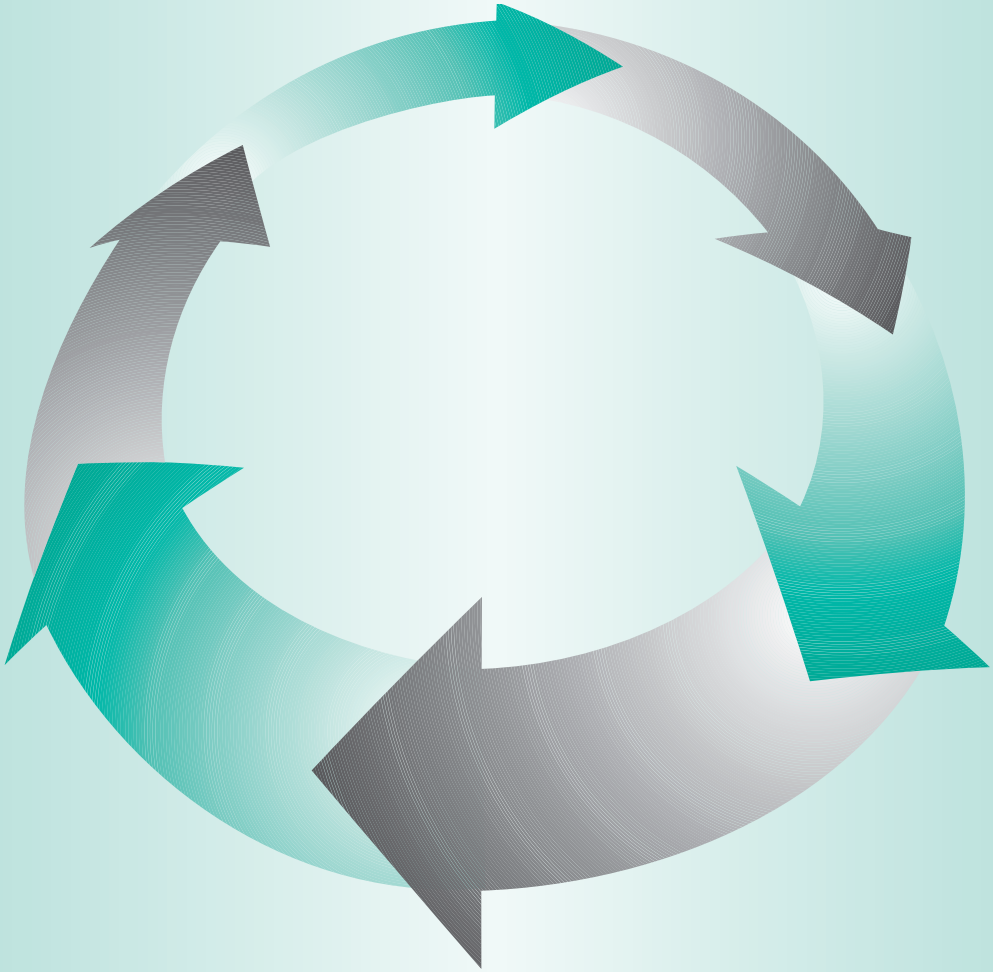
# Sustaining School-to-Career Systems for Urban Youth:

## A Consortium of State-Urban Partnerships



Council of Chief State School Officers
State-Urban Initiative Conference Proceedings
Regal Cincinnati Hotel
Cincinnati, Ohio
October 23 - 25, 1997

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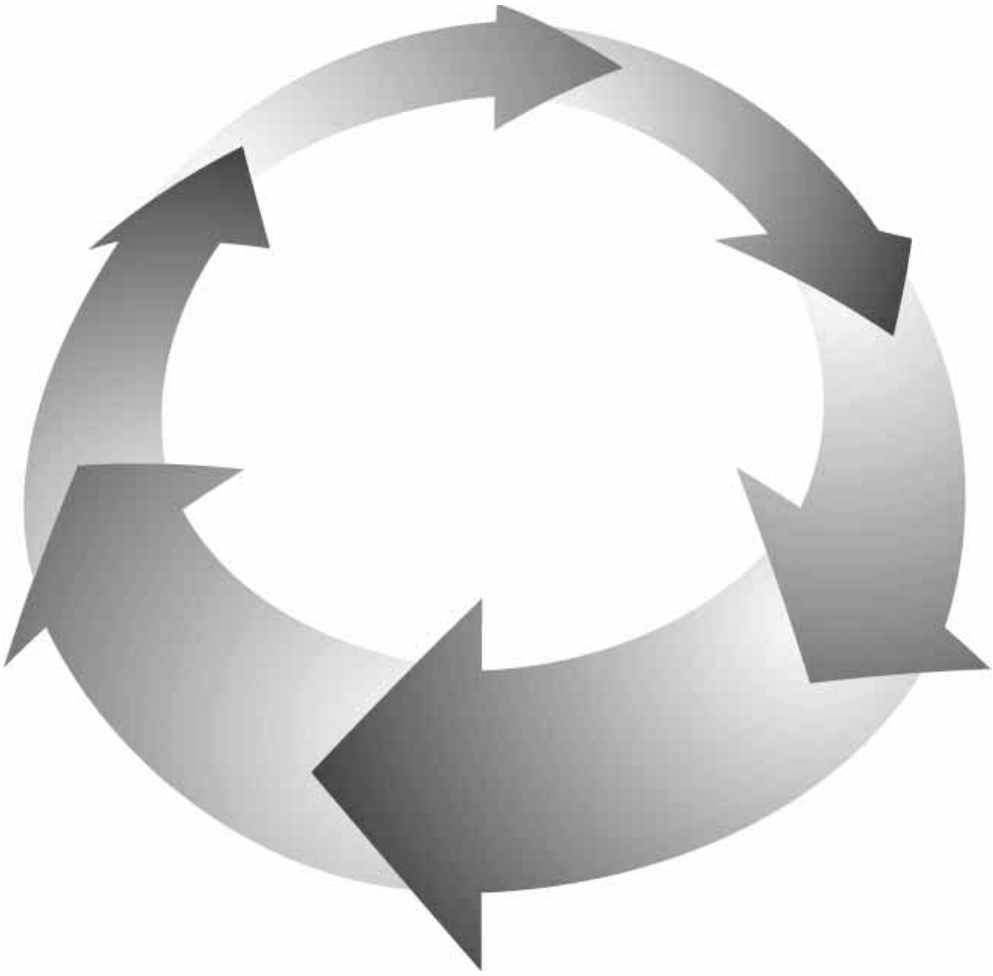

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## COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nationwide, nonprofit organization composed of the public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO seeks its members' consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public. Through its structure of standing and special committees, the Council responds to a broad range of concerns about education and provides leadership on major education issues.

