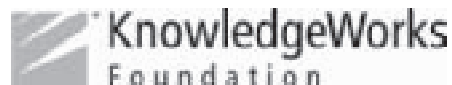


Advancing High School Reform in the States:

Policies and Programs

Advancing High School Reform in the States: Policies and Programs

By Monica Martinez





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About the Author

Monica R. Martinez is the senior fellow for the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, the foundation's lead resident expert on high school reform. She speaks frequently on issues of education reform, including national high school redesign strategies and educational access and achievement for low-income and minority students. She also provides workshops to education leaders to help them understand scientifically based research in the context of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Martinez received her Ph.D from the School of Education at New York University. Martinez was the founding director of the National High School Alliance and served as a senior associate at the Institute for Educational Leadership. Her publications include *From Whole School to Whole Systems*, *How is School Reform Tied to Increasing College Access and Success for Low-Income and Minority Youth?* and *All Over the Map: State Policies to Improve the High School*.

Introduction

As an institution, the comprehensive high school is not even 50 years old. Yet almost since its inception, it has continually come under criticism. Although the policy debate was muted while the standards-based reform movement and its subsequent assessments were developed, the criticisms have been resurrected with fervor over the last few years. As a result, today there are multiple federal, state, local, and philanthropic initiatives that are simultaneously attempting to address the consistent and ongoing criticisms of the traditional comprehensive high school.

In 2005, the Bush administration put forth an initiative for high school reform and has actively promoted it. The nation's governors held a summit on high school reform in Washington, DC, in February, 2005, where 13 states pledged to address the issue, and Congress has begun a series of hearings on high school reform.

Many might ask, Why now? Why is there now such an extraordinary focus on high schools? Is the answer as simple as "Because the standards-based reform movement has caught up to high schools"? Or is it because, after years of being ignored by the national school reform movement, there is finally enough political will to address the needs of the nation's high schools? The Education Trust (2005) asserts:

In many ways, it is not surprising that elementary schools have made much stronger progress than middle and high schools.... Moreover, most states and districts have concentrated their resources and their energy on the early grades. The theory has been that education is like inoculation—if we get it right for students in those early years, we can prevent later school failure. (p. 3)

As a result, high schools—and therefore high school-age youth—have suffered from neglect. Standardized exit exams have highlighted the low levels of academic proficiency of graduating seniors. Research organizations and universities have unmasked graduation rates that are considerably lower than what has historically been reported by districts, states, and even the U.S. Department of Education (Balfanz & Letgers, 2004; Greene & Winters, 2005). And international comparisons, although not perfect, have increased the spotlight on the lack of academic adequacy of U.S. high school students compared to students in other countries (Education Trust, 2003).

Although the accountability movement may have created a demand to improve the nation's high schools, it has not addressed what is behind the low academic performance among high school students. Nor has the movement fully developed the support and public policies required to engage high school students and help them improve.

As a result, philanthropic organizations, as well as other groups, have turned their attention to redesigning the all-encompassing comprehensive high school. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has committed more than \$2.3 billion to improving high schools by creating small high schools that focus on rigor, relevance, and relationships (Andersen, 2005); The Carnegie Foundation has invested approximately \$60 million dollars in seven urban districts across the United States and \$30 million in New York City to redesign high schools and improve how districts support high schools (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2004); and the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, with the Gates Foundation, has invested \$53 million dollars in 10 districts across the state of Ohio to convert 17 large high schools into autonomous small schools. These foundations may focus on different change agents to lead the transformation of the comprehensive high school, such as reform-minded intermediaries, community-based advocates, districts, or school-level coaches, but they share a common vision for a new kind of high school, one that is organized to focus on student learning rather than on managing students.

In addition to the more recent philanthropic efforts, reform models developed by researchers, practitioners, charter management organizations, and business groups have been implemented as a means to restructure the comprehensive high school. The most predominant models include America's Choice, *Breaking Ranks*, the Coalition for Essential Schools, First Things First, High Schools that Work, and Talent Development (Martinez & Klopott, 2004). The momentum and energy fueled by the vision of philanthropists, researchers, and other reform-support organizations has directly challenged the original design of the comprehensive high school.

International comparisons, although not perfect, have increased the spotlight on the lack of academic adequacy of U.S. high school students compared to students in other countries.

NASSP Recommendations for Federal Legislation

All of these organizations support the core areas advocated by *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, NASSP's field guide to transforming high schools and improving the learning experience of high school students: establishing the right conditions for improved student performance; personalizing the learning environment and strengthening relationships in the school community; and providing a rigorous, personalized curriculum to increase student engagement in learning. NASSP is providing support in the field, which includes training sessions at the local and national levels as well as resources and tools to help principals focus on these core areas.

With so many concurrent and similar initiatives targeted at the comprehensive high school, and with accountability mechanisms in place with individual or school-level sanctions, what policies can be developed to support the current redesign initiatives or more specifically, improve teaching and learning within high schools? To be fully committed to redesigning the comprehensive high school as a means to improving teaching and learning, states and the federal government must develop policies and programs that support building the capacity of high schools. NASSP recently issued a set of eight federal legislative recommendations for high school reform. These include support for:

States and the federal government must develop policies and programs that support building the capacity of high schools.

