter by educators

Teachers knowing how to teach all students

Teachers not knowing application of subject matter in real world

Lack of responsibility by all stakeholders - (students, administration, educators, parents and community)

Administrative pressure vs. quality learning environment

Accountability (attendance, attention to quality, preparation for real world)

Schools expected to “do it all” and “do it well” mentality - realistic expectations

3) What new approaches are needed?

Balance between curricula content and application

Demonstration by students around skill attainment

4) What are the obstacles to change?

Administration, regulations, contracts
Parents, school committees, educators, unions
Lack of resources - taxpayer funding
Tradition - always done this way
Lack of buy-in for change by leadership, parents, students, industry, community
Complacency on part of educator in the delivery of their curriculum

5) What next steps should be taken?

Start secondary school one hour later
Start elementary school one hour earlier
Extend school year
 ~ remove one vacation week from current schedule
Infuse more resources (funding) for quality strategic planning
Demonstration requirement for all students
Reduce/streamline bureaucracy
 ~ utilize more input from practitioners/educators into designs
 ~ reduce micro-management of sites by school committees
 ~ change in management style/preparation within schools to encourage
 community/site interaction

6) What do you see as the role of RI Seafood Council in bringing about changes which are needed?

Provide sites for work-based learning opportunities
Deliver accurate/current industry standards, opportunities, information to
 educators and educational sites
Provide assessment for student demonstration of skill attainment at worksite

11. Rhode Island Financial Services - Industry Focus

Date: October 25, 2000

Place: Cranston, RI

1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?

Personalization
Smaller classes
Hands on projects
Technology
Mentoring with Business partner
Internships and Coop learning opportunities
Teacher training/Professional development

2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?

Lack of personalization

Current integration of Industry practices and technology

Systemwide professional development

~ teacher planning time (joint)

Lack of industry involvement

Lack of parental involvement

Tax incentive missing for business involvement

Information dissemination (top down to practitioners systemwide)

Work habits/ethics component for all students

Career Awareness/Development/Exposure systemwide

~ with pathways to post-secondary choices outlined

3) What new approaches are needed?

Personalization - smaller learning environments

Community Awareness - public opinion for choices

~ traditional schools vs/ Career tech centers vs/ Academies

Workbased learning Component for all students

~ Flexibility within scheduling of students time

~ automatically built into school day programming

~ mandatory for all students

Team teaching - interdisciplinary way with a meaningful approach to build respect for all training components and teachers

4) What are the obstacles to change?

Community cannot get beyond certain assumptions about traditional/CTC/Academies

Teachers mindset (including guidance counselors)

Traditional school structure

Transportation/Liability issues

Funding

Clear picture and understanding of vision and purpose - understanding of big picture

Industry's perception of their responsibility in system change

~ see their "partnership role"

~ Return on Investment - workforce development

5) What next steps should be taken?

Professional development for teachers

Work based learning component built into schedule

Bring Business into the classrooms

Create Schools within the School

~ Team students with teachers & transition through promotion

6) What do you see as the role of RI Seafood Council in bringing about changes which are needed?

Provide work based learning opportunities

Developing and maintaining partnership between industry and education

Support student learning with in-kind contributions, resources, and technical assistance

Funding - initiative support, adopt a school, etc.

Scholarships

Industry Skill Standards validation

Businesses to act as a community liaison, advocate, and promotion partner

12. Rhode Island Manufacturing Partnership Focus Group

Date: October 17, 2000

Place: United Way Building

1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?

Job Shadowing

Technology - starting earlier in the process

Good Reading Preparation

Abstract Core Curriculum Information

Resource availability - knowing how to access information

Problem solving skill development

Team Building skill preparation

Peer to Peer tutoring

Mentoring

Project based learning

Application of curriculum

Integration of Core Subject

2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?

Negotiating Skills

Practical Application - conveyance of subject/application

Problem solving skill development

Team Building skill preparation

Writing skills - report writing

Spelling capacity

Basic Employability Skill development

Work habits, ethics, and expectations

Personal accountability

Math capabilities - (basic rote memory)

Balance between traditional/present creative approach

Tie in with special needs students

Presentation/public speaking skill development

3) What new approaches are needed?

Project based learning

Incorporate core curriculum with skill development & attainment

Develop relevance, real, meaningful curriculum that links academic and application

Flexibility - evaluate & review current practices

Accountability/measurements of success

- Have you reached your goals
- Is the curricula design working
- Does it meet the needs of the student

Balance of Student capabilities & skills

Do not track all students to one specific choice - offer diverse options

4) What are the obstacles to change?

Resources funding

Mindset of System

- little increments of change not enough

System is structured for the sake of educators and not student learning

Lack of competition - no reason for system to change across economic levels

Free education for all - Universal

Promotion regardless of skill attainment

Lack of feedback from Community/Students/Industry to system

5) What next steps should be taken?

Ensure basic foundation skills and core curriculum attainment for all students

Better testing/assessment with accountability measures

- ~ not just standardized testing process

Evaluation and Compensation for creative/innovative educators regarding

- ~ motivation of students
- ~ effective learning practices
- ~ measurable outcomes

6) What do you see as the role of RI Manufacturing Partnership in bringing about changes which are needed?

Provide feedback to education system

Activism

Change the public, educator and parental perception of our industry

Promote high skill - high wage opportunities within industry to educators, parents, community and students

Collaborate and coordination between industry and education

Provide technical assistance with curriculum designs

Provide project based learning - industry based opportunities
Provide work based learning opportunities

13. Rhode Island Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Focus Group

Date: October 24, 2000

Place: Radisson, Warwick RI

1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?

Mentoring

Internships in industry

Choice/options

Treating students with independence

Developing a knowledge of themselves

Developing a knowledge of Industry

Flexibility

~ scheduling

~ work based learning opportunities

2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?

1 answers missing from individual school sites

Lack of standard content foundation in curriculum delivery within sites

Lack of personal/parental discipline

Adequate funding

Not learning work habits, ethics and values

Present structure is too rigid

System does not see the value of change

Media's presentation/interpretation of industry opportunities

3) What new approaches are needed?

Change perception of our industry and level of opportunities

Industry involvement within school sites

Teacher externships - building awareness of industry opportunities

Industry professional development

Partnerships between industry and education

Recognition of the Value of Service Industry Skills

Introduction of current technology advancements within Industry into the curricula

~ current equipment & techniques

Industry standards and academic standards based curriculum balance

4) What are the obstacles to change?

Administration concerns - refusal to change
Separate agendas within system trying to reach same goal
Funding
Tradition - past has always worked - why change it mentality
Bureaucracy
Lack of Diversity - mindset
Unable to welcome new ideas - no thinking outside the box

5) What next steps should be taken?