Because the Council represents the chief education administrators, it has access to the educational and governmental establishment in each state and to the national influence that accompanies this unique position. CCSSO forms coalitions with many other education organizations and is able to provide leadership for a variety of policy concerns that affect elementary and secondary education. Thus, CCSSO members are able to act cooperatively on matters vital to the education of America's young people.

The CCSSO Resource Center on Educational Equity provides services designed to achieve equity and high quality education for minorities, women and girls, the disabled, limited-English proficient, and low-income students. The Center is responsible for managing and staffing a variety of CCSSO leadership initiatives to ensure educational success for all children and youth, especially those placed at-risk.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction . . . . . 1

II. Acknowledgments. . . . . 2

III. Conference Overview. . . . . 3

IV. Sustainability: Panel Discussion:. . . . . 7

Sustaining School-to-Work: Lessons Learned from the Field . . . . . 7

Sustaining School-to-Work for High Risk Youth. . . . . 11

Sustaining School-to-Work: A National Perspective . . . . . 12

Q & A: Concluding Remarks. . . . . .14

V. Building a School-to-Career System: State-Urban Team Breakouts . . . . . 15

VI. Marketing a School-to-Career System: State-Urban Team Breakouts . . . . . 18

VII. Looking Ahead to the Next Series of Conferences. . . . . .20

Appendices . . . . . .21

Appendix A: CCSSO State-Urban Initiative
Conference Technical Assistance Model. . . . . 21

Appendix B: Open Space Meeting Process . . . . . 24

Appendix C: Bibliography of Conference Material . . . . . 25

Appendix D: Conference Participant List . . . . . 26

# I. INTRODUCTION

The Council of Chief State School Officer's (CCSSO) State-Urban Initiative held a national conference on sustaining school-to-career systems for urban youth on October 23-25, 1997, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Nine state-urban partnerships comprised of 68 participants attended the conference. The partnerships included: California/Los Angeles, Oakland, and Sacramento; Kentucky/Lexington and Louisville; Michigan/Detroit; Minnesota/ Minneapolis; Missouri/Jefferson City, Kansas City, and St. Louis; New York/New York; Ohio/Columbus, Dayton, Grove City, and Lorain; Pennsylvania/Harrisburg and Pittsburgh; and Wisconsin/Madison, Milwaukee and Racine.

The goal of this conference was to improve the capacity of states and cities to structure comprehensive school-to-career systems so that they are inclusive and support the needs of urban youth and urban partnerships. Through collaboration, state and urban leaders will continue to (a) refine a vision of a successful school-to-career continuum for the nation's urban youth; (b) identify the structure, resources, and stakeholders that will advance the vision; (c) develop practical strategies for overcoming challenges and barriers to the vision; (d) prepare for their own use a matrix or plan of work that identifies the concrete tasks, personnel, resources, expected outcomes and time frame to achieve the vision.

The conference provided a forum within which state-urban partners joined in a progression of sessions to build and communicate effective school-to-career systems for urban youth, and then to consider how to sustain these efforts when the School-to-Work Opportunities Act sunsets in 2001.

The conference provided support for teams to assist them in their work including: (1) mix and match team sessions; (2) individual team meeting sessions; (3) experts and specialists who serve as presenters, facilitators and resource people; (4) site visits to schools, community colleges, the public sector, and businesses implementing school-to-careers; and (5) open space meeting sessions; and (6) documentation and other research-based informational resources.

This report represents a synthesis of the conversations and work conducted by state-urban teams during the three day conference. In addition, this report incorporates the ideas and concepts of the expert resource people and Council staff who supported the work of teams, as well as information from the materials and reports that were made available to conference participants.

The intended use of this report is to: (1) support the continuous work of state-urban teams; (2) assist teams in informing, and ultimately rolling out, their strategies to other cities and urban partners within their states; (3) inform and encourage others interested in using school-to-career concepts for education reform in urban communities; and (4) contribute and add to the body of knowledge in this area.

## II. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While the success of the Cincinnati conference was a result of the all those who participated, there are numerous individuals who made special contributions. Bev Campbell, Stuart Greenfeld, Sonia Hernandez, and Doug McPhee (California), Diane Sharp (Kentucky), Naomi Bryson (Michigan), Joan Wilkosz (Minnesota), David Etheridge (Missouri), Cynthia Laks (New York), Roy McCullagh and Don Spangler (Pennsylvania), Stan Potts (Wisconsin), and Shirley Moore and Jane King (Ohio) played an integral role in organizing and planning the work of their teams. We appreciate the leadership of Jo Ann Poe, School-to-Work Coordinator for Cincinnati Public Schools for planning and coordinating the site visits. We would also like to thank Cliff Migal, Executive Vice President/CEO of the Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Development for hosting a reception and teleconference at this site. Finally, we thank the following individuals who took time out of their busy schedules to speak during the conference: Gene Harris, Chief Program Officer, Ohio Department of Education; Rob Radway, Ohio School-to-Work Director; J. Michael Brandt, Superintendent, Cincinnati Public Schools; Dr. Shelley J. Hamler, Director, Career Paths, Cincinnati Public Schools; Dr. Harold Carr, Superintendent, Great Oaks Institute of Technology and Career Develpment; and Dr. John M. Goff, Ohio State Superintendent of Public Instruction; and our panel members, Lynn Olson, Senior Editor, Education Week; Lois Ann Porter, Program Services Team, National School-to-Work Office; and Alan Zuckerman, Executive Director, National Youth Employment Coalition.

Several other individuals contributed their expertise and knowledge to the conference activities including: Amy Coughenour, Center for Occupational Research and Development; Adrienne Smith, Jobs for America's Graduates; Karen Johnson, National Conference of State Legislatures; Richard Luecking, National School-to-Work Office; Mary Mack, the National Transition Network and National Transition Alliance; Owen Brown, National Urban League; Alan Zuckerman, National Youth Employment Coalition; Lawrence Whitman, U. S. Department of Education; and Steven Kussmann, Utility Business Education Coalition.

Chris Wade, a teacher at Withrow High School, and her Business and Marketing Career Path students joined the conference and offered their assistance registering participants. Students provided Cincinnati tourist information, and worked with conference participants to unpack and display information about their state and local school-to-work programs.