- ◆ Increased academic rigor that reflects the integration of curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- ◆ Personalized instruction that is based on the academic needs of individual students
- ◆ Targeted strategies to raise achievement scores of low-performing students to grade-level proficiency
- ◆ Schoolwide initiatives to improve reading and writing literacy
- ◆ Multiple assessments that are aligned with state standards and include

performance-based measures to provide schools with individual student data to improve teaching

- ◆ Collaborative, inclusive leadership and the strategic use of data
- ◆ Improved subject-area competency and content pedagogy of current and incoming faculty members
- ◆ Technical assistance for high schools identified as “in need of improvement.” (NASSP, 2004)

Promising State Policies and Programs

NASSP's recommendations reflect the reform strategies outlined in *Breaking Ranks II* and focus on specific curricular or structural changes that support school-level implementation and capacity. To be effective, these policies and programs must be supported by efforts at both the state and federal levels. This paper will identify ways in which states can support the *Breaking Ranks II* recommendations. The state policies and initiatives discussed in this paper are in no way exhaustive but rather examples of ways in which states are attempting to improve their high schools.

Increased Academic Rigor

Today's high school coursework should prepare students with the knowledge and skills for both the workforce and postsecondary education. According to Achieve (2004b), "No state requires its graduates to take courses that reflect the real-world demands of work and postsecondary education" (p. 3). States can respond to this by developing policies that are targeted at increasing the rigor of the curriculum including establishing a core curriculum that is aligned with college admission standards, developing an accelerated high school curriculum, and concurrently providing incentives or financial support for students to take more rigorous courses or accelerated learning opportunities through the AP program, the International Baccalaureate program, or dual enrollment.

States need to provide a core curriculum that prepares all students for the workforce and postsecondary education. Four states—Arkansas, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Texas—are planning or have established a core curriculum, or a "default course of study," in which all students have to enroll in an effort to align college and workplace expectations (Achieve, 2004b). The minimum high school curriculum in Texas and Arkansas includes three credits of math, mandating one unit each of algebra I, algebra II, and geometry; two units of science that include biology, chemistry, or physics; four units of English; two units of a foreign language; and three units of social studies. Texas also requires one unit of economics. Indiana enacted legislation that replaces its general curriculum with a college preparatory core curriculum (Core 40) that will enable all students to be successful in both

Today's high school coursework should prepare students with the knowledge and skills for both the workforce and postsecondary education.

college and the workforce. And beginning in the 2006–07 school year, Oklahoma will require all students to complete a college-bound curriculum.

States can also reconfigure the curriculum to accelerate students' progression through high school while providing access to a core curriculum. Most states require high school students to complete a minimum of 24 Carnegie Units as part of a college-preparatory curriculum (Martinez & Bray, 2004). However, Florida has reduced the number of Carnegie Units students have to take to graduate from high school; thereby reducing the length of time it takes for students to graduate from high school. Beginning with the 2004–05 school year, students entering the ninth grade can select from three high school graduation programs, one being an accelerated program that entails the completion of 18 credits in three years and is aligned to postsecondary education requirements. Florida is the only state that has reduced the number of Carnegie Units for graduation. The reason that fewer Carnegie Units are necessary for graduation is that Florida eliminated the multiple electives traditionally required for high school graduation. Accelerating students' completion of high school challenges the necessity of the traditional four-year high school experience and the need for electives. An accelerated academic program should not negate the availability and importance of a core rigorous curriculum.

States must find innovative ways to ensure that students have access to accelerated learning opportunities. States have begun to support this primarily through the provision of AP courses, AP exams, and dual-enrollment programs. Successful completion of AP courses and AP exams allows students to enter college with exemptions from entry-level college course requirements, enabling them to progress more quickly to a focused course of study once enrolled in college. States have begun to expand the program to include schools that have not traditionally offered the program.

States can begin to ensure that all students have access to accelerated learning by offering financial incentives to schools and teachers. For instance, states can support AP classes by paying for AP teacher training or student exams, mandating that schools offer AP classes, or creating accountability plans for AP. Massachusetts and New Jersey use funds from the U.S. Department of Education's AP Incentive Program to subsidize or pay for low-income students' exam fees as an incentive for students to take the tests. Massachusetts subsidizes the cost of AP exams for public and private school students who meet the eligibility guidelines, reducing the fee from \$82 to \$10. Low-income New Jersey students can take AP exams at no expense. Similar to Massachusetts and New Jersey, Texas provides financial incentives to schools that adopt AP programs and students who take the exam. Unlike the other states, however, Texas also offers financial incentives for teachers. Teachers receive a small subsidy for training and a share of a teacher bonus pool in proportion to the number of AP courses they teach.

Another way that states can accelerate learning opportunities is through the use of dual enrollment—a growing, albeit small, trend to accelerate learning for high school students by providing them with the opportunity to earn college credits while still in high school. North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley instituted Learn and Earn, which offers students the option of a

five-year high school program where they concurrently earn a high school diploma and a community college associate's degree. In California, state statutory law allows for advanced community college courses to replace high school courses in the same subject (Goodberger & Haynes, 2005). According to Pennington (2004), "A number of states (notably Florida, Utah, and Texas and to a lesser extent Washington, Georgia, and Indiana) have begun to use dual-enrollment policies as a more intentional strategy for increasing college-going rates" (p. 14). Dual enrollment can be an effective means of providing an accelerated curriculum to students, but states must consider what purpose it serves and for whom.