Start from Scratch
Develop curriculum including work morals, values, ethics
Ensure responsibility and commitment skill development
Fundamental Core Curriculum integration
Designing relevancy to encourage students to learn
Identifying the relationship between training and expectations
Structure (clear roles, responsibility, and accountability - building blocks)
Student preparation that results in transferable skills

6) What do you see as the role of Hospitality, Travel & Tourism Council in bringing about changes which are needed?

Advisory capacity
Mentoring
Partner with Schools
Provide Workbased Learning Opportunities
Provide employment for appropriately prepared students
Provide assessment for student demonstration of skill attainment at worksite
Provide support for change, resources, and participation
Encouraging positive opportunities and perception of Industry
Treat people with respect always

14. Health Partnership Council Focus Group

Date: October 3, 2000

Place: Regan Building

1) What is currently working for students which will lead to high achievement?

Hands on learning	Fast paced information
Connecting learning to earning	Learning to results
Outcome opportunity	Seeing quick results

Technology usage	“real” positive feedback
Mentor/strong role model	Teachers w/real world experience
Application of curriculum	Teachers w/real world curricula tools
Students see impact of their work expectations	Skill standards movement/ high
Highly trained educators	Highly motivated/passionate educators
Knowledge of where things are in transition	
Positive peer to peer networking within student body about participation in activities	

2) What isn't working or is missing in schools?

In consideration of our responses to question # 1 (there are individual pockets of excellence and there is a lack of this existence in many sites/classrooms)

- Industry Involvement
- Scheduling designs- lack of flexibility/block
- Total commitment
- Mindset of Students (reception to content)
- Lifetime learning vs/school calendar
- Lack of recognition of student achievement in out of classroom/site activities
- Systemic value of grades vs/worthiness of all academic pathways/learning
- Evaluation of any/all student programs - is there meaningful learning going on
- Good match of Faculty to Students to learning styles
- Linkage of education training to meaningful choices and careers

3) What new approaches are needed?

- Holistic approach to student preparation
- Balance between curricula content and application
- Quantitative and qualitative demonstration of skill attainment
- Diverse menu of options for students' to match with their long term goals and interests

4) What are the obstacles to change?

- Administration, regulations, contracts
- Comfort level of status quo
- Cultural system, very rigid, very protective
- Misinformation Policy vs/ Practice
- Perceived Individual Industry reputations
- Tradition - always done this way
- Media about Healthcare world, students are counseled to go into something safe (misinformation about opportunities, work environment and advancements)
- Freedom to take risks within learning experience

Lack of buy-in for education by leadership, parents, students, industry, community

Freedom to take risks w/in learning experience

In School wrong gets a "bad" grade - in Life wrong is how you learn

Complacency on part of educator in the delivery of their curriculum

5) What next steps should be taken?

Individual learning plan for all students

Train school leadership for performance management

Professional Development for Educators

Change process for developing administrators

Equitable reward for achievement (merit based)

Flexible scheduling

Educator accountability for student outcome (not standardized test scores)

Demonstration requirement for all students

6) What recommendations should apply to all Rhode Island High Schools?

Facilitate change

Share Information

* Teacher Externships

* Student Internships

* Workbased Learning Opportunities

* (based on seriousness of education system to change)

Personalize WBL placements to students' interests in long term goals

Encourage/Expand diverse WBL opportunities

Deliver accurate/current industry standards, opportunities, information to educators and

educational sites

Participate in lesson plan/curricula development

Health Partnership Council will participate in education/industry professional development events

Notes from the Rhode Island High School Summit:
"Systems Change for Rhode Island High Schools"

Overview

The Rhode Island High School Summit was convened at the Newport Marriott Hotel, on November 15 and 16, 2000. The Rhode Island Department of Education and the Northeast Regional Lab at Brown University collaborated as sponsors for this action. James DiPrete, Chairman of the Board of Regents and Peter Fornal, Vice President of Log on America, chaired the event for the purpose of rethinking and recreating Rhode Island's high schools in the 21st Century.

In the Summer of 2000, a Summit planning team organized and planned the Rhode Island High School Summit. The following goals were established:

- To confirm what Rhode Island students should know and be able to do upon graduation.
- To figure out new approaches (strategies) to achieve the desired learning results.
- To determine what the obstacles are to achieving worthwhile change.
- To identify next steps for post High School Summit follow-up activities.
- To propose recommendations for Regents' policy regarding Rhode Island high schools.

Day one

The Rhode Island High School Summit opened on Wednesday morning, November 15, at the Newport Marriott Hotel. Co-Chair of the Summit and Chair of the Board of Regents, James DiPrete addressed the working group of nearly 100 broadly representative participants with specific concerns about the high school, particularly the traditional 40-minute class period and the isolation of the high school from the community.

Providing the link between education and business, Peter Fornal, Co-Chair of the Summit and Vice President of Log on America emphasized continuous learning and job changes as a way of life. He said that kids need to be exposed to career information from K-12, and he urged us to forge lasting, effective partnerships with business, government and education.

Peter McWalters, President of the Council of Chief State School Officers, and Rhode Island's Commissioner of Education, spoke to the assembly. He said that the high school is a national question. "We have not addressed structure or practice," he said. "And we don't know enough about adult learning. The issue of good professional practice, teaching and learning, is something we are only now getting into. We want standards for all kids. If we are focused on how to learn, then we are preparing them for life-long learning. We are on high moral ground here."

After those introductory words, the assembly broke into five cross-constituency working groups. Facilitators led each group through activities to prepare members for working in a team during the two days of the Summit. Individuals began by sharing personal thoughts and goals for the Summit.

Facilitators from the groups later compared notes and found commonalities:

- Participants were very much aware of the diverse and broad based nature of their groups.
- They felt that connections must be made between school and the world.
- They knew that the foundation for this new work had already commenced (many of them had been part of that work).
- They said it is time to get on with actually changing Rhode Island's high schools!

In addition, small groups set norms for participation within each working team and did an activity to heighten awareness of individual learning styles.

“Our goal must be that all students will leave high school ready to work,” said Governor Lincoln Almond to the reassembled large group on that first day. He acknowledged the work done by the Task Force for Restructuring Career and Technical Education in Rhode Island, co-chaired by James DiPrete and Bernard A. Jackvony. He said that legislation has provided funding for a three-to-five year program to move the work of the Task Force forward. “We are working on entrance criteria for Career and Technical Schools,” he said. “They should have the same standards and criteria as other schools.” The Governor said he would like to see successes at Davies duplicated at all Career and Technical Centers.

