

HIGH SCHOOLS OF THE MILLENIUM: IMPLICATIONS FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL
EDUCATION

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>> MCKENNEY: Good afternoon.

I'm Floyd McKenney, director of the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education.

We want to welcome you to this continuing Professional Development Series that is sponsored by the National Dissemination Center.

I want to let those of you here in the audience at Ohio State University know that this series is being Webcast live on the National Center's Web site, and we do indeed welcome our Web site participants across the world.

At the conclusion of our speaker's presentation today, there will be a chance for questions from the audience, and she may also entertain questions throughout her presentation.

We are pleased to have Betsy Brand with us today to address what many of us believe to be one of the most critical issues facing this nation.

Betsy is codirector of the American Youth Policy Forum in Washington, D.C.

The American Youth Policy Forum is a nonprofit organization that provides professional development to national policymakers in the field of education, career preparation, and youth development. As codirector, Ms. Brand oversees the development of forums, seminars, field trips, and publications.

Betsy's professional experiences, which are not new to many of you, are quite extensive, in spite of her youthful appearance.

She has served in the U.S. Department of Education as assistant secretary in the Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

As assistant secretary, Betsy served as the primary spokesperson for the federal government on issues relating to vocational technical education and adult education, as well as workforce development.

During that time period, she was responsible for managing a budget of about \$1.5 billion.

Betsy has also served as president of Workforce Futures, Incorporated, served as a professional staff member of the U.S. Senate's Labor and Human Resources Committee, directed the White House Task Force on Literacy, and has served as staff on the Committee on Education and Labor in the U.S. House of Representatives.

It's important to us, Betsy also served as an advisory committee member for the National Dissemination Center and the National Research Center, and we're very happy to have her input in that particular area.

Betsy received her B.A. degree from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

And we're delighted to have her here today to speak on an extremely important topic, "High Schools of the Millennium: Implications for

Career and Technical Education."

Please join me in welcoming Betsy Brand.

(Applause)

>> BRAND: Thank you, Floyd.

I appreciate that introduction, and it's -- it's a pleasure to be in Ohio.

I was here a couple -- a couple of months ago with Charlotte Coomer for the Ohio Career and Technical Education Leadership Institute, and have been here numerous times and know (inaudible) very well.

So I feel like Ohio is one of the places that's really fun to come to, to talk about career and technical education.

I have to speak in the microphone for the camera, but I may start moving around because I feel with this group it's small enough that we might get more interactive, and I may come closer to you; don't fall asleep.

I want to talk about a report called "High Schools of the Millennium." And I'll hold up my props.

This is available on our Web site, and I'll give you the Web site at the end.

The handouts that you have cover the executive summary of the report, the recommendations in the report, and -- and some other material from the report.

So you'll get a pretty good coverage of the written material with the handouts that you have on your seat.

Certainly, you're welcome to download this document or see me later if you want more information.

The High Schools of the Millennium project grew out of a lot of American Youth Policy Forum's work in career and technical education. And I'll start by saying that our organization was begun in 1993, and it really heavily focused on the School to Career Opportunities Act and a lot of the career preparation movements that were kind of taking place and really flourishing in the '90s, including tech prep and career academies.

And our focus, since we got involved in career preparation, was really to move from just a simple career preparation activity to really what's happening in secondary schools. And as we got deeper and deeper into the subject of career preparation, we got deeper and deeper into the issue of secondary school education and the need for reform at the secondary school level.

So that's how the project started to grow.

We did not approach it, however, as just career and -- career-technical educators.

And our goal is to really broaden the discussion beyond a career and technical education.

However, I think as I go through this discussion today, that you will see, I hope very clearly, where career and technical education fits into what we're calling high schools of the millennium or promoting as high school reform.

But this discussion today is not just limited to the field of career and technical education.

So I'm going to be talking about broader issues that are related to high school reform.

To start off with -- I'm sorry, I just can't stand behind the podium, I'm not a professor, I'm not a teacher.

I just don't feel comfortable back there.

To start off with, this is a list of some of the groups that we called upon to help us in this discussion of High Schools of the Millennium. And this is a very small illustrative sample that is just to show you that we actually did have a lot of folks from the career-technical education world, but we also had broad education groups as well, Council of Chief State School officers, we had the Council for Basic Education in Washington, D.C., which is a standards-based organization, the American Federation of Teachers, and SREB, Gene Bottoms with High Schools That Work.

They are a lot of people that you are all familiar with, I'm sure. But we also broadened it beyond career and technical education, as I said.

We did include a lot of people from the standards-based movement -- standards-based education movement.

We also included a lot of people from -- not a lot, but we included some people from the youth development world, and also from service learning, and some of the other activities that have become quite current in the world of high school education.