States will need to consider how to pay for or subsidize the college courses that are part of dual-enrollment opportunities. For instance, Accelerated College Enrollment, the Illinois grant program to support dual enrollment, waives or reduces tuition paid by students to participate in dual credit courses. Washington State's program, Running Start, allows 11th- and 12th-grade students to take college courses for free at Washington's 34 community and technical colleges and Washington State University, Eastern Washington University, and Western Washington University. In 1990, the Washington legislature created Running Start as a part of the Learning by Choice law, which was designed to expand educational options for high school students. Utah is using a financial incentive to increase the number of students taking advantage of dual enrollment for a significant proportion of their coursework in the last few years of high school. The New Century Scholarship pays 75% of an eligible student's college tuition for two years (60 credits) at any Utah state-operated higher education institution so long as the student earns an associate degree during the year their class graduates from high school. As dual enrollment is implemented in more areas, it is imperative that states monitor which students are taking advantage of this opportunity and what type of state support will be necessary to ensure access to first generation college-going students and low-income students.

Personalized Instruction

States must support personalization as a means of improving student achievement. Personalization is a strategy to design instructional practices and support mechanisms that take individual student characteristics and needs into account. School building staff members who get to know students as individuals can help to develop each student's strengths and talents; recognize their weaknesses; and integrate their prior experiences and knowledge in their high school educational experience.

States need to develop policies that can personalize each student's education and provide students with ongoing support and access to information that they may not be able to acquire on their own. This can include a policy that mandates or establishes personalized learning plans that support students' academic and career development as well as assess and monitor students' learning. Kentucky requires students to develop an individual graduation plan as a means of helping them focus on the connection between course work and goals after high school and to gauge student progress toward meeting learning standards. Information gathered includes information pertaining to academic and career

assessment, career goals, four year high school plan, interests/hobbies, school and community activities, and work experience (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2005).

Similar to Kentucky, Rhode Island requires a personalized learning plan. Rhode Island's individual learning plans require that students map their academic plan as well as profile their interests, needs, learning goals, and graduation requirements. Individualized or personalized learning plans, like action plans, serve as an effective means of identifying and supporting underperforming students.

States need to support personalization by developing policies to ensure that students receive support from an adult within the school. For example, Rhode Island requires "all school improvement plans to provide a structure by which every student is assigned a responsible adult who is knowledgeable about that student and tracks his or her progress" (Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2004). In South Carolina, the state will begin to provide more high school guidance counselors to help students and parents plan for future education and careers by the 2006–07 school year. The law will reduce the average number of students for whom a counselor is responsible from 500 to 300 students. As part of the New Jersey Abbott reform program, a new initiative designed to improve education in secondary schools makes specific suggestions on how the secondary school should be structured for personalization. Inherent in this structure is the development of small learning communities as a means of facilitating more personalized, improved instruction. In addition, interdisciplinary teacher teams that serve as advocates within the smaller organizational structures will remain with a cohort of students for multiple years so "all students are known well" (Education Law Center, 2005; Gewertz, 2005). Advocates will meet informally with their students weekly and with the students' families twice a year as well as prepare an individual learning plan for each student.

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Embedding personalization into policies that target high schools is new ground for states and needs to be a growing movement. Policies or programs, such as those in Rhode Island and New Jersey, have only been developed within the last year and similar initiatives or policies are beginning to be recommended. For instance, a task force convened by the Ohio State Board of Education recommended that the Ohio Department of Education provide every high school student who takes the eighth-grade Ohio Achievement Test or the Ohio Graduation Test with a personalized workbook containing detailed timely information about the student's academic strengths and needs (State Board of Education's Task Force on Quality High Schools for a Lifetime of Opportunities, 2004). The task force also recommended that advisory programs and counselors be made available to ensure that students

have personal attention. Additionally, the report recommends that the Ohio Department of Education should work collaboratively with postsecondary education institutions and the business community to develop a high-quality preparatory and professional development program for school counselors and advisers. There are multiple ways by which personalization can be offered at the school level.

States need to consider how to foster and sustain smaller, more personal environments to encourage close relationships and stronger academic achievement. One step would be for states to reexamine policies that may negatively affect the kind or size of schools that can be built and instead establish policies that support the construction of smaller schools through incentives; eliminate minimum sizes for new schools; and facilitate new, smaller schools in big cities and suburbs (Bingler et al., 2003). States should also develop alternatives to rural school consolidation. Although most policymakers consider small schools to be cost prohibitive, small schools' costs are less than large schools' when calculated on the basis of cost per graduate, and they can be built as affordably as larger schools (Bergsagel et al., in press).

Targeted Strategies to Support Low-Performing Students

As the push for higher standards becomes institutionalized through increased grade promotion and graduation requirements, states must provide some form of extra help to high school students who are not meeting proficiency requirements. In fact, federal requirements in place since 1994 specify that low-income students who are not meeting state standards must be offered remediation, and states must pay for programs that provide extra help in the form of tutoring or summer programs for students who are academically at-risk. As discussed previously, individualized learning plans can be the most effective means of early intervention. Other policies include extra academic assistance, which may include tutoring, after-school and summer programs, or supplemental services.