“We are teaming with CCRI to oversee all CISCO academies in the state,” he said, “and we look forward to a new CCRI campus in Newport, where we have the Naval Undersea Warfare Center and a strong and diverse business community. Now we have public and private monies for businesses of tomorrow in our institutes of higher education,” and he reiterated the mandate that “no child should be left behind.”

Cheryl Kane, Executive Director of the National Commission on the Senior Year, was the last speaker of the morning session. She brought to the participants a thumbnail sketch of the two-phase work of the Commission, which is to examine the problems around the high school senior year and the

transition to post high school work or schooling — then to find solutions. A report of the findings will be published in January, and the nation will have an opportunity to respond in forums.

During the session break as participants moved from large groups to afternoon working teams, conversations in the hallways focused on school and kids. Words like “decency” and “civility” jumped out of the conversational din. Someone said, “ I know of a high school in Montana....” Networking continued as people prepared for the next round of work.

Teams brainstormed strategies to achieve the Common Core of Learning Goals, from 1:30 – 4:00 p.m. and they attempted to come to consensus on approximately five categories of strategies. The work was difficult, frustrating at times. Some felt that they had done this same work time and time again. At the end of the first day, however, one member of each team — including two students — did make a presentation to the larger group (See Common Core of Learning Goals and Summary of Strategies below).

Day two

Todd Flaherty, Rhode Island’s Deputy Commissioner of Education, opened the second day of the RI High School Summit, Thursday, November 16. He struck home by saying there are national reports, regional reports, national and regional commissions focused on the high school, but Rhode Island has no authorized commission or report. He said, “These two day are about producing a Rhode Island plan. We will build ownership for our comprehensive strategy to restructure Rhode Island high schools in the best interest of children.”

Executive Director of the Northeast Regional Lab at Brown University, Phil Zarlengo, made a public commitment to working with this high school initiative for the next five years.

From the brainstorming lists created on day one, each team chose a single strategy. Their task for the day was to explore that strategy deeply by articulating gateways and roadblocks and by creating an action plan. Team members listed non-negotiables, then explored obstacles to achieving them. Again, the work was emotional and intense. Many participants had been working for change in the high school for a generation or more and they wanted to get it right, this time.

The process — of moving from small group to large, working intensely with a few and reporting out to the many, then listening to guest speakers — flowed on to the end of the day.

Anne Miller, Director for School Leadership Services, National Association of Secondary School Principals, reminded the group that schools have not change for a hundred years and it is time to change them. “We need to take out the word ‘reform,’” she said. “That word places blame and shame.” She said that school change is not a collection of actions but a system implementation of a comprehensive plan.

Representing the Board of Regents, Bob Canavan asked the assembly to state through their working teams exactly what they would want from the Regents. With that imperative in mind, teams returned to work briefly within the context of the large group.

Luncheon speaker Anthony Trujillo, Director, America's Choice Project, National Center for Education and the Economy, said he has been in high schools for fifty years, and he has administered from California to Florida. The essence of the problem, he said, is that high school is defined by 180 days, 6 hours a day for 4 years. After that time a student is locked out." According to Trujillo, we need a clear nonnegotiable core curriculum for all children, a broad variety of programs to prepare the student for the world of work when the core curriculum has been mastered, clear standards tied to performance (not time), and an accountability system with real consequences for all aspects of the institution (not just the student). "To do this," he said, "we must be organized for learning."

With those words of inspiration in mind, the groups resumed work in small groups for the remainder of the day.

Summit Outcomes and Followup

By the close of the second day of the Summit, teams made a variety of proposals which will ultimately serve as the bedrock of Rhode Island's High School Restructuring Plan. Basically, the teams focused on the following areas which were determined by consensus on Day One of the Summit.

- Literacy
- Standards, Common Core, and Instruction
- Leadership
- Personalization
- Professional Development
- School-to-Career (Contextual learning)
- Public Engagement
- Systems

Each of these critical areas of emphasis was addressed by teams in terms of answering the following questions:

- What follow-up actions can be taken to address the immediate need for change?
- What are the obstacles to change?
 - 3) What are the recommendations for either RIDE or RI Department of Labor and Training actions or Regents policy adoptions.

The following papers summarize the work of each themed working group.

Actions, Obstacles, Recommendations

Literacy

Action

High schools will make literacy their major focus

Obstacles

- Lack of ownership of problem
- Lack of knowledge of how to deal with the problem
- Lack of attention of how well students can or cannot read
- District/building leaders not versed in literacy issues

6. Recommendations to the Board of Regents

- Convene a statewide task force to develop recommendations regarding secondary literacy initiative

to determine characteristics of secondary literacy
to identify effective programs

- Mandate that all secondary schools provide literacy support for all students who lack the literacy skills to be successful

- Provide funding for

professional development
literacy coaches
materials

- Investigate community literacy models

Common Core of Learning Goals

- Communication — reading, writing, speaking, listening and conversing effectively
- Problem solving — view learning as a lifelong process in which problem solving complement the body of knowledge by helping students acquire and apply new knowledge
- Body of knowledge — acquiring ideas and skills that have been passed on by past generations and that form the base for the future progress of society
- Responsibility — accepting responsibility for oneself, one's learning and one's role in society

Strategies to Achieve the Common Core of Learning Goals

Literacy at the top of the paradigm and runs across all strategies.

- Redesign school environment to provide a personalized learning experience and web of support for all students.
- Breaking large high schools into small learning communities
- Use time differently in planning the school day and the school year, for both student and teacher learning.
- Develop teacher in-service/professional development programs, which reflect the education reform agenda being proposed.
- Common planning time that is teacher centered for strategizing assessment and co-learning.
- Provide professional development for coaches, cooperating teachers and administrators, based on New Standards and Common Core of Learning
- Develop innovative and relevant curriculum linked to academic/ industry standards that incorporates work based learning opportunities and Common Core of Learning skill development that can be achieved by all students.
- Use multi-style assessments as "episodes of learning." Teachers will learn about instruction from assessment of students and students learn about their understanding of materials/instruction.

- Establish support services for all students to meet high standards and to develop into healthy, well adjusted citizens.
- Identify successful research and use what works.

Leadership

Action: The principal will be the instructional leader of the school; teachers will be instructional leaders.

Obstacles

Leadership

- No common set of marching orders, officially endorsed, for high school change
- Lack of tactical (versus strategic) implementation and decision-making at the local/regional level

Communication

- Uninformed media perpetuate education myths
- Communication between school committees and superintendent
- School committee, town government distrust
- Strategic plans are frequently templates that don't include views of stakeholders
- Many older citizens do not see the value of education. They pull up the ladder after they are on board.