So that's just to give you an idea of some of the groups that we worked with.

Now, when we put all these people together, we didn't necessarily have agreement on why high schools should change, and so we -- because people are all over the map.

And we thought we should spend a little bit of time talking about why we thought it was important, about why high schools should change.

And many people are really in disagreement.

I was actually at a meeting last week where some people were saying, "Maybe there really isn't a problem with high schools, maybe we as educators are manufacturing this crisis because parents and the public don't really seem to think that there's a problem with their schools. They say their schools are fine.

And if you look at polls, that's pretty much what comes out.

So maybe it's a manufactured crisis."

Well, maybe it is, but I really don't think so.

We started to get a lot deeper into the issues that were going on with youth and learning.

And just to highlight a few of them, certainly standards-based reform is driving change throughout the entire K-12 system.

And we're finally learning and discovering that many kids have not performed, and we have not expected them to perform, and we haven't done anything to help them perform.

So we have got to change our way of thinking, and -- and truly get every child to a high level of achievement.

And I think that's the best thing about standards-based reform.

It's causing some other problems, in terms of assessment and testing and perhaps narrowing of the curriculum, but at least standards-based reform has put on the table that every child can learn, and we've got to find a way to make sure that every child learns to high levels.

The need for urban school districts.

This may not be an issue so much in Ohio -- maybe it is in Columbus, I'm not sure.

It probably is in Columbus.

But there are urban school districts that have 60% dropout rates.

You know, that's a shocking, shocking statistic for the United States. And a lot of people don't know that.

They really don't believe that we have 60% dropout rates in some of our urban high schools.

>> The dropout rates in (inaudible) (inaudible).

>> BRAND: A comment from the audience was that dropout rates in Appalachia were 72%.

So -- but a lot of us just kind of ignore that fact and just kind of go on and think, well, that's okay, that's somebody else's school, we don't have to worry about that.

And the youth of urban schools, not only do they have high dropout rates, teachers -- frequently, well, there aren't even enough teachers, but the teachers that are there are teaching out of context, and they tend to be the least trained and have lower skills and newer skills, and so they are not as effective as some other teachers in more suburban and wealthier districts.

We spent a lot of time talking about student engagement from the learning process.

And any of you who've been in classrooms or around teens know that they are easily disengaged, and they find school boring, they find it irrelevant, and they think it's a waste of time, and they're just passing time until they can either go to college or get a job.

Well, they're not learning, so what's going on?

In all the youth groups that we've worked with and all of the youth programs we've gone to, many alternative programs, the kids are saying, "You know, school was just a miserable experience for me, teachers don't respect kids, they treat us, you know, like dirt, and many times they don't think we can learn."

And kids have lots of stories, and maybe some are right; some are wrong.

But whatever it is, the kids aren't learning and they're out of school, and we've got to find a better way to deal with this, getting them more engaged in learning.

A couple of other reasons that this group took on the charge, the global economy.

I don't think I need to say a lot to that -- on that to career and

technical educators, but the whole issue of the expansion of technology -- I'm sorry, the expansion of information through technology and changing the way students learn. Any of you who have children know that they're learning very differently than the way that we learned in high school and college, and it's only going to continue to change rapidly. These kids have access to information anytime, almost anyplace that they want it, and with the increase in all of the Palm Pilots that schools are using and wireless technology, these kids won't have to go to college anymore; they won't be on the campus any longer. And that's just going to keep driving down and down and down to the lower grade levels. So the kids that are coming up in the system right now are wired for this technology, and we're not really meeting this need. But, in addition, it opens up a huge range of information to -- to youth, to young people, that they probably really don't know how to negotiate, and they don't have the skills to discriminate "What is the right information that I need, what's the quality of this information," you know, "How do I sort through this information?" And those are skills that our children need as well. And I'm not sure that we're really doing the best job in meeting those needs, simply because it is new technology and a lot of us are still learning how to use it effectively. There were a lot of legislative issues that we talked about. One of them was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which Congress started to consider in this last Congress. They did not finish it, and we kind of had an idea they weren't going to finish it being that it's a big election year. And so it will come up next year and be pretty much the primary education law that the new Congress will consider. A lot of money in Title I, which is the biggest federal education program, goes to elementary schools, but a very small percentage of Title I dollars go to secondary schools, and yet there are very many needy students at the secondary school level. And we believe this is an issue that should be discussed at the federal level, either more accessibility or more money because the needs of these kids don't necessarily disappear, or we have new students are coming into the system, with immigrant populations and other newcomers. So that we still have great needs at the secondary school level, but the Title I program and many of the other programs really don't reach the secondary education level. So we feel that legislatively we need to raise this and find a way to deal with the needs at that level. There's also a little act called the Carl Perkins Applied Technology Education Act, which isn't up for reauthorization in the next Congress; it's up in 2003. But there will be groups starting to talk about what to do with

Perkins in the next round, and so those conversations will begin either 2001, 2002, and we feel that we have a lot of information that may be helpful in those discussions.