States need to ensure that schools offer extra academic help and financial support for students who are academically at risk. In Arkansas, any student not achieving at least "proficient" on a portion of the state-mandated criterion-referenced assessments will be evaluated by school personnel. The school then develops a student academic improvement plan with the student to assist him or her in achieving the expected standard in the subject area(s) where performance is deficient. Pennsylvania provides tutoring support for students in grades K–12 and focuses support on high school and Career and Technical Education students as well. In 2002, Massachusetts invested \$50 million in remediation programs, and introduced a \$2.5 million grant program for schools and organizations with innovative remediation programs for low-performing high school students from the Class of 2003 (Mass Insight in Education, 2003). Florida instituted a categorical fund, the Florida Academic Intervention Service, to help students in kindergarten through grade 12 make adequate progress in school. The statutory regulation allows supplemental instruction strategies that include, but are not limited to, reading instruction, after-school instruction, tutoring, mentoring, class-size reduction, extended school year, intensive skills development in summer school, and other methods that can improve student achievement (Florida

Department of Education, n.d.). When developing such programs and strategies, high schools will need to consider that adding more instructional or remedial time becomes complicated because many students work after school or during the summer or simply will not attend when programs are offered.

Improving Reading and Writing Literacy Skills

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004), the literacy skills required for all U.S. occupations are projected to rise by 14% by 2006. However, adolescent literacy experts—and the results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress—indicate that as many as 70% of students struggle with reading and require differentiated instruction. Literacy skills (reading and writing) are the foundation of academic success for every student in every school. The lack of grade-level appropriate and remedial literacy programs across the curriculum in middle and high schools is a significant cause of so many students falling behind in reading comprehension.

States need to design programs that allow literacy instruction to be taught across the curriculum. For instance, every single high school student in Rhode Island is to be provided with literacy support across the curriculum, with special interventions targeted at students behind grade level. In spring 2005, the Arkansas state literacy initiatives for elementary and middle level schools, Smart Start (K–4) and Smart Step (K–8), were scheduled to be expanded to grades 9–12. Similar to its predecessors, the goal of the high school literacy initiative, Next Step, is to ensure that all students will meet or exceed grade level requirements in literacy. Over the past few years, federal and state initiatives have supported reading programs targeted at the early grades. Now, however, programs are being developed specifically to serve adolescent literacy needs.

States need to provide financial support for adolescent literacy programs in combination with professional development support that develops instructional skills for teachers. For instance, to encourage support and interventions for reading development and comprehension on content-area tests, the Ohio State Department of Education (ODE) provides funding, through a competitive grant, for adolescent literacy programs that include components of professional development and research-based literacy instruction. Grants will be offered to middle level and high schools to be distributed over a two-year period. ODE also provides concomitant professional development through another initiative, the State Institutes for Reading Instruction (SIRI): Adolescent Literacy (grades 4–12). This program provides teachers with foundational knowledge about adolescent literacy development, effective classroom reading instruction that is research- and evidence-based, and reading strategies that allow for differentiated instruction presented in the framework of Ohio's content standards and assessment system. The SIRI module provides teachers with a broad perspective of literacy development, including how older adolescents' needs and interests will differ from those of younger adolescents. In addition, in fall 2004, a professional development curriculum for literacy specialists/coaches was piloted in the northern and southern regions of the state. Literacy specialists/coaches, in turn, provide year-round building-level support

for teachers across the academic content areas, helping them to be more responsive to their students' academic literacy needs and interests. Additional support comes through the Ohio Office of Reading Improvement, which supports adolescent literacy initiatives in partnership with the Ohio Resource Center for Mathematics, Science, and Reading and publishes an online journal, *Adolescent Literacy In Perspective*, which features research-based practices and students' and teachers' voices from across the state. The partnership is designed to address the unique literacy needs of adolescent learners by promoting and supporting effective, evidence-based practices for classroom instruction and professional development in Ohio's middle level and high schools. As evident, adolescent literacy initiatives need to be comprehensive and value professional development.

Assessments

Testing is the primary way states measure whether students are acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in school and in life. Comprehensive tests are the most common form of assessment across states (Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 2004). Nonetheless, they should be only one measure of student learning.

States need to strengthen comprehensive tests to better measure the knowledge and skills high school graduates need to succeed in the workforce and postsecondary education. Many states administer comprehensive tests in the 10th or 11th grade as an exit exam in an effort to "assess the degree to which students have mastered the objectives in the required courses they have taken prior to the tests" (SREB, 2004, p. 1). Achieve (2004a) found that most of the exit exams in place measure 8th-grade-level work and, for those states that are the exception—such as Massachusetts, Ohio, Texas, New Jersey, Florida, and Maryland—the high school exit exams are still below the standards that public colleges use to determine admission and placement. Although comprehensive tests are in place in nearly half the states and more than half the nation's high school students have to pass them to earn a diploma, most of the tests are not overly demanding (Achieve, 2004a).