Finance

- Low pay for administrators
- Quality of life issues affect administrators; too much to do, not enough time.

Labor Issues

- Collective bargaining agreements
- Labor-management distrust
- Teacher unions currently hold many powers that formerly and ideally belong to the principal

Shift in Thinking

- Old-style thinkers – parents, students
- Past practices/paradigms
- Management duties assigned to principals reduce instructional leadership capacity
- Principals who want to protect the status quo
- Apparent reluctance of parents to accept a leadership role
- Past reputation of high school change efforts
- Teachers are often resistant to leadership roles
- Logistical problems associated with many good ideas/changes
- Time: 12-month window

Personalization

Action

Every one in high school is known and is engaged in learning that reflects his or her interests and learning styles as described in a personal learning plan laying out a path to meet high standards.

Obstacles

- Time
- Tradition
 - Structure
 - Community expectations
- Student/teacher ratios
- Professional level

Recommendations to the Board of Regents

Time reorganization

- Flexible scheduling
- Lengthen the school year
- Increase instructional day to allow for personalization
- Change graduation requirements from time based to performance based

Tradition

- Communicate data, best practice, and research to community, staff, parents and students
- Reconsider the departmental structure within schools
- Democratic involvement of all stakeholders

Adult Student Connections

- Encourage advisor/advisee relationships in schools through funding, contract negotiations
- Connect to community mentors

Professional Development

Action

Create a plan for professional development continuum for improving high school. This includes pre-service preparation, student teaching/internship, induction/mentoring, on-going improvement of skills, knowledge of education professionals and other stakeholders. This should be embedded in the job and should heavily involve peer expertise.

Obstacles

- Funding for professional development
- Time - school should be open all day - not every moment should be "contact time"
- Lack of substitute teachers
- We don't have a process of identifying and encouraging teachers to become "professionally developed".
- Funding for teachers to implement professional development
- Lack of career ladders for teachers
- Teacher resistance to instructional change

Recommendations to the Board of Regents

- Redefine the school day
- Build time into the school day for professional development
- Develop a system of recognizing and rewarding professional development

School to Career

Action

Develop and implement a career development system for all students, imbedded in the Common Core of Learning, which provides a pathway to work or post-secondary opportunities

Obstacles

Lack of congruence between

- Schools understanding employers' needs
- Multiple sets of standards/practice
- No comprehensive plan to transfer school/work standards
- Many programs exists which do not form a system

Recommendations to the Board of Regents

- Develop and implement a career development system for all students embedded in the Common Core of Learning, a system that provides a pathway to work or post-secondary opportunities
- Find partners (HRK) to identify and sort relevant standards (SCANS, industry content, PERF)
- Identify relevant Career Development Programs and assign staff to gather data, synthesize data and disseminate
- Raise awareness by disseminating information and providing specific professional development through colorful, professional marketing campaigns

Public Engagement

Action

Develop a plan for student interaction and community support

Obstacles

- Funding
- Community willingness
- Organization: Who does what?
- Articulation of goals
- Accessibility

Recommendations to the Board of Regents

- Establish internships and community service as a requirement for graduation
- Produce public awareness
- Require every student to have a learning plan and annual assessment thereof
- Policy on school size
- Enact interest awareness/preparation programs to begin in middle school and continue into high school
- Require annual school reports analysis
presentation of analysis to public
emphasize relationship of analysis and relevancy to the public
- Conduct evaluations of programs and work for improvement

High School/Systems

Action

Design a high school transformation system that incorporates the dimensions of high performing high schools (knowing students; standards, instruction and high expectations; shared accountability and knowledge based; school structure and professional development); uses information well; and is systematic and systemic and supports every student achieving high standards.

Obstacles

- Shared vision
- School serves adults, not kids
- Resources
- Public perceptions / buy in
- Adults without children are not supportive/ understanding
- 36 separate districts
- Lack of political will/strength
- Post secondary acceptance
- Lack of rationale to establish need for post secondary teacher preparation change
- Union endorsement

Recommendations to the Board of Regents

- Graduation requirements (Turn the core standards into Regents' regulations of competency)
- Every district should have no fewer of 60 hours of teacher time focused on
 - professional development
 - Standards based curriculum
 - Common planning time for teachers
- One adult will be responsible for each student as long as that student is in
 - school (ratio of 1:12)
 - Individualized learning plan for each student
 - Flexible scheduling (not necessarily 180 days, 6 hrs, 5 days a week, longer school year, longer times for learning)
- All schools with have teaming at 9th and 10th grade (teams of no more than 100 students, teams of teachers, small learning communities)
- Multiple assessment (alternative ways to meet state standards)
- Adequate school facilities based on small school models
- Integrated workplace component/authentic application of learning, school to career (has to be in conversation with HRIC)

- Multiple avenues to establish a common web of community support

Recommendations for Policy*

- By the time of entry into grade 9, each high school student will have an individualized learning plan that is assessed annually. ®
- One adult will be responsible for each student as long as that student is in school (ratio of 1:12). ®
- Schools will connect students to community mentors. ®
- A statewide task force will be convened to develop recommendations regarding a secondary literacy initiative. (E)
- All secondary schools will provide literacy support for all students, especially those who lack the literacy skills to be successful. ®
- The Common Core of Learning will become the standard for competency (cross-walked to the SCANS competency). ®
- The work of students will be assessed in multiple alternative ways to meet state standards. ®
- Internships and community service will be required for graduation. ®
- Graduation requirements will be based on performance rather than on time. ®
- Curriculum will be based on state standards. ® (E)
- Every district will have no fewer than 60 hours of teacher time for professional development focused on the student as learner. ®
- Principals and other leaders will receive professional development to strengthen their ability to function as instructional leaders. (E)
- Trained literacy coaches will provide all educators with literacy training. (E)
- Outstanding professionals will be recognized and rewarded. (E)
- Professional development will occur within the context of the school day. ®

- Schools will allow for flexible scheduling (not necessarily 180 days, 6 hrs, 5 days a week; longer school year, longer times for student and teacher learning) ®
- All schools will have teaming at 9th and 10th grade, teams of no more than 100 students, teams of teachers, small learning communities. ®
- Teachers will have common planning time. (E)
- Departmentalization will be studied for its value in the high school. (E)
- School facilities will be adequate based on small school models. ®
- Integrated workplace component — authentic application of learning, school-to-career — for all students, from middle school through high school, will be required and embedded in the Common Core of Learning (This has to be in conversation with HRIC and other partners). (E) (L)
- Schools will make annual public reports. (E)

*® Board of Regents

(E) Rhode Island Department of Education

(L) Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training.