Daniel T. Wiltrout and Joyce Lieberman of the Council of Chief State School Officers were responsible for organizing and conducting the conference, and for developing the supporting materials. Barbara West provided support to conference participants and activities. Cynthia G. Brown, CCSSO Director of the Resource Center on Educational Equity, gave her support and ideas that helped to conceive this initiative. Ms. Lieberman is the primary author of this document.

## III. CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The three day conference included expert panel discussions and speakers, small group breakout sessions, individual team planning sessions, open space meeting sessions, and site visits. State-urban teams used these sessions to discuss challenges and strategies and, from these discussions, developed a plan-of-work that outlined expected outcomes, concrete steps, resources and a time frame for implementing their school-to-career systems.

Conference discussion and activities focused on three major themes:

- building K-12+ school-to-career systems
- marketing school-to-career systems to diverse audiences; and
- efforts and plans for sustaining high quality school-to-work principles and elements, after the School-to-Work Opportunities Act sunsets in 2001.

Day One of the conference opened with a State-Urban Carrousel. Team leaders from each state-urban partnership briefly summarized: (1) What they are doing well; (2) What areas need work; and (3) What teams want to accomplish by conference end related to the conference themes. In addition, each state-urban team was allotted space to display information about successful school-to-career programs within their states and cities. Participants had the opportunity to collect and discuss these materials in an effort to begin networking with others.

### Welcoming Remarks

Gene Harris, Chief Program Officer, Ohio Department of Education and Rob Radway, Director of Ohio's School-to-Work Program delivered keynote addresses at the welcome lunch.

Originally an English teacher and a high school principal, Ms. Harris progressed into administration as the assistant superintendent for the Division of Curriculum and Instruction at Columbus Public Schools in 1991. In 1995, she was named to her current position of Chief Program Officer for the Ohio Department of Education. She provides leadership for development and implementation of new performance accountability standards for Ohio's students, schools, and districts, and is a point-person for the department on the Ohio School-to-Work Initiative.

Ms. Harris provided an overview of Ohio's approach to building, communicating, and sustaining effective school-to-work systems. Most of her work has been in urban areas where children "come from steps behind." According to Ms. Harris, "students should realize that once they graduate in June, they are going to work. All students will find themselves in the work force, including those going to college." Ohio has an existing law on opportunity for all students to participate in career plans beginning at the end of the 8th grade to get direction for education in high school.

Key points from Ms. Harris' remarks include:

- Increase pressure to improve academic standard results, particularly in urban areas;
- Sustain school-to-work efforts by integrating school, the work force, and economic development;
- Involve local communities through active participation by the School Board;
- Raise new teacher standards;
- Work with parents and the schools to support the development of critical thinking skills and self-motivation skills for students; and
- Integrate pre-service teacher programs to include experiences beyond the walls of school.

Ms. Harris concluded by stating that "All of us working together will achieve school-to-work opportunities for all of our students."

Rob Radway's 25-year educational career includes 23 years of classroom experience as an English teacher. Prior to being named Ohio's School-to-Work Executive Director, Mr. Radway served as the School-to-Work Opportunities Coordinator for the Ohio Hi-Point Career Center. There, he is credited with creating one of Ohio's National Star Site School-to-Work models. The Center was named one of Ohio's BEST Practices in 1996.

Mr. Radway discussed his 16 years working with K-16 work programs with five agencies: the Human Service Bureau, the Bureau of Employment, the Development Bureau, the Regents, and the Board of Education in an effort to build a sustaining system that will provide opportunities for all students in classrooms and the workplace with rigorous and relevant experiences. Radway believes that school-to-work is a vehicle to provide all students challenging academics applicable to their needs.

Key points from Mr. Radway's remarks include:

- Include parents, businesses, and teachers with students to design and implement school- to-work programs; find out what the community needs;
- Provide communication skills and high technical programs for higher education
- Realign teacher licensure to ensure that new teachers understand and can adapt, rigorous, relevant experiences for their students;
- Work with universities to design pre-service programs;
- Redesign teacher professional development to address curriculum changes; and
- Make the connection between school and work to students. "Learning doesn't stop at the school bell."

### Site Visits

Day Two of the conference opened with a welcome by Dr. Shelley Jefferson Hamler, Director of Career Paths for the Cincinnati Public Schools. Next, Cincinnati Public Schools Superintendent J. Michael Brandt described his five-year plan entitled *Students First,* which "provides a framework for organizational change to improve student achievement in every school, at all levels, and for each student. The plan represents a new vision for the Cincinnati Public Schools, one that focuses on teachers and students in the classroom."

The pre-site visit briefing provided participants an opportunity to become oriented to Ohio and Cincinnati's school-to-work system and how the sites to be visited fit into that system. Site visits, as technical assistance, can serve an exciting and rewarding aspect of a conference or meetings because they:

- Bring participants into the community to see first hand how programs and services relate to the conference;
- Provide an opportunity for participants to see a program or a number of programs in operation and to hear about successes, failures, and problems from those operating or participating in the program; and
- Afford an opportunity for participants to reflect on the state and community school-to-career system, and how the various sites relate to the whole system.

Often the dialogue that takes place during these meetings can open up new ideas and provide examples of strategies for program initiations, modification or change that the participant can take back to her or his community. Also, participants may offer suggestions based on their own school, community, or state experience and respond to questions from the hosts about how they are solving challenges. Site visits are intended to provide time for discussion with participants or staff, to gain a more thorough understanding of the program and how it fits into the larger system or to probe about specific issues, problems, and barriers that were encountered and how they were overcome.

Participants had an opportunity to visit one of the following sites:

- *Bramble Developmental Academy* - a K-6 neighborhood school which has transformed itself from a failing elementary school with low academic achievement to a highly successful school whose principal was awarded Ohio's 1997 Distinguished Principal award.
- *School of the Creative and Performing Arts* - a magnet school for grades 4-12, which provides an environment where young people with special talents in the arts can develop artistic and academic skills within the same building.
- *Hughes Center* - a 9-12 center that has transformed itself from a failing neighborhood high school into a successful Magnet Center. The Hughes Center houses five academies using post secondary articulation agreements, and workforce training plans for students to make the transition from high school to college and careers.
- *Cincinnati State Technical and Community College* - this site featured the higher education's connections to School-to-Work Career Path and Tech Prep programs at the six Cincinnati Public School's Career Path centers, focusing on admissions policies, articulation agreements, and the role higher education plays in the development of the high school School-to-Work curriculum.