There are also moves to increase block grants, and Perkins has often been kept out of the block grant debate, but increasingly we're going to see a movement to including Perkins with other secondary school programs.

And so I think everything really -- we need to look at this more holistically, and we felt that this was -- the timing was right to consider high school reform with all of these other legislative vehicles out there, and the Workforce Investment Act and the youth councils and the programs that are driving education and training and a lot of alternative education at the local -- at the state and the local level.

And we want to see those programs much more integrated with what happens with the K-12 system.

So those are just a number of issues.

You can read about them in the book, if you want more detail.

We spent probably 12 -- 12 to 15 months meeting face to face, having some really pretty difficult conversations on many of these topics.

But our group finally decided that we would use the basis of the Breaking Ranks report that was prepared by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

How many of you are familiar with that?

Okay, a good number of you are.

We didn't want to duplicate work that was already done, and we thought that the groundwork that they had laid was really pretty significant. So we used a lot of their work in thinking of our, quote, vision for the High Schools of the Millennium.

And I will put up the two slides that I am going to put up that give you kind of a broad view of what our vision is.

Basically, it's that learning can't be confined to the school building any longer and that if we really hope to truly educate our youth to be not only academically capable but socially capable, physically capable, and capable in a career, we need to use the resources of the entire community to do that, and no longer can school be responsible or able to do all of that.

There aren't enough hours in the day, and information is changing too rapidly, and there are too many demands, in terms of career preparation.

So our vision is really to kind of open up the learning experience for high school students and for teenagers, to find a way to access all of the resources and learning that exists throughout the entire community.

That's one piece of it.

There's also a little bit more that I want to add on to that.

And then I'm going to go into greater detail on what we were -- what this means at the high school level.

The second part of the vision relates more to the personal relationships that need to exist in a young person's life, and this talks about building smaller learning communities and building greater connections and more frequent connections with adults and mentors and counselors throughout the educational career of the student. And this comes from a lot of youth development research and from a lot of the programs that we studied that were more related to youth development -- to the youth development field than probably traditional education.

But when we see youth that have dropped out of the system that go through a small community-based program or neighborhood-based program, you know the reason they go and the reason they stay generally is because they're saying, "There was a person there that really helped me, that I really connected with; they got me back on track."

They don't go for the programs.

They go for the people.

And for the kids that are floundering that aren't making it in high school that are the potential dropouts, this is really what we wanted to build in and find a way to use what already exists in the community and a lot of knowledge and a lot of those kinds of things, and meld that with the academic and career preparation education.

So those are kind of the two big themes in the vision that we wanted to promote.

Just let me check, is everyone okay with this?

Anybody violently disagree, violently agree, sounds right, sounds wrong?

Our group did okay?

Okay.

I want to go through the elements that we broke it down into to make it a little bit more manageable.

And there is a hand- -- there is a handout, it's a two-page graphic that opens up that has all of these bullets on elements of these topics.

It's got a little star in the center.

Help me, Charles.

What page is it?

Is it in here?

Okay, it's actually the -- yeah, it's actually, I guess, the second page in that starts, "High Schools of the Millennium."

So you can follow along if you want to and read that.

We started, pretty obviously, with a vision of high expectations.

But if you go out into schools and you cast an honest eye about what's going on, it's really clear that there are a lot of schools that don't have a clear vision of what they're all about, and we don't have high expectations for all their students.

They have high expectations for some of their students.

And -- and I may be preaching to the choir with this group here

because you may be very committed educators, but, you know, I can give

this talk until I'm blue in the face, and people will still walk out of the door and go back to their classrooms and go back to what they're doing and treat their kids differently, and we just can't do -- we can't afford that any longer.

So we just push as strongly as we possibly can the belief, the strong internal belief system that every child can learn.

The superintendent in Fairfax County, Virginia, where I live, is a very dynamic superintendent.

Our school system is about 170,000 kids.

It's a huge school system, but it's a good school system.

We're obviously a pretty wealthy county.

And his big -- his big line is, "I now believe that we can have -- that we can create the programs that will help every child learn," he said, "but what I have to do is to change the belief system of every single employee in the Fairfax County School District."

He said, "It's not about programs anymore.

We can figure out the programs, we have the programs, we know what to put in."

He said, "My job is to get those people to change their belief system."

And that's a hard thing to do.

And that's what we're trying to work on as well, is to really change people's belief system. With the right resources, with the right programs, with the right kind of interventions, with the right kind of community support, every child can learn to high levels.

So that sets the first for our list.