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Mr. Michael Trofi W. Warwick School Department	Ms. Joann Wallwork, Teacher Davies Career & Technical High School
Ms. G. Ginette Walsh, Assistant Manager, LITE, Bryant College	Ms. Nancy Warren Administrator of Comprehensive Career Development Programs RI Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Mr. Elliott Washor, Co-Director The Big Picture Company	

*Absent

Rhode Island High School Summit
Newport Marriott Hotel – November 16, 2000
Closing Remarks: “Pretend or Prepare”
Dr. Lee H. Arnold

Good afternoon. My name is Lee Arnold. I serve as Director of the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training, and as Executive Director of the Rhode Island Human Resource Investment Council. I also have the privilege of serving as President of the New England Training and Employment Council.

The New England Training and Employment Council met in this hotel from Monday through Wednesday this week. Let me share some of the information presented at that conference:

Over the past decade, New England has seen population losses due to economic problems. The labor force in that period would have been negative had it not been for immigration.

The poverty standard across the nation does not take into account Regional differences in the cost of living. Federal allocation formulas hurt us because of our relatively low unemployment rate and low “official” poverty rate.

Poverty is often linked to the nature of jobs being created. In Rhode Island, our median income level has risen at the same time that our level of poverty has risen.

The 16-24 age cohort will grow substantially from 1995 – 2010. Growth is concentrated in Hispanic and Asian groups; many will be immigrants. Skill gaps are pronounced among this group.

All the data suggests that occupational skills training, On-the-Job Training, and a combination of occupational and basic skills yields the highest placement rates and average wages at placement.

I mention this economic and demographic information because it will have a direct bearing on who we teach, how we teach, and the opportunities our high school graduates can realistically expect if we don’t link workforce development with education and economic development.

Now let me share three quotes with you:

1. “If you love your kids more than you love your schools, you’ll change your schools.” - Dr. Willard Daggett, State of New York Education official, 1989

Dr. Daggett said this to a task force a decade ago. The task force, comprised of members of our Board of Regents and members of what is now called our Human Resource Investment Council, took those words to heart and ultimately produced a report that members of the General Assembly embraced and enacted into law. The changes authorized by that law created the new Davies Career and Technical Center in Lincoln, and the Met School in Providence.

2. “What can I do as a result of learning and training?” –
John Morgridge, Chairman of the Board of Cisco Systems, November 9, 2000
Mr. Morgridge made this statement last week at a meeting hosted by the Community College of Rhode Island at their Lincoln Campus. He was there to dedicate a Cisco Academy at Davies. He told people to focus on leadership, governance, technology and competence; he said that a strong factor for business is a pool of talent; and suggested that we leverage assets to be successful.
3. “The school system is my number one workforce development priority.” –
John Yunits, Mayor of the City of Brockton, Massachusetts, November 15, 2000

Mayor Yunits was on a panel during this week’s New England Training & Employment Council institute. He too made the case for linking education, workforce development, and economic development.

Another speaker at that conference said that basic skills, occupational skills, and work experience are critical to personal success, and that we need pathways other than post-secondary education for people to succeed.

In my view, we have two choices with our kids: we can pretend, or we can prepare them.

We tell them that college is important, and that there is a direct correlation between their educational attainment and their earning power. That’s true. We don’t tell them that too many of them will not graduate from high school. We don’t tell them that of those who get to college, half of them will be unprepared to the point that they’ll be in remedial classes. We don’t tell them that many who start college never finish. We can let the debates in Congress be not about how to fund improvements in public education, but about how many H-1B visas should be awarded to let foreign nationals take our high-technology jobs which our own kids can’t hope to get. We can continue to let our kids stumble, and fall, and brand themselves failures.

Or we can prepare them. We can organize the learning enterprise so that every student is actively engaged in learning. We can look to ways to connect learning to life. We can equip them with the basic skills that can serve as a launching pad for lifelong learning and plateaus of success. We can let them know that in the global economy that is their reality, they can compete with kids from all parts of the globe, and maybe even get those high tech jobs.

In 1997 some of us in this room went to Switzerland and Germany to look at their education and apprenticeship systems. An educator in Switzerland said to me that he did not understand how America could continue to be a great country when it let its children wander around for so many years before they got on with their lives. He said they were serious about the education of their kids because they can't afford to waste anybody, and their economy can't make it by competing against low wage, low skilled countries.

Unlike many of the people here today, I am not a professional educator. Education is important to me from a workforce preparation view, and it's important to the Human Resource Investment Council. We have devoted a substantial amount of time, effort, and money on such efforts as Davies, the Met School, the RI Skills Commission, Breaking Ranks in the Ocean State, School-to-Career, Jobs for Ocean State Graduates, the Literacy Collaborative, and task forces that looked at vocational education, literacy, career and technical education advances, and this summit. Peter Fornal, Vice President of Log On America and a member of the Human Resource Investment Council, Co-Chaired this summit. We have a stake in the success of the education of our kids, because they will be our workforce. If we can't get this right, if we choose to pretend instead of to prepare, we do our kids, our communities, and our economic well-being a huge disservice. I hope you will choose to prepare. If that is your choice, we want to be your partners. Thank you.

RESTRUCTURING CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN RHODE ISLAND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If Rhode Island's economy is to thrive in the next century, its schools will need to contribute to the development of a capable workforce. All graduates—not just some or even many, but all, including students with special learning needs or who speak languages other than English—must be prepared to successfully continue in post-secondary learning, join the work force, and develop a career.

The state's career and technical education centers have traditionally served those students who are not successful in the traditional high school program and prepared them to enter the workforce upon graduation. But this success is mitigated by some discomfiting outcomes. Graduates may move into entry-level, low-skill jobs upon graduation, but many if not most have not met high academic standards, nor are they prepared for lifelong learning and career development. As a result, the career and technical education system graduates many young adults who are inadequately prepared for developing a career and learning both on the job and through formal post-secondary education.

Incremental improvements within the current design will not address this problem. Restructuring the career and technical education system requires a thorough reexamination of its mission and focus, governance, and funding.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

The task force's assessment of the current career and technical education system yielded several important findings.

THE SYSTEM

Regional character. The number of students attending the career and technical education centers from sending districts is very low and declining. The centers are losing their regional character.

Student profile. There are approximately 5,000 places in the career and technical education centers and 4,000 of those are occupied, representing about 10 percent of the secondary school population.