- *Business Connections - Cincinnati Courthouse* - business partners discussed School-to-Work program planning, implementation strategies, and work-based learning opportunities for all students.
- *Community Connections - Cincinnati Courthouse* - Cincinnati's new strategic plan was the result of restructuring initiatives planned by business, community, parents and local school leaders. Two tax levies were passed for the purpose of rebuilding the system by implementing decentralization of administration and the development of Local School Decision Making Committees.

### Professional Development

Following the site visits, participants came together for debriefing discussions and a visit to Cincinnati's new professional development center, the Mayerson Academy for Human Resource Development. Mayerson is the nation's state-of-the art educational training facility, modeling the latest learning technologies and the highest quality professional development programming. The Mayerson Academy has provided in excess of 100,000 person hours of professional development since it began operations in March 1993.

The mission of the Mayerson Academy is "to provide the highest quality training and professional development opportunities to the men and women responsible for educating the children of Cincinnati; provide educators with training resources they need to deliver the highest quality education possible to the young people of Cincinnati; and build close collaboration between the Academy, Cincinnati Public Schools and the community."

The Mayerson Academy is a collaborative effort of the Cincinnati Public Schools, the Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, the Cincinnati Federation of Teachers, the Cincinnati Business Committee, and the concerned citizens, businesses and private foundations of Cincinnati.

### Panel Discussion on Sustainability

Day Three of the conference began with a Challenge Panel and Large Group Discussion on: *Looking Ahead to 2001 for Sustaining High Quality STW Systems.* The panelists included Lynn Olson, Senior Editor at *Education Week* and author of *The School-to-Work Revolution: How Employers and Educators are Joining Forces to Prepare Tomorrow's Skilled Workforce;* Lois Ann Porter, Program Services Team, National School-to-Work Office; and Alan Zuckerman, Executive Director of the National Youth Employment Coalition.

The panelists (1) offered advice for sustaining high quality school-to-career systems in states and cities; (2) identified challenges state and urban planners face in carrying forward current successes; and (3) encouraged states and cities together to develop action plans now for sustaining successful school-to-career systems, when the School-to-Work Opportunities Act sunsets in 2001. The following section presents a synthesis of the panel discussion.

# IV. SUSTAINABILITY: PANEL DISCUSSION

*The Congress provided seven years for the Federal "seed" money to allow States to design and implement comprehensive STW opportunities systems. Eight States are ready to start the fourth year of their Federal funding, 19 others are starting their third year, and 10 States are in their second year. With the first round of States entering their next-to-last year the issue of sustainability is particularly timely. The key question to consider is: will the States be able to build STW systems with broad, lasting impact in the next several years?*

1997 Report to Congress:
Implementation of the STWOA

## Sustaining School-to-Work: Lessons Learned from the Field

*The topic of sustainability is a daunting one, especially in urban areas where the average superintendent stays under three years.*

Lynn Olson, Education Week

Lynn Olson has written about public education in the United States for nearly 15 years. A nationally recognized education journalist, she has won awards from the Education Writers' Association, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the International Reading Association. She is senior writer and editor for *Education Week*, an independent, national newspaper that covers education in grades K-12. In 1995, she received a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation of New York to write a book about the transition from school to work for America's young people. The book, published by Addison-Wesley, is titled, *The School-to-Work Revolution: How Employers and Educators are Joining Forces to Prepare Tomorrow's Skilled Workforce*."

Lynn Olson opened the panel discussion by describing some concrete steps a few sites have taken toward long-term growth and survival. She found that one of the biggest challenges to sustainability is: How to make school-to-career part of the broader school-reform movement.

Another challenge that must be addressed is the precarious relationships that exist between the necessary partners in school-to-work systems. "School-to-work programs are like polygamous marriages among partners that rarely work together—businesses, K-12 educators, higher education officials, parents, and students. That's not easy." The following section is a summary of Olson's remarks, including some of the keys to sustainability in Boston, Massachusetts; Austin, Texas; and Kalamazoo, Michigan, lessons from national research on school-to-work, and recommendations for others grappling with linking school-to-work and education reform.

### Boston, Massachusetts

Olson found Boston to be one of the most encouraging success stories, in terms of finding mechanisms to sustain growth. According to Olson, Boston's goal is to have 50 percent of its juniors and seniors participating in structured programs that combine work and learning by the year 2000. At the state level, Massachusetts passed

a law in 1996 to provide an ongoing state revenue stream for connecting activities related to school to work. The legislature appropriated $2.87 million for fiscal year 1997 to support connecting activities.

At the school level, Boston has eight designated "school-to-career" high schools. Each of the schools has committed to create smaller units organized around career themes. In addition, the district funds a full-time school-to-career coordinator to work with teachers out of its general operating budget.

At the teacher level, the most recent teachers' contract included the formation of a committee to look at high school restructuring. The committee will address how to ensure that school-to-career teachers do not get "bumped" by more senior teachers as school-to-career programs develop.

Olson cites the following keys to sustainability in Boston:

- All of the stakeholders have been involved at all stages of design and implementation, including both the business community and the school system;
- Boston has set clear, measurable benchmarks for where it is headed and to see if it is making progress on schedule. These include goals for business participation, targets for how many students will be served in any given year; implementation by schools of career pathways and school-to-career plans on schedule; targets for the number of teachers involved; long-term changes in student achievement and employment.

### Austin, Texas

School-to-work activities in Austin present a more complicated picture. For the past three years, school-to-work activities have been coordinated primarily through a nonprofit intermediary group called the Capital Area Training Foundation (CATF). Funding for this project expired on September 30, 1994. Olson believed that "in all likelikhood [the funds] will not be renewed.

At the district level, Austin Independent School District (AISD) and several other outlying districts agreed to absorb the cost of career specialists into their regular school funding. Currently, there are eight career specialists. The AISD has also begun an initiative to create a career academy in each of its 10 high schools. Counselors have been mandated to participate in industry field visits arranged by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce and Capital Area Training Foundation. Further, the AISD has begun conversations around a partnership with Austin Community College

Olson relates some concerns about sustainability as raised by Bob Glover, a professor at the University of Texas, who has been closely following the Austin initiative:

- Continuous, voluntary funding will not persist—it is not a long-term solution to sustainability;

- If schools end up paying both for career specialists and business liaisons, there is a risk that this will develop into solely a school-based endeavor, with minimal business ownership. Career pathways, for example, could develop into totally in-school programs, as opposed to programs that require the joint ownership and participation of businesses, with strong work-based learning as an integral component.