States need to use end-of-course exams in addition to comprehensive exams to facilitate student learning. End-of-course exams assess students' mastery of the standards for particular courses and are considered more effective than comprehensive tests in promoting consistent instruction statewide (Bishop, 2001). End-of-course exams may also be used more broadly. For instance, where Tennessee students must pass the end-of-course exams to graduate, Georgia student's end-of-course exam scores will be reported on their high school transcripts for colleges to review. Maryland, Arkansas, and Oklahoma also report end-of-course scores on student transcripts (SREB, 2004). Other states, such as North Carolina and South Carolina, incorporate end-of-course exams into final grades. Clearly, tests can have multiple uses and states are looking for ways to make standardized exams more relevant to student learning (SREB, 2004).

States need to consider how to incorporate performance-based assessments as a measure of student performance. Performance-based assessments require students to construct a response, create a product, or perform a demonstration rather than select an answer from a

ready-made exam. Most often, a performance assessment is conducted through a portfolio assessment. A portfolio is a collection of work, usually drawn from students' classroom work. Rhode Island has begun to require districts to establish proficiency-based assessments as part of the graduation requirements for all students, beginning with the 2008 graduating class. By May 2004, school districts were required to identify which performance-based measures (e.g., portfolios, senior/capstone projects, exhibitions) would be required as part of the student accountability plan. The Rhode Island state exam, however, will be part of each student's total assessment and will not exceed more than 10% of all the factors leading to promotion or graduation. Maine also has moved toward using performance measures as part of its statewide testing system. In 2007, high school graduation will depend on successfully completing a performance-based assessment (Davidson, 2002). Performance-based assessments aligned with state standards can be designed to assess student progress, effort, or achievement and can encourage students to reflect on their learning. States need to support the use of multiple assessments to establish a comprehensive profile of a student's progress toward meeting high school proficiency requirements.

High-Quality School Leaders

Historically, principals' roles have primarily focused on the more bureaucratic, administrative, and managerial responsibilities of running a school. Within the past decade, however, their focus has been redefined to improve teaching and learning. Generally, high school principals must be able to cultivate a cohesive community with a coherent education program, understand the breadth of teaching and support the professional development of teachers, serve as an inclusive leader, and be able to monitor and improve organization performance. Licensure requirements may be able to help drive the professional development of leaders to assume these new roles and responsibilities.

States must examine their certification processes to ensure that the standards reflect what principals should know and be capable of doing before becoming recertified, particularly for high school. Some states have used the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for this purpose. ISLLC is a consortium of states and associations formed for the purpose of developing model standards, assessments, professional development, and licensing procedures for school leaders. In addition, the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELLC), a consortium of NASSP and other educational groups working to review the quality of university-based graduate programs in educational leadership, uses standards devel-

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oped by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration that are based on the ISLLC standards. Missouri has used the ISLLC standards to change the standards and the process for licensing school leaders. These standards support some of the skills that high school principals need, such as the ability to create a collaborative environment and instructional programs, and even address managerial responsibilities.

States need to institute differentiated licenses or certificates that can support the ongoing professional growth of practicing principals as instructional leaders. Texas has used the ISLLC standards to develop the professional growth of its principals as leaders. Principals seeking recertification must develop an individual assessment and a professional growth plan and must participate in professional education activities as suggested by Texas standards—which are consistent with the ISLLC standards. Indiana offers a standard license valid for five years, to be followed by a professional license valid for 10 years and renewable every 5 years thereafter. Nebraska issues four licenses, ranging from a Temporary Administrative and Supervisory Certificate that is valid for 1 year to a Professional Administrative and Supervisory Certificate that is valid for 10 years. Each license signifies and reflects differing levels of skills, educational requirements, and experience.

States also need to consider how to integrate field work and experience as a means of developing principals. For instance, in Kentucky, principal candidates are placed in schools as principals or assistant principals on a temporary basis for two years before they can become certified. In Texas, a first-time principal must complete a one-year induction period that includes mentoring support. This is consistent with some of the preparation strategies of more recent alternative principal development programs such as New Leaders for New Schools and the KIPP Academy Foundation. Both of these organizations require that their teachers spend a minimum of one year in a residency program. Field experience has always been a key component of teacher development and although many principals are former classroom teachers, it does not mean they have had experience in leading a school.

States need to use teacher-competency-based systems and career ladders to reward teachers for assuming teacher leader roles. In Iowa, Florida, and other states, teachers who become lead teachers are rewarded for taking on such leadership roles as working as department heads, joining leadership teams, mentoring new teachers, and helping improve low-performing schools. The use of teacher leaders can develop and promote a collaborative environment in the school and help principals balance the managerial and instructional aspects of a school while indirectly preparing these teachers to serve as principals in the future.

States also need to establish policies that institutionalize a professional learning culture. As part of the regulations of the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education and Ensuring Literacy for All Students, high schools must establish weekly common planning time for classroom teachers. This kind of policy encourages teachers to work collaboratively toward common goals in the school and recognizes that common planning time can create opportunities to improve teaching and learning.