Performance data focused on results. There is little data about student, program, and system performance. Most student performance information is obtained in the tenth grade, thus serving as an evaluation of the high schools the students came from rather than the centers they are attending.

Image. The public image of the career and technical education system is not a positive one. The system is often viewed as a place for poor students, for those who can't or won't go on to college, and for those who will have low-paying jobs.

PROGRAMS

Program focus and quality. Programs are of varying appropriateness and quality. Many program offerings, sometimes those most heavily attended, do not address “high skills and major growth sectors.”

Fragmented programs. The split-time programs (between the sending high school and the career and technical education centers) offered by most centers provide a fragmented learning experience for students and impede the seamless integration of academic and technical knowledge and skills. Academic and technical learning are often provided in separate schools, if not separate classrooms.

Weak articulation. Linkages between the career and technical education centers and post-secondary institutions are weak. Few career and technical education centers have articulation agreements with Rhode Island's community college system.

GOVERNANCE

State governance. There is little state-level coordination of the career and technical education system. The Department of Education provides policy and program oversight for the career and technical education centers, but state-level programs—School-to-Career, Skills Commission, Tech-Prep—are not well integrated.

Center governance. The governance system as defined by state regulation is variously implemented across the regions. The local school committee in the host district has substantial governance authority because it is responsible for, among other things, the district budget and the management of the collective bargaining agreement with the teachers who work in the center.

Business involvement. Business involvement in the development and implementation of center programs varies considerably across the career and technical education centers. Most often it is superficial or non-existent.

FUNDING

Inadequate funding. Funding for program development is inadequate and episodic, driven more by shifting federal priorities than by a coherent and strategic state plan. The state’s financial commitment to career and technical education has been uneven and weak. Most notably, there is really no financing “system” for career and technical education in that funding is provided through a combination of federal, state, and local sources and varies across regions. While the Davies and Met centers are fully state funded, the other centers must use local dollars. Funds for the other eight career and technical education centers are not targeted in state aid allocations to the host districts.

Inadequate building maintenance and equipment repair and upgrading. The centers’ facilities are inadequate to support the programs offered. The Department of Education estimates the backlog of needed repairs and upgrades to center facilities and equipment at about \$15 million.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND FEATURES

These principles and understandings are essential to the design for the new career and technical education system. We believe that an exemplary career and technical education system must:

- Focus on preparing students for lifelong learning and work and careers in high-growth industries. This requires that graduates demonstrate mastery of high academic competencies as well as workplace readiness skills.
- Provide a coherent and holistic program of studies for all students.
- Link to the K-12 system and particularly to high schools. Integrate the School-to-Career, Tech-Prep, and CIM initiatives into a coherent support system for both career and technical education centers and high schools.
- View the career and technical education centers not as places for low performing and poorly motivated students, but as a destination of opportunity for which students must prepare.
- Have the support of state and local governance mechanisms that are committed to cutting-edge career and technical education.
- Focus on student and program results, assess them, and use the information to drive improvement and redesign.
- Include a strong commitment from the Board of Regents and the Department of Education to provide direction and oversight to the system.
- Include strong business and higher education alliances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The task force proposes a package of interdependent recommendations in three areas—programs, governance, and funding. The recommendations are focused on achieving the state’s dual mission of high performance on high-level academic

standards for every student coupled with preparation for immediate entry into a career path in a promising industry, supported by continuing learning on the job and/or in post-secondary institutions.

These recommendations are interdependent and will require a three- to five-year phased implementation.

Programs

Career development. Focus career and technical education programs on preparing students for employment in industries with specific standards and certification requirements. Such a focus need not eliminate non-certificated programs altogether, but special attention shall be given to ensuring that graduates of all programs are prepared for future learning and career development, not merely for an immediate job upon graduation.

High-growth industries. Support the development of programs that address industry clusters identified by the Department of Education and the Economic Development Corporation and supported by the Department of Labor and Training in cooperation with the Human Resource Investment Council. Programs in these clusters shall focus on high performance, high skills, high wages, and the major growth sectors of Rhode Island's economy.

Integrated programs. Ensure that all programs provide a seamless integration of generic workplace skills, high academic standards required of all high school students (part of Rhode Island's Comprehensive Education Strategy and aligned with the focus of the federal Office of Vocational and Adult Education), and industry-specific standards where they are available.

Full-day, stand-alone schools. State-certified career and technical education centers shall provide full-day, two- to three-year programs. These centers shall operate on an extended year and offer expanded hours to provide supplementary learning opportunities. These centers shall operate as stand-alone schools, as do Davies and the Met.

Open access. Expand access to the state-certified career and technical education centers so that students from throughout the state can attend a certified program or certified program component of their choice, for which they are qualified and for which space is available. Such access shall be to the closest center to the student's community.

Program entrance and exit criteria. All state-certified center programs shall have entrance and exit criteria based on high standards and a structure and process for assessing them.

Collaboration with high schools. Career and technical education centers shall work with middle and high schools to help all students understand program requirements/entrance criteria and prepare for them. Center personnel shall collaborate with high school counseling personnel to assure comprehensive program information to students and their families. The faculties of the centers and the high schools shall work together to provide student access to sports and extracurricular activities.

Shared diploma. Graduates of the state-certified career and technical education centers shall receive a diploma from their home community with a special certificate/endorsement issued by the career and technical education center.

Collaboration with post-secondary institutions. Strengthen collaboration and articulation with the post-secondary education system to provide learning opportunities for all graduates. Establish articulated programs and articulation agreements between the centers and post-secondary institutions where program exit criteria require additional preparation beyond the two to three years provided at the centers.

Business involvement. Strengthen involvement of business and industry representatives in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and curricula.

Family and community engagement. Develop high-engagement activities for families and community members.

Governance

Regents State Schools Committee. The State Schools Committee of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education shall provide policy direction and oversight to the career and technical education system. This committee shall give special attention to these functions:

1. Establish program priorities based on labor market information.
2. Develop a strategic plan for career and technical education.
3. Establish program quality criteria.
4. Develop and employ program certification and evaluation systems.
5. Develop industry and higher education partnerships and alliances.
6. Conduct public information campaigns regarding exemplary career and technical education.

The Department of Education shall work closely with the Department of Labor and Training, the Human Resource Investment Council, and the Economic Development Corporation in assisting the committee in carrying out these functions.

Center criteria. The Board of Regents shall establish criteria for serving as a state-certified career and technical education center. Criteria shall include:

1. Focus on industry-specific certificated programs.
2. An independent board of trustees.
3. Active involvement of business and industry groups in program and curriculum design and implementation.
4. Active family and community involvement.
5. A student population drawn primarily from the regional area with open access to students from throughout the state.