### Kalamazoo, Michigan

Olson relates a number of steps that officials with the Education for Employment Consortium in Kalamazoo have taken to ensure sustainability:

- There is a long term written agreement between the boards of the local school districts and the community college to support school-to-work;
- School-to-work coordinators are supported through the regular school system budgets. Each local school district agrees to fund the coordinator positions based on the number of their students who enroll in school-to-career activities;
- The Education for Employment Consortium has a five-year growth plan, with both short and long-term goals, so that it knows where it is headed; and
- The Consortium pays constant attention to marketing and communication efforts, letting people know about its successes.

### National Research

Olson went on to report some good news about sustainability based on Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) research. According to Olson, a recent study by MDRC found that 16 school-to-career programs operating between 1992-1993 still existed in 1996. In addition, all of the programs had grown in terms of the number of students and employers involved; over half were attracting more high-achieving students; all had expanded employer roles and activities, improved curriculum and instructional methods, and added new work-based learning opportunities and expanded into new occupational areas. MDRC wrote it had "cautiously optimistic hopes for the future of school-to-work."

Olson summarized what these efforts tell us about sustainability:

- Most programs had a full-time or nearly full-time coordinator;
- Most had full-time business liaisons or recruiters;
- All had set short- and long-term goals and regularly and candidly reassessed how they were doing in relation to those goals; they constantly changed and evolved over time;
- All invested in professional development for teachers so that they could slowly change the practices and expectations within schools;
- All relied on what MDRC calls a strategy of "incrementalism"—they built on their original components to create new ones;

- All had the active support of the high school principal or district-level sponsor;
- Many had independent employer organizations that could bring large numbers of employers to the table; focused on industries with a clear labor-market need; organized employers by industry clusters; and worked with existing business networks and associations to recruit employers; and
- Most had expanded by beginning to provide a continuum of school-to-work experiences, by branching out into new career fields, or by adding new employers.

Olson advised us to "keep our expectations realistic. By and large, this is a steady, slow growth proposition and there are real tradeoffs between quantity and quality. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act monies may be gone after 2001, but the timetable for school-to-work should really be framed in a much longer perspective. Meanwhile, we have to figure out a way of turning soft money sources into regular mechanisms for supporting school-to-work, or hard money. Firms need to see this in their own interest and to lock in funding mechanisms to support such activities, as do school systems."

Olson talked about the biggest challenge and the biggest opportunity for sustaining school-to-work–that is, how to connect it to the broader reform movement. As school districts develop their own standards and accountability systems, Olson suggests that districts:

- Demonstrate how school-to-work helps meet academic standards;
- Design programs that ensure students are taking a solid academic curriculum;
- Track changes in the results, such as the percentage of school-to-work students who are enrolled in upper-level math and science courses, who go on to higher education, who improve their attendance rates, etc.; and
- Look at the standards and assessments being developed in your district or state and ask if they are contrary to your school-to-work efforts.

Olson believes that for urban areas, school-to-work "can play a central role in high school reform. Most of our high schools are just too big, too unfocused, and too anonymous for students. The effort to create career academies share a lot with what we now know about good high schools in general. Namely, a sense of common mission; smaller learning communities; more active learning, in which students are encouraged to apply their knowledge to real-world problems; and some sort of choice exercised on the part of the students."

In conclusion, Olson stated that "Connecting school-to-career to standards is a big undertaking and we shouldn't assume it's an easy marriage just because conceptually it makes sense. But, it's an absolutely essential marriage."

## Sustaining School-to-Work for High Risk Youth

*For out of school youth, work is not a career. Teenagers go in and out of the labor market. The mean number of weeks worked by 16-21 year old high school graduates is 40. For black male dropouts the mean is 21 weeks a year. We have an obligation to make this system effective. The alternative is human misery.*

Alan Zuckerman, National Youth Employment Coalition

Alan Zuckerman is the Executive Director of the National Youth Employment Coalition, a 90- member organization committed to improving the capacity to train and prepare youth to be productive workers. The National Youth Employment Coalition is a clearinghouse for information about successful youth development programs and techniques, an advocate for improved youth employment policies, a forum for exploring alternative youth employment programs and policies and a support network for local and regional youth employment coalitions.

### Sustaining School-to-Work for Drop-Outs on Welfare

Zuckerman began by sharing some statistics that indicate what the world is like for out of school youth:

- 1.5 million kids drop out each year
- 43% of dropouts have a child
- 11% of 17-21 year olds are dropouts; 13% are black; 17.5% are hispanic; 68.5% are poor
- average earnings for 17-21 year olds is $10,180/year for males and $2000/year for females

Welfare reform legislation was Zuckerman's next topic of discussion. Welfare-to-work legislation allocates $3 billion over the next two years, including supportive services, child care, transportation, etc. With a five year limit for benefits, and penalties for states, there are "powerful forces operating to motivate states and welfare recipients to work." However, it is important to note that no funds have been allocated for either education or training. Funding in these areas will be the responsibility of each state. Zuckerman believes that if education and training systems are not put into place, welfare-to-work programs will not succeed.

According to Zuckerman, in 1997, there were more than 3.5 million welfare recipients and more than 10% (371,993) were in New York State. Further, 30% of the AFDC recipients nationwide are between the ages of 16 and 24. These statistics illustrate the importance of providing education and training to welfare recipients, many of whom are young adults with children and lack job skills.

### Sustaining School-to-Work and Effective Practices Criteria

Zuckerman also talked about what works in sustaining high quality transition to work systems by outlining a set of criteria for effective practice. They are as follows:

In conclusion, although Zuckerman believes the words "school-to-work" will not appear in any forseeable future legislation, the concepts may "because they make good sense."

| Management | Workforce Development Skills | Youth Development Skills | Evidence of Success |
|---|---|---|---|
| • has a clear mission<br>• measures impact and strives for continuous improvement on a day by day basis<br>• provides staff development<br>• leverages resources and diversifies funding | • measures progress toward SCANS competencies<br>• assures attainment of basic skills competencies<br>• incorporates thinking and problem solving skills and experiential learning<br>• includes actively engaged employers<br>• posts placement activities | • promotes leadership skills<br>• utilizes young people as resources<br>• fosters relationships with caring adults<br>• builds support networks for youth and engages family<br>• engages in individualized age and stage appropriate activities<br>• exhibits high expectations | • builds accountability systems to identify impact on young people, community and employers<br>• documents what works for young people |

## Sustaining School-to-Work: A National Perspective

*We are halfway to the sunset of the legislation. To date $800 million have been used in 37 implementation states, and technical support is available in 15 development states and extra-state jurisdictions.*

Lois Ann Porter,
National School-to-Work Office

Lois Ann Porter has a lead role in the National School-to-Work Technical Assistance strategy of School-to-Work Training Institute. Porter joined the National School-to-Work Office from Boston where she served as the School-to-Career Director for the Boston Regional Employment Board. She also directed Boston's ProTech, a model school-to-work program connecting work and learning in Health Care, Financial Services, Utilities & Communications, Environmental Services and Business Management.