States need policies that can encourage high school principals to use data to monitor organization performance. In an age of accountability, school leaders need to be able to col-

lect, analyze, and use data in ways that fuel academic excellence. One of the most significant steps a state can take to help principals monitor school performance is to create data systems and programs that provide the necessary performance indicators and can be accessed by principals in a timely manner. Florida has established the School Community Professional Development Act, which requires that schools establish performance indicators to identify school and student needs. Indicators include student achievement data; school discipline data; school environment surveys; assessments of parental satisfaction; and performance appraisal data of teachers, managers, and administrative personnel. This policy goes beyond making data available and accessible and attempts to facilitate schools' use of the data for continuous school improvement.

Highly Qualified Teachers

High school teachers must be content specialists and must be able to employ engaging pedagogical techniques. In addition, teachers must be able to establish and maintain instrumental relationships with students and work within a professional community. States need to consider what kind of policies can help develop sufficient numbers of teachers so high schools will have innovative communities of practice. This can include policies specific to certification and licensures, field experiences, and professional development or induction programs.

States need to require high school teachers to have at least a college minor in the subjects they are expected to teach as a minimum prerequisite. Approximately 60% of states require high school teachers to have some sort of concentration (major or minor) in the subject areas they teach. However, 18 states do not require a prospective teacher to earn either a major or minor in the subject they teach (*Education Week, 2005*). The notion that teachers should have strong knowledge in the subjects they teach is intuitively logical and prompts little argument at the high school level.

States need to institute programs that develop prospective teachers' pedagogical skills. This could be accomplished in part through the provision of structured field experiences. Currently, through traditional teacher education programs and licensure requirements, states require anywhere from one month to four months of student teaching (*Education Week, 2005*). All programs should provide intense and supportive teaching experiences for certification and licensure. For instance, in New Jersey, participants seeking a provisional certification must enroll in an approved district or residency training program where schools assign provisional mentors. Certification and licensure programs could offer a range of field-based learning experiences such as classroom observation, apprenticeships, guided practice, knowledge application, and inquiry to ensure the development of diverse pedagogical strategies. If teachers are to meaningfully engage students in learning, the development of pedagogical skills is equally as important as their content knowledge.

States need to work with other entities and organizations to support the development and use of high standards and a performance assessment process that reflects the acquisition of subject knowledge and pedagogical skills that are appropriate for high school students.

States can build upon and expand such existing standards as those developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), modifying them to their specific state context and grade level. The consortium, formed in 1987 to help states align their teacher licensing systems to high standards, has developed model core standards for what all beginning teachers should know and be able to do in order to practice responsibly (INTASC, 1992). Similarly, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has developed advanced standards and performance assessments as a means of defining and assessing quality teaching. NBPTS offers certificates in fields that reflect the developmental levels of the students and the subject being taught. (For example, some of the certificates available are Early Childhood/Generalist, Adolescence and Young Adulthood/Mathematics, Early and Middle Childhood/Art.) States have financially supported NBPTS to advance teachers' pedagogical and subject-area expertise. Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia pay for or reimburse (upon completion of certification) all or part of candidates' fees, whereas other states provide financial assistance to some, but not all candidates. Some states, such as Florida and Hawaii, only offer successful candidates financial assistance to defray the costs of certification-related expenses (NBPTS, 2004). States can advance teachers' skills by using well-established standards and performance criteria outside the state licensure entity.

States can also use standards and the performance assessment process as the basis for an advanced certification or reward system for teachers. Colorado has a "master teacher" certification for those teachers who are involved in ongoing professional development and have "advanced competencies or special achievements," including receipt of the National Board Certification. Teachers who receive NBPTS certification automatically have their Colorado state license extended a few more years than those who are not National Board Certified. Other states have used NBPTS certification to reward teachers financially and to advance teachers' careers. For instance, Iowa has a mandatory career ladder program where teachers are moved along a series of levels, earning more at each subsequent level on the basis of locally developed performance criteria. Locally developed criteria are derived from regulatory standards developed by the Department of Education and grounded in NBPTS standards. Thirty-one states provide teachers who earn National Board Certification with a variety of bonuses and raises or progressions along the career ladder, with which raises are associated. Teachers who earn NBPTS certification and teach in low-performing schools are given bonuses of \$20,000 over four years in California and \$10,000 over three years in New York (NBPTS, 2004). INTASC and NBPTS have helped develop policies that consider alternative means of defining, verifying, and rewarding accomplished teaching.

States can advance teachers' skills by using well-established standards and performance criteria outside the state licensure entity.

States need to establish policies that support mentorship and/or induction programs as professional development. Currently, 16 states require and finance mentoring programs for all novice teachers (*Education Week*, 2005). Iowa has established a mentoring and induction program for new teachers to enhance instructional skills. The state requires districts to provide released time for mentors and beginning teachers “to plan, provide demonstration of classroom practices, observe teaching, and provide feedback” (Iowa Code §284.5). States also use “recognized” or “accomplished” teachers to support the novice teachers in induction or mentorship programs. Massachusetts established a “master teacher corps” for the specific purpose of building a core group of recognized, high-achieving teachers who can serve as mentors to incoming teachers. Policies that focus on induction and mentorship programs are consistent with the current redesign efforts that envision high schools as learning communities; teachers can deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting with one another constantly and consistently.