Transfer process. For those career and technical education centers that choose not to, or cannot, meet the criteria for a state-certified center, the Department of Education shall develop a process for transferring the buildings and land to the district while providing support for a successful transfer and appropriate use of the facility. The transition plan shall take into account the individual circumstances and capabilities of each center.

Center Boards of Trustees. Establish at each state-certified center, consistent with the 1991 legislation, a board of trustees to provide policy and program guidance. Each board shall:

1. Establish program priorities based on local needs and resources.
2. Develop and implement programs in collaboration with business and industry.
3. Develop industry and higher education partnerships and alliances within the state frameworks established by the Board of Regents.
4. Evaluate student and program performance.
5. Market program offerings to students and their families. Communicate that the community of residence provides tuition for attendance at any state-certified center.
6. Create a budget for the operation of the center.

Funding

Center facilities. The state shall prepare a statewide bond request to bring all centers' facilities up to acceptable standards, including necessary information technology infrastructure. A current estimate for such work is \$15 million.

Operations. Provide the Department of Education with funds to prepare a detailed design and implementation plan for the restructured system, provide increased support and technical assistance to the state-certified centers, and conduct the expanded functions of the Regents' subcommittee. This assistance shall include at a minimum program and curriculum development, faculty education, training, and support, and student and program assessment. The Department shall certify programs and centers and shall develop substantive working agreements and relationships across state agencies and with business, industry, and labor.

These partnerships shall be created to support the career and technical education system as well as each program.

Center funding. Place all state-certified centers on full state funding to provide the Boards of Trustees with operational funds. This might be accomplished by funding one center at a time.

Fund pilot programs. Identify and support three to four promising programs for incorporation into the restructured career and technical education system. Each program shall include an emphasis on integrating high academic and industry standards in the “high performance, high skills, high wages, and major growth sectors of Rhode Island’s economy.”

Conduct public engagement. The redesigned and restructured career and technical education system shall require major public engagement in order to alter the public’s current negative mindset of the centers and to create an image of centers as desirable locations and appropriate options for children.

Incentives. Target discretionary federal and state grants to programs that address state education, training, and economic development priorities and are certified by the Regents.

Implementation

We believe these recommendations are essential and compelling. Nevertheless, they call for substantial and complex changes in nearly every aspect of the system. Each center has unique capabilities, needs, and circumstances. Successful implementation, therefore, will require a careful staging and phasing over three to five years. The Department of Education shall develop a customized transition plan with and for each state-certified center. This plan shall focus first on upgrading programs and strengthening partnerships with business and higher education.

Immediate attention shall also be given to state and center governance structures and to establishing the policy guidance and operational support systems required for redesigning programs, preparing staff, creating new organizational structures, marketing, and student and program evaluation. The new foundation and funding will allow the system to bring to scale those exemplary but isolated programs that point the way to the career and technical education system that Rhode Island needs.

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.

Commission on Public Secondary Schools

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION

For
High Schools
Middle/High Schools
And
K-12 Schools

Effective for Schools
Hosting Visiting Committees
Beginning in the Year 2000

Teaching and Learning Standards

Mission and Expectations for
Student Learning

Curriculum
Instruction

Assessment of Student Learning

1 TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Mission and Expectations for Student Learning

The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based on and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning.

1. The school's mission statement shall represent the school community's fundamental values and beliefs about student learning and the purpose of the school and be consistent with the district's mission statement.
2. The school shall have established expectations for student learning that;
 - Reflect the school's mission statement;
 - Identify high expectations for all students in academic, civic and social areas;
 - Specifically state what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from the school taking into account the skills, competencies, concepts and understandings identified by district, state, and national standards and by professional organizations.
3. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall be developed by the school community, and approved and supported by the faculty, the school board, and any other school-wide governing organization.
4. The school shall utilize a variety of data to regularly review the mission statement and expectations for student learning to assure that they reflect student needs, community expectations, the district mission, and state standards.
5. There shall be a separate document developed by the faculty that defines the school's academic expectations for student learning in specific, measurable ways, describes specific levels of performance and indicates which level is the indicator of successful accomplishment.
6. The mission statement and expectations for student learning shall guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school and shall be evident in the culture of the school.

2 TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Curriculum

The curriculum, which includes coursework, co-curricular activities and other educational experiences as described in the program of studies, is the school's formal plan to fulfill its mission statement and expectations for student learning. The curriculum links what the school believes and expects students to learn to its instructional practices. The strength of that link is dependent upon staff commitment to and involvement in a dynamic process of review, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum based on the school's expectations for student learning.

1. From the document that defines the school's academic expectations, each curriculum area shall identify those expectations, each curriculum area shall identify those expectations for student learning for which it is responsible and shall have clearly articulated learning standards in support of such expectations.
2. Written curriculum documents shall be aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and shall guide content, instruction, and assessment.
3. The curriculum plan shall ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to practice and achieve each of the school's academic expectations for student learning.
4. The content of the curriculum shall be intellectually rigorous and provide opportunities for the authentic application of knowledge and skills.
5. The curriculum shall be appropriately integrated and shall emphasize depth of understanding over breadth of coverage.
6. The school shall provide opportunities to extend student learning beyond the normal course offerings and the school campus.
7. There shall be effective curricular coordination and articulation between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district to insure the expectations for student learning and being addressed.
8. Instructional materials, technology, equipment and supplies, and staffing shall be sufficient to allow for the implementation of the curriculum.
9. There shall be ongoing review and evaluation of the curriculum that takes into account the assessments of student performance in achieving the school's academic expectations for student learning.

10. The school shall commit sufficient time, financial resources, and personnel to the review and evaluation of curriculum.
11. The professional staff shall be actively involved in the development and revision of the curriculum.
12. Professional development activities shall support the development and implementation of the curriculum.

3 TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Instruction

The quality of instruction in a school is the single most important factor affecting the quality of student learning and is the link between curriculum, learning expectations, and student performance. Instructional practice must be grounded in the school's mission and expectations for student learning, supported by research in best practice, and refined and improved based on identified student needs. Consequently, teachers are expected to be reflective about their instructional practices and participate in professional dialogue with their colleagues about instruction and student learning.