Porter began by recapping the key expectations of the Act which are: all states, all youth; contextual learning to high standards; comprehensive school restructuring; high level employer involvement and; skill certificates with postsecondary linkages. The role of the National School-to-Work Office is to makes strategic investments with: 1) labor; 2) community-based organizations; 3) employers; and 4) education; to target technical assistance to grantees through STW Institutes and Lines of Credit; and to disseminate information through the STW Learning Center.

According to Porter, the National School-to-Work Office provides support through communications/marketing directors; for out-of-school youth; for whole school reform (New American High Schools) and; through research and evaluation.

In 2001, the National School-to-Work Office wants to: bring a critical mass of support; create a unifying identity and name recognition; gather quantifiable evidence; connect with national trends and; engage all states and all communities in STW activities

In her remarks, Porter highlighted the areas identified by the Office of the Inspector General to look at school-to-work sustainability. They are: legislation and policy issues; governance; strategic planning; leveraged funds; incorporation of other programs; involvement of stakeholders; and roll-out strategy. The following is a summary of these areas.

### Legislation and Policy Issues

Porter stated that:

- 23 states have some sort of school-to-work language in their state legislation
- 14 states have explicit school-to-work legislation

According to Porter, much of the legislation includes curriculum frameworks that reflect school-to-work elements, resources, and policy alignment.

The challenges in this area are to establish where the school-to-work governance will be within the state, and to forge a relationship between school-to-work, welfare reform, and workforce development.

### Governance

Porter noted that the following elements are necessary for governance:

- a permanent, formalized infrastructure
- a workforce development and education reform foundation at the start
- an operational staff needs to be permanent and funded
- a reality of the changing political arena

Porter raised a number of questions in the area of governance: What is a sustainable governance structure? Who needs to collaborate on integration of funds? Do you have depth of political leadership? Is there a connection between stakeholders and leaders? And, Who really owns school-to-work in your state?

### Strategic Planning

Issues to consider include:

- differentiate between a strategic plan and a management plan
- have the right players at the table
- make sure participants share a common vision
- include parents in the planning
- do not separate performance measures from planning

Again, Porter raised a number of questions to be considered including: How do we make plans more "strategic" for sustainability? Does the state have a statewide strategic plan across all agencies? Do you know what you want to achieve and is there agreement across partners?

### Leveraged Funds

According to the National School-to-Work Office, more measurable results equals more leveraged dollars. Therefore, education improvement plans should include a school-to-work component. What strategies need to be developed and used to link and leverage resources from new Perkins legislation, Welfare-to-Work legislation, and the Higher Education Reauthorization?

### Incorporation of Other Programs

Across the country, states are consolidating grant-making, action plans, and reports. States are also integrating school-to-work with statewide assessment systems. In addition, other states are establishing "one-stop" points of contact for employers.

### Investment of Stakeholders

The National School-to-Work office is seeing stakeholders involved at the state level in Request for Proposal (RFP) reviews. Within the RFPs, the partners roles are defined instead of just providing letters of support. It is important to invite all the stakeholders to the table and to have their participation at the local level.

### Roll-Out Strategy

Roll-out strategies vary across states. This raises a number of issues re: sustainability.

## Q & A: Concluding Remarks

During the Q & A session, the following points were discussed in an exchange between panelists and participants:

- document school-to-work successful results
- acknowledge the growth of participation by small minority entrepreneurial businesses
- use resources to educate welfare recipients
- teach students how to make viable plans to present to banks for loans
- access technical assistance money - each state has a line of credit through STW directors
- find academic field money to hook on to
- use available funds to host institutes to bring local partnership teams together

## V. BUILDING A K-12+ SCHOOL-TO-CAREER SYSTEM: State-Urban Team Breakouts

According to the *1997 Report to Congress: Implementation of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act*, system building must include "a number of elements... to ensure an integrated approach to STW implementation. Such efforts must build on and coordinate existing efforts in education reform, workforce development, and economic development." The necessary elements are:

- STW opportunities are intended for all students;
- STW awareness needs to be incorporated into staff development and pre-service teacher training;
- STW system building includes employers and labor unions;
- STW in schools is organized around career majors, thus providing a context for learning and strengthening the connection between school and work; and
- STW is built on a foundation of existing education, workforce and economic development programs, which includes a "roll-out" strategy to manage system expansion.

Throughout the conference, state-urban teams identified the things they are doing to build school-to-career systems and potential obstacles. Discussions took place in individual team meetings, paired team meetings, and open space meetings.

Key topics for this session include: Leadership, professional development, collaboration, curriculum and instruction, career information and guidance, postsecondary access and teacher preparation, applied research, out-of-school or marginalized youth, involving community-based organizations (CBOs), employer involvement, family involvement, links to welfare reform, and systemic vs programmatic changes.

### Challenges in Building School-to-Career Systems

Building school-to-career systems is difficult and characteristic of fragmented social programs rather than a common agenda. Participants noted that it is often difficult to meet local needs because of demographic differences and external pressure from the community, elected officials, businesses, etc.

Another major challenge in building school-to-career systems is funding. Often, funding is tied into student performance, attendance, and other measures. Therefore, it is important to align student assessments with expected outcomes for students enrolled in a school-to-career program. Participants noted that in many cases, the state (or local) agenda can outweigh accountability, performance and student achievement (i.e., the management and its maintenance are more important than students).

### Special Challenges for Urban Settings

Participants discussed special challenges for urban settings in building school-to-career systems. They include a perceived lack of engagement or disaffection among students, and educators and

communities with low expectations for urban children. In addition, many urban schools do not want or do not know how to change the instructional delivery or redesign the school day to best meet their students' needs. For large districts, this poses challenges in terms of the quality and organization of programs, and can magnify complexities. Other challenges raised include:

- Many parents feel disconnected from their children's school and do not feel that they have a voice in their children's education.
- Some union issues impede the process of building school-to-career systems.
- Limited technology and its consequent issues of access and equity are especially important to urban districts. There is a need to continue highlighting technology and to recognize that equity is also associated with it.