High Schools Identified as In Need of Improvement

As federal and state accountability mechanisms kick in, a high number of schools are being identified as in need of improvement. Because most high schools do not receive or are not eligible for Title I funding from the federal government, states have been slow to support and provide assistance to high schools that are identified as underperforming.

States must provide direct and intensive assistance to the lowest performing schools to build the capacity of teachers and leaders. Kentucky provides financial assistance and makes experts available to help low-performing schools. North Carolina sends trained and experienced educators directly to a low-performing school to provide assistance. In both of these states, experienced educators develop and implement improvement plans for and with the school. Pennsylvania recently allocated \$10 million to offer targeted support for schools and districts that are identified as underperforming. Using a distinguished educator program, Pennsylvania provides direct intensive support to underperforming schools that includes a component on leadership development.

States can also develop programs or policies targeted at redesigning high schools. Besides providing \$10 million to low-performing schools generally, Pennsylvania has also invested \$4.7 million for Project 720, which offers grants to help high schools redesign their governance structures, break into smaller schools, transform classroom pedagogy, and build partnerships and multiple pathways to postsecondary opportunities. In 2002–03, through the High School Pupil Success Act, the California legislature provided funds, a framework, and a support structure for 11 school districts and their community partners to develop plans for high school transformation. The High School Pupil Success Act was a unique public-private partnership between California and the Gates Foundation, inspired by the Schools for a New Society initiative, a five-year large-scale effort that began in 2001 to reinvent secondary schools in seven urban communities supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Gates Foundation. (Although the act included support for policy and practice changes, continued funding was not provided through the state in the 2003–04 budget.)

States need to strategically award federal funding to prioritize statewide high school redesign initiatives or intervention programs in low-performing high schools. For example, both the Ohio Department of Education and the Maine Department of Education have used the federal Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) program to financially support technical assistance and high school redesign. Ohio has used its CSR funds to support the Ohio High School Transformation Initiative (OHSTI), a statewide effort supported by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation with the Gates Foundation, to fundamentally improve academic achievement of high school students by redesigning high school. In addition, some of the schools involved with OHSTI also received funding from the federal Smaller Learning Communities program. In Maine, funds from the CSR program were used to support high schools and the technical assistance that was provided by both the state department and the Education Alliance at Brown University. In 2000–01, California established the High Priority Schools Grant program that was targeted at helping schools identified as low performing and was eligible to be used in combination with CSR funds. States can use federal programs to initiate and sustain state programs designed to target high schools.

States need to convene a high-profile commission of experts or stakeholders to develop visionary guidance for the state that can improve high schools. The North Carolina governor's office established a task force that recommended that a High School Innovations Fund be created with public, foundation, and corporate money to provide seed capital for establishing theme- or workforce-focused high schools. This would ensure that students have multiple pathways to graduation. North Carolina established such a fund in response to these recommendations. The innovations fund provides start-up grants for three to four years for new or existing schools and permits high schools, community colleges, and public and private colleges and universities to establish high schools together. It also includes provisions for creating a "virtual" high school and for customized learning programs for accelerated students who can benefit from early graduation. In Ohio, it was the State Board of Education that established a task force made up of experts and stakeholders. Ohio's Board of Education's Task Force made similar recommendation as the North Carolina governor's task force, including establishing a Quality High Schools Innovation Fund that would provide seed capital for innovative high school initiatives. Unique to both of these recommendations is that the funds should be used to support innovation in high school redesign and supported by public and private dollars.

States need to consider how to use external assistance providers strategically in support of low-performing high schools. While some states have provided state-trained educators to provide assistance, other states intend to or have used charter management organizations and externally developed reform models as a means of an intervention strategy for low-performing schools. For instance, Colorado authorizes districts to convert their low-performing schools into charter schools and Pennsylvania allowed multiple education providers to serve various schools in the Philadelphia school district. Mississippi and Georgia have designated a reform model, America's Choice, as the statewide technical assistance provider for their lowest performing elementary and middle schools. While these initiatives have focused on ele-

mentary and middle grades, the concept of direct technical assistance by an outside provider can be expanded to the high school level. Just this year, New Jersey—in response to the 1998 state supreme court decision (*Abbott v. Burke*, 1998) that found the state education funding provisions were unconstitutional—will award an outside technical assistance provider with the responsibility to serve all of the high schools receiving funding from the Abbott decision.

Multiple forms of broad-based technical assistance strategies need to be offered to schools through state departments of education. This form of technical assistance can include guidance documents, workshops, networking opportunities, and partnerships with external technical assistance organizations. In Rhode Island, the initial guidance document for the Regulations of the Rhode Island Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for All Students Entering High School was designed to assist schools and districts in implementing the requirements. The original guidance will be followed by additional supporting guidance and technical assistance that will include suggested print and electronic resources and list potential partners to support efforts to meet student needs in a manner consistent with the regulations. In addition, the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Education Alliance at Brown University will coordinate the efforts of statewide networks focused on exhibitions, common tasks, and digital portfolios. A recommendation of the Ohio State Board of Education's Task Force was to expand the dissemination of best and promising high school redesign practices with emphasis on the diffusion of lessons learned through the statewide high school redesign initiative, OHSTI. The task force also recommends that the Ohio Department of Education provide support for a network of small high schools. California's State Bill 1274 provided support for restructuring schools through networks and through discourse communities established to focus teachers on the challenges of changing school habits. In addition, the California State Department of Education provides a comprehensive Web site that provides multiple resources relevant to redesigning high schools. States need to develop a system of support for assisting schools and school districts.