1. instructional strategies and practices shall be consistent with the school's stated mission and expectations for student learning.
2. Instructional strategies shall include practices that personalize instruction, make connections across disciplines, engage students as active self-directed learners, involve all students in higher order thinking to promote depth of understanding, and provide opportunities to demonstrate the application of knowledge or learning.
3. Teachers shall provide formal and informal opportunities for students to assess their own learning.
4. Teachers shall use feedback from a variety of sources such as other teachers, students, supervisors, and parents as a means of improving instruction.
5. Teachers shall be knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches and reflective about their own practice.
6. Discussion of instructional strategies, practices, and student work shall be a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
7. Adequate time and financial resources shall be committed to ensuring the continuous improvement of instruction.
8. Technology shall be utilized to support instruction and to improve student learning.
9. The school's professional development programs shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional practices and be guided by identified instructional needs.

10. Teacher supervision and evaluation processes shall be used to improve instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

4 TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its purpose is to inform students regarding their learning progress and teachers regarding ways to adjust their instruction to better respond to the learning needs of students. Further, it communicates the growth and competence of students to parents, school officials, and the public. The results of student learning must be continually discussed and used to develop short-term and long-term strategies for improving curriculum and instruction.

1. teachers shall base their classroom assessment procedures on clearly stated expectations for student learning.
2. Specific learning criteria based on specific expectations for student learning shall be the basis for grading and reporting.
3. Teachers shall use a variety and range of classroom assessment strategies to determine student knowledge, skills, and competencies and to assess student growth over time.
4. Teachers shall use the results of classroom assessment of student learning to evaluate and revise the curriculum.
5. Teachers shall use the results of classroom assessment of student learning to improve their instructional practices.
6. Teachers shall meet to discuss and share student work and the results of classroom assessment for the purpose of revising the curriculum and instructional strategies.
7. Teachers shall communicate to students and their families how student work and progress are being assessed.
8. The school's professional development programs shall provide opportunities for teachers to develop a broad range of assessment strategies for classroom use.
9. The administration and faculty shall use agreed upon levels of performance, indicators of successful accomplishment and other data to assess the progress of students in achieving the school's stated academic expectations for student learning and regularly report the findings to the public.

10. The administration and faculty shall use assessment data to determine success in meeting the school's stated civic and social expectations and regularly report the findings to the public.

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

5 SUPPORT STANDARD

Leadership and Organization

The manner in which a school provides leadership, organizes itself, makes decisions and treats its members profoundly affects teaching and learning. Faculty and administration must be clear and reflective about and responsible for the decisions and practices they have implemented in organizing and structuring their programs and in creating a culture that support learning for all students.

1. the principal shall provide leadership in the school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
2. Teachers shall provide leadership essential to the success of school improvement.
3. The school board and superintendent shall ensure that the principal has sufficient autonomy and authority to guide the school in its mission and in meeting the school's stated expectations for student learning.
4. The organization and structure of the educational program shall promote the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student grouping patterns shall reflect the diversity of the student body, foster heterogeneity, and be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning as well as current educational research.
6. The schedule shall support the school's mission and expectations for student learning and should be designed to provide the most effective implementation of curriculum and instruction.
7. School leaders shall accord meaningful roles in the decision-making process to students, parents, and members of the staff to promote an atmosphere of participation, responsibility and ownership.
8. Each teacher shall have a student load that enables him/her to provide sufficient attention to the needs of individual students.
9. The school shall provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate within and across departments.
10. All school staff shall be involved in promoting the well-being and learning for student.
11. Student success shall be regularly acknowledged, celebrated, and displayed.

12. The climate of the school shall be positive, respectful, and supportive, resulting in a sense of pride and ownership.
13. The professional culture of the school shall be characterized by thoughtful, reflective and constructive discourse about student learning and well-being in both formal and informal settings.

6 SUPPORT STANDARD

School Resources for Learning

The school's student support services include guidance and health services, special education, personal, career and social counseling, and access to outside referrals along with library/information services. Student learning is dependent upon adequate and appropriate support programs and services. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of integrated resources to enhance and improve student learning and to support the school's mission and expectations.

1. the school shall allocate resources, programs, and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the school's stated academic expectations for student learning and to participate in the educational program.
2. The school shall allocate resources, programs and services so that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve stated civic and social expectations.
3. Each student shall have an adult member of the school community who serves to personalize that student's educational experience.
4. The school's student support services shall be consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.
5. Student support and library/information services personnel shall be knowledgeable about the curriculum and involved in its implementation, evaluation and revision.
6. All school resources for learning shall be regularly evaluated and revised to support improved student learning.
7. Student support personnel shall enhance student learning by interacting and working cooperatively with professional and other staff, and utilizing community resources to address the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students.
8. There shall be a system for effective and ongoing communications with students, parents/guardians, and school personnel designed to keep them informed about the types of available student support services and about identified student needs.
9. The school shall provide and maintain library/information services program and materials that are fully integrated into the school's curriculum and

instructional program and are consistent with the school's mission and expectations for student learning.

10. The library/information services programs shall foster independent inquiry by enabling students and faculty to utilize various school and community information resources and technologies.
11. A wide range of materials, technology, and other library/information resources shall be available to students and faculty in a variety of formats and utilized to improve teaching and learning and be reflective of the school's student population.
12. Library/information services shall include, but not be limited to, sufficient certified professional personnel.
13. Students, faculty, and support staff shall have regular and frequent access to library/information services facilities and programs as an integral part of their educational experience before, during, and after the school day.
14. Policies shall be in place for the selection and removal of information resources and the use of technologies and the Internet.
15. Student records shall be maintained in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal and state law.

7 SUPPORT STANDARD

Community Resources for Learning

Active community and parent participation, facilities which support school programs and services, and dependable and adequate funding are necessary for the school to achieve its mission and expectations for student learning.

1. the school shall engage students and their families as partners in the students' education as well as encourage their participation in school programs and parent support groups.
2. The school shall foster productive business/community/higher education partnerships that support student learning.
3. The school site, plant, and equipment shall support and enhance all aspects of the educational program and the support services for student learning.
4. The school site, plant and equipment shall be maintained to ensure an environment that is healthy and safe for all occupants.
5. There shall be a planned and adequately funded program of building and site management that ensures the maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment as well as the thorough and ongoing cleaning of the facility.
6. There shall be ongoing planning to address future program, staffing, facility and technology needs as well as capital improvements.
7. The physical plant and facilities shall meet all applicable federal and state laws and be in compliance with local fire, health and safety regulations.
8. The community and the district's governing body shall ensure an adequate and dependable source of revenue to provide and maintain appropriate school programs, personnel, services, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials, and supplies for student learning.
9. Faculty and building administrators shall have active involvement in the budgetary process, including its development and implementation.
10. Equipment shall be adequate, properly maintained, catalogued, and replaced when appropriate.
11. School board decisions, policies, and procedures and district plans shall support the implementation of the school's mission and expectations for student learning.