### Responses to Challenges

Responses centered around ways a school-to-career focus can become part of the larger education reform agenda for student success. One suggestion was for school districts to consider building systems by organizing around academies or high-skilled occupations to keep the focus on students and quality careers. Other suggestions for building school-to-career systems included:

- Revise student assessments to reflect contextualized learning.
- Devise strategies for recruiting business and community participation.
- Provide teachers with business internship opportunities.
- Help administrators and vocational instructors identify jobs within the school in an effort to help students balance school and work.
- Identify needs and develop a common agenda within and across districts to develop solutions. A state could facilitate the coalition, e.g., Ohio has helped to create District Teams that are facilitated by state staff. Planning meetings are intended for urban districts.

### Strategies to Help Overcome Challenges

A number of strategies were suggested to help overcome challenges to building school-to-career systems. They are:

- Share data and solutions between localities, allowing for flexibility.
- Continue to obtain quantitative data but also collect better qualitative data on program performance.
- Collect data on student needs and benefits to students of school-to-work initiatives directly from students.
- Keep track of the number of youth who succeed, even or especially those with GEDs, in pursuing postsecondary education and training. The criterion for measurement should be that educational pursuit reflects motivation and students' desire to achieve higher levels of education.
- Determine which school-to-work programs in state are effective, particularly those in urban settings

### Going "Beyond the Box" to Build School-to-Work/Career Systems

In an open space meeting, members from the Minnesota and Wisconsin teams discussed how each had "gone beyond the box" to build their respective school-to-work systems.

| School Level Strategies | Staff Development and Training Strategies | Including Out of School Youth Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| • Increase graduation requirements<br>• Infuse SCANS into curriculum<br>• Adopt project-based curriculum<br>• Tie rigor with technology across disciplines<br>• Collaborate with college interns in the classroom, e. g., to demonstrate lab activities that infuse science concepts and results<br>• Involve business people with teams of teachers | • Share best practices of project-based activity with school staff<br>• Work with outside "change agents/ experts" to establish examples and to build on current practices to build project-based learning<br>• Team across schools<br>• Bring in business and community facilitators<br>• Establish partnerships with local businesses and foundations to focus on curriculum | • Focus on economic development to involve CBOs and create business partnerships<br>• Open computer labs after school for out of school youth and the community |

# VI. MARKETING A SCHOOL-TO-CAREER SYSTEM: State-Urban Team Breakouts

*The first rule of marketing is that you must have a good product to sell. School-to-work is better than good. The second rule is that there must be something about the product that appeals to everyone in your target audiences - the "what's in it for me" approach. Again, no problem. School-to-work is truly a win-win scenario for everyone. The third rule is that their must be no apparent downside - no drawbacks or consequences for those who "buy" the product. And here you face the first hurdle.*

Dr. Patty Williamson, 1995

For the purpose of this conference, marketing was defined in three areas of communication; (1) State leaders communicating what the School-to-Work Opportunities Act requires to a variety of audiences; (2) State and Local partnership leaders communicating what their state's school-to-work system is and is not; and (3) State and local leaders discussing strategies for responding to criticisms of school-to-work. During individual and paired team sessions, participants identified the things they are doing to market school-to-career systems and potential marketing obstacles.

Marketing school-to-career systems involves changing the public perceptions from the traditional vocational education view to the new school-to-work/career philosophy. Effective marketing must reach beyond schools to include community and business, industry and labor leaders. This is critical for school transformation. The participants discussed their challenges and ways in which they could be met, especially in urban settings. A synthesis of their discussions follows.

### Marketing Challenges

- School-to-Work is perceived as a Democratic Party initiative and is opposed by the Christian Coalition.
- School-to-Work has not been mentioned by the Clinton administration or members of Congress lately.
- School-to-Work programs are still misperceived as tracking devices.
- School-to-work programs at the local school level are diverse, which makes a general marketing effort difficult.
- There is resistance to the fact that some 15-16 year olds have to make career choices.
- Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds have been cut

### Responses to Challenges

Communication with students, parents, the community, and business is key to marketing. For effective communication and understanding, the different stakeholders need to establish a common language e. g., use language that is understood by each specific audience. It is also important to develop an understanding of issues from both the education and business perspectives.

In discussion with various stakeholders, state and local leaders must communicate that school-to-

work is a vehicle for improving/reforming education. One example is to use standards as way of framing programs. Leaders need to show where the "bar" is, and how their program is helping to raise the "bar." Other responses included:

- Raise the level of discussion with students, parents, and the community.
- Bring together multiple agencies from across the state.
- Educate the public about the current job market, e.g., skill levels, salary levels, and expectations.
- Educate faculty and staff about other career areas so they are able to explain school-to-work to students, parents, community leaders, and business people.

### Marketing the Real Vision

In an open space meeting, participants identified a list of suggestions for effectively marketing school-to-work programs.

When using a professional marketing group, make sure the group knows how to reach the client and that it "gets the vision." In general, participants advised targeting marketing materials to specific groups of stakeholders; e.g., "Know your audience." Marketing materials should be age/grade appropriate and should be representative of the whole population (e. g., ethnic, disability, gender, etc.).

Participants stressed the importance of keeping the message clear and consistent: school-to-work is for everyone, not just for those who will enter the workforce after high school graduation.

They suggested using recognizable personalities to carry the message, e.g., "Who is almost more important than the message." Another recommendation was to utilize national agendas to promote local events and to set up national, state and local marketing resource clearinghouses.

Finally, we are urged to look at cost return on investments - use startling statistics (e. g., cost of education vs cost of crime).

Marketing strategies for different target audiences include:

| Students, Parents and Community | Businesses |
|---|---|
| • Collaborate with students and parents in your marketing effort<br>• Use student organization programs to "sell" the program<br>• Have students create marketing materials, products and activities for younger students<br>• Videotape actual practices with students and partners (e. g., students and mentors in the workplace) | • Set up brown bag lunches to collaborate with and to inform employers<br>• Underscore work options and opportunities using personal stories, struggles, successes and testimonials<br>• Use a major corporation leader to get other business/industry involvement<br>• Use "home-based" businesses and local programs |

## VII. LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT SERIES OF CONFERENCES

The Cincinnati conference was the third in a series of three supported by the shared ownership consortium of state-urban partnerships. At this conference, participants recommended that CCSSO proceed to organize a series of three conferences to take place over the next two years. The first of the new series will take place in San Jose, California, Spring, 1998. State-Urban team members selected the following themes/program design for that conference:

- integrating systems, policies and practices for reforming high schools, including out of school youth;
- focusing on national issues and their implication for states; and
- providing time for hands-on activities where participants can explore and experience technology for both policy development and policy advancement.

These suggestions and other comments will be taken into account as planning continues with state-urban teams for the next meeting.