Intensive professional development can be provided through state policies and programs as a form of technical support for low-performing schools. For instance, NC HELPS (North Carolina Helping Education in Low-Performing Schools)—a joint project of the governor's office, the university system, community colleges, and the state board and department of education—uses federal and state funds, and provides professional development for teachers and school administrators, along with services like personnel evaluation, curriculum alignment and research. The project also matches schools with agencies and businesses that have relevant expertise (Achieve, 2001). If states do not help schools develop their internal capacity, schools will continue to be sanctioned and have no opportunity to improve.

Conclusion

The time has come for states to make high schools a priority, if not out of a moral imperative in response to low graduation rates, the general underpreparedness of high school graduates, and the minority achievement and attainment gap, then as a practical response to the fact that standards-based reform has caught up to the high school. Over the last 20 years, state and federal programs, reform models, philanthropists, and researchers have identified effective practices necessary to improve high schools. There is now a basis of collective knowledge, and more important, key education reform support organizations have begun to agree and mobilize around the key practices necessary to improve high schools. When the National High School Alliance was launched in 2001 by NASSP and the Institute for Educational Leadership its goal was to mobilize organizations involved in high school reform and to foster a nationwide network and commitment to improve the education of high school age youth. It has begun to succeed. NASSP began to mobilize schools across states and to provide a blueprint for school improvement with *Breaking Ranks*. Now *Breaking Ranks II* provides a state level blueprint as well. Organizations have begun to collaborate through the National High School Alliance's *Call to Action*; states are being mobilized by the American Diploma Project Network, managed by Achieve Inc., around issues of academic rigor, specifically preparing all students for work in college by raising graduation standards. Through such shared efforts, it is hoped that a tipping point can be reached nationally across states and schools.

Policies have emerged in response to the early advocacy work of multiple organizations. Early policies primarily focused on student and teacher academic supports by bolstering the curriculum and reviewing elements of quality teaching. Recent policies have moved beyond that work to integrate diverse measures of success to extend help to the high school students who are failing and to those who will not graduate from high school with the skills to succeed in work or further education. Essential state policies to improve high schools need to address academic rigor, personalized instruction, targeted strategies to raise achievement scores of low-performing students, schoolwide adolescent literacy initiatives, the use of multiple assessments that are aligned with state standards, collaborative leadership, improved subject-area competency and content pedagogy of teachers, and the availability of technical assistance to high schools.

Partnerships with national and state education organizations, philanthropists, higher education institutions, technical assistance providers, intermediaries, and other reform focused organizations can be equally as powerful. Partnerships with such organizations can

develop the capacity of the state while also assisting states in understanding and using effective strategies to support high schools. Through partnerships, states can ensure that effective high school redesign strategies are put into place and stay in place

Highly visible partnerships across each state that are supported and coordinated by key policymakers and include practitioners are essential for systemic solutions. Through these collaborative relationships, messages about the urgency for high school reform can be communicated and reinforced across the state. Governors can participate in helping develop and implement comprehensive state plans to push through initiatives such as the National Governors Association's Honor States Grant Program or the America Diploma Project. States must learn to move past the role of monitor and regulator to become a facilitator of positive change and translate ideals for systemic change into reality.

In addition to serving as a clearinghouse for and a disseminator of effective practices, the federal government must be a partner with states, providing a set of progressive high school reform policies targeting areas of need that are unaddressed by states. This important activity will amplify the importance of high school improvement on a national scale. Educators, communities, lawmakers, and families must commit themselves to collectively changing traditional, embedded practices and policies. High school redesign requires a rethinking of traditional roles and expectations in education.

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This matrix is a summative display of the states that have addressed the policies recommended in this publication. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of *all* states and/or *all* programs available across the 50 states and Washington, DC.

States	Increased Rigor (curriculum, accelerated learning, and alignment) (Page 5)	Personalized Instruction (Page 7)	Targeted Strategies for Low-Performing Students (Page 9)	Schoolwide Literacy Initiatives (Page 10)	Multiple Assessments (Page 11)	High-Quality Leaders (licensure, practicum, professional development) (Page 12)	High-Quality Teachers (licensure; professional development; career ladder) (Page 14)	Technical Assistance for High-Need High Schools (Page 16)
Arkansas	X		X	X	X			
California	X						X	X
Colorado							X	
Florida	X		X			X		
Georgia	X				X			X
Illinois	X					X		
Indiana	X					X		
Iowa						X		
Kentucky		X				X	X	X
Maine					X			X
Maryland					X			
Massachusetts	X		X				X	
Mississippi								X
Missouri						X		
Nebraska						X		
Ohio		X		X				X
Oklahoma	X				X			
New Jersey	X	X					X	X
New York							X	
North Carolina	X				X			X
Pennsylvania			X					X
Rhode Island		X		X		X		X
South Carolina		X			X			
Texas	X					X		
Utah	X							
Washington	X							



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