# APPENDIX A

## CCSSO STATE-URBAN INITIATIVE CONFERENCE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MODEL

In 1994, the Council of Chief State School Officers convened an advisory group of state and urban educators and others involved with school-to-career transition programs to address the challenges that face this nation's urban youth and their school systems. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a strategy to strengthen the capacity of state education agencies to support the development of quality school-to-career transition systems that are available to urban youth. The discussion that took place led to the formation of the Council's State-Urban Initiative. The Initiative brings together teams of state and urban leaders, as well as federal-level policymakers and experts, to discuss and design comprehensive school-to-career systems that include and support the educational experiences and economic opportunities of all urban youth.

Since October 1995, the Initiative has hosted a series of national conferences bringing together state-urban teams to design school-to-career systems that serve urban youth. They were held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Fort Worth, Texas; San Diego, California; Providence, Rhode Island; and Cincinnati, Ohio. State-urban partnerships that have sent teams to one or more conferences are: California/Los Angeles, Oakland, San Diego, Sacramento; Colorado/Denver; Illinois/Chicago; Kentucky/Jefferson County, Frankfort, Lexington; Louisiana/New Orleans; Maine/Lewiston; Maryland/Baltimore; Massachusetts/Boston; Michigan/Detroit; Minnesota/Minneapolis; Missouri/Kansas City, St. Louis; New York/Albany, New York; Ohio/Columbus, Dayton, Grove City, Lorain; Oregon/Portland; Pennsylvania/Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh; Rhode Island/Providence; Texas/Fort Worth; Washington/Tacoma; and Wisconsin/Madison, Milwaukee, Racine.

The State-Urban Initiative relies primarily on a technical assistance delivery model that requires close collaboration and ongoing input from: (1) CCSSO staff; (2) state and urban team leaders; and (3) other educators, policymakers and stakeholders experienced and interested in school-to-careers and programs for urban youth.

Themes and Issues: This model begins with the identification of major themes or issues that will be addressed by the Initiative. In collaboration with CCSSO staff and experts, team leaders identify the themes that they feel are most crucial to the improvement and implementation of effective school-to-career systems in their states and cities. To date, state-urban teams have identified several major themes which have served as focal points for the Initiative. These include:

- Design school-to-career systems that serve all youth, especially those determined to be at-risk;
- Increase the involvement of employers and labor to ensure school-to-career systems are linked to workforce and economic development strategies;

- Develop standards and assessments that integrate the knowledge of workplace skills and academic disciplines;
- Improve the quality and increase the number of professional development activities for instructors, counselors, administrators, and other staff responsible for implementing school-to-career programs;
- Connect policy, legislation and systemic reform efforts at the federal, state and local levels;
- Increase understanding of the new and emerging trends in federal legislation, such as consolidated planning, block grants and reauthorization processes;
- Participate in and utilize the results of national evaluations, benchmarking and indicators, as well as link this work with state and local efforts;
- Learn about successful efforts to create school-to-career programs that serve out-of-school/out-of-work youth;
- Bring to scale high-quality, school-to-career opportunities for all youth;
- Provide plans for sustaining quality school-to-career systems; and
- Develop strategies for marketing high quality school-to-career systems.

Discussions related to these themes are presented in CCSSO publications following the conferences.

State-Urban Teams are made up of state and urban educators and policymakers who possess the leadership, expertise and resources necessary to develop and implement strategies that correspond to the themes identified. Teams represent the nucleus of a much larger group of stakeholders who are responsible for developing, implementing, and sustaining school-to-career systems in their respective states. Teams meet and/or communicate prior to each conference to develop a vision, goals and objectives, and conference strategies. Subsequent to each conference, teams continue to work together and with Council staff to implement the strategies developed during the conference.

Site Visits as technical assistance can serve an exciting and rewarding aspect of a conference or meeting that gets attendees into the community to see first hand how programs and services related to the conference or meeting theme operate. For meeting participants, site visits provide an opportunity to see a program or a number of programs in operation and to hear about successes, failures, and problems from those operating or participating in the program. Often the dialogue that takes place during these meetings can open up new ideas and provide examples of strategies for program modification or change that the participant can take back to her or his community. Also, participants may offer suggestions based on their own school, community, or state experience and respond to questions from the hosts about how they are solving challenges.

Finally, site visits afford an opportunity for participants to reflect

on the state and community school-to-career system, and how the various sites relate to the whole system. For the representatives from states and local programs being visited, the visit provides an opportunity to gather their thoughts and ideas about an issue or set of issues that are of interest to others. It can also be used as an opportunity to gain visibility for the program in the broader community or political arena.

On-going Technical Assistance is provided to teams by CCSSO staff following the conference through follow-up calls, state visits, and participation in regional and statewide conferences. State-urban teams are also encouraged to continue their contact with each other, and with experts and resource people who were present at the conference.

# APPENDIX B

## OPEN SPACE MEETING PROCESS

GENESIS: Open space is a process that was first developed and used over 15 years ago. It was inspired by the recognition that some of the best work at conferences and workshops is done during the coffee breaks, over meals, and at other times when people talk about the things they really care about and when they make connections with others who care about them too. Open space has been used with groups of as few as 5 to as many as 1,000 people.

PURPOSE: Open space provides an opportunity and structure to share experiences and strategies and to network around specific issues. It allows you to identify, convene, and participate in sessions based on issues and topics that you have an interest in pursuing or a problem you are facing. It offers an opportunity for people who share a passion for an issue or topic to meet amongst themselves to discuss it from whatever angle or perspective the group desires. Participants who initiate an open space meeting session do not have to be experts to identify a topic. They simply have an interest in exploring a question with others. Or they may be facing a problem in their community that they would like to discuss with others. Or they may be really excited about something others are doing in their school-to-work initiative that they would like to share and discuss.

PROCESS: In open space, participants are invited to identify topics around which they would like to convene a group. Not everyone will identify an issue, and some people may bring up multiple topics. When everyone has had an opportunity to bring up topics, a schedule is developed that identifies rooms and times for sessions. The individual who brought up the topic acts as the convener of the group. The convener, with the help of a facilitator and/or a note taker is responsible for keeping brief summary notes to be shared with the larger group.

### Open Space Meetings: Four Principles and One Law

1. Whoever comes is the right people
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could happen
3. Whenever it starts is the right time
4. When its over, its over

The law of two feet: If you find yourself in a situation where you are neither learning nor contributing, use your two feet and go to some place more productive.

(CCSSO thanks the National School-to-Work Learning Center, and Ivan Charner and Sue Hubbard of the Academy for Educational Development for the above description).

# APPENDIX C

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