But it's also important to have a vision of what the school is about.

And we spent also a lot of time the vision piece of it, because that has to be community generated, that can't be the principal standing up saying, "The vision for our school is going to be," you know, "high-tech high school, and that's it.

Now go do your job."

You know, that doesn't work.

It's got to be community-generated.

It's got to be generated with support by the parents and from the parents, the employers in the community, the community-based organizations, all the alternative youth programs that are out there. These -- all these people need to be engaged in this discussion about what the vision of the high school is really going to be, and what is it that this one individual high school is going to do for these kids. Now, that can be very particular in a lot of ways.

It can be, you know, an arts -- a performing arts high school.

It certainly can be similar to a lot of the career academies that we all know about and the career-technical high schools, magnet programs that we know about.

That's fine.

But it's got to have a clear focus and a clear vision of what you want to achieve.

The comprehensive high school really has got to go.

That just doesn't work.

Number two up there is principles for youth development, and we put that up because we feel this has really been a missing piece in a lot of education reform discussions.

We spend a lot on academic preparation, a lot on civic preparation, although probably not as much as there needs to be, and some on workforce preparation, career preparation.

But oftentimes what's really missing is the preparation for life and allowing the student to feel that school is a place to develop all of that person's talents and abilities, not just the academic talents and abilities, and to find ways to create leadership and development in a very positive sense.

So youth development, for those of you who may not know much about the field, really looks at the positive side of youth and finding ways to build on their individual talents and abilities and competencies in a progressive developmental manner so that they get support in a very individual one-on-one sort of -- sort of way.

It's not aimed -- you know, it's not so much the -- the kids of -- you know, kids are bad, they might get into drugs, and they might, you know, get pregnant, and they might do these bad things, which is the way a lot of -- which is the way people think about youth programming, kind of the remediation side of it.

This is really looking at it more as a positive prevention way.

And oftentimes youth will tell you that they get academics from school, but they don't get that kind of personal, social well-being support from school. And we feel that that needs to be built into the structure of education.

Whether it happens right on the campus of high school, maybe yes, maybe no.

There are a lot of other organizations in the community that can help provide that kind of connection and that kind of positive learning growth for youth.

And we'd like the schools and educators to think about ways to build that in.

The vocational student organizations is probably one of the best examples of positive youth development.

There's probably more that can be done with those organizations, but a lot of the -- a lot of those career-technical student organizations really are very small, or they're not very well supported in high schools.

And they're a great opportunity to connect youth with adults and to give them those leadership opportunities.

So we're putting that at number two.

We really want people to focus on that, get youth involved.

Youth will tell you what they want and what they need, and the more you get them engaged and involved, the more they'll be learning.

Teaching and learning goes to the heart of what this report is about,

simply stated, project-based, contextual, applied, real-world, a lot of what you as career-technical educators are doing, and I think this is where we really learned a lot from the career-technical field -- technical education field and wrote that into the report because in this case, we think the academics are really missing it. So we strongly support the project-based learning that needs to be across the board for kids of all ages, not just elementary grades, but all ages.

Let's see, I'm going to try to move through here more quickly. Assessment, we say a lot about assessment, but primarily we believe it should be proficiency-based, competency-based; that one single test is not the way to go; kids need to be measured on lots of performance assessments; the assessments need to be diagnostic and ongoing, and not end-of-the-year, end-of-the-course exams.

Structured organizations, small schools, small learning communities, again, were the focus.

So career academies are great models.

Tech prep is a great model.

The 16 career clusters with the Department of Education, if that's a great way to organize yourself, that's fine, but it can be much beyond that.

It can be, as I said earlier, you know, the performing arts or something else related to the community that -- that may not have a career focus.

The immersion in the adult world and using the community for learning are somewhat related.

The adult world, again, is finding ways to connect youth with adults. In all the youth programs that we have analyzed and looked at the evaluation material, more than anything else the fact of having a single caring adult in a youth -- in the life of a young person is the biggest factor to success beyond anything else that we have seen. And we have looked at hundreds and hundreds of evaluations of youth programming and education programming.

So that connection to the single caring adult is crucial.

Let's hope it's more than one single caring adult.

That's what we'd really like to see.

And those connections can be made by getting kids involved in the community.

We strongly promote service learning in this report.

We're not just talking about work-based learning that a lot of you all are familiar with, but service learning, great programs where you relate a community problem back to history, social science, English, math, whatever.

Get the kids out in the community, volunteering to do some -- you know, to help with some issue in the community.

And they feel good about the service that they're providing to the community.

The community gets a service.

They're connected with adults, so ...
There are lots of creative ways to get kids involved in the community.
But oftentimes people in the service learning world don't really think
that they're doing the same thing that people in the career and

technical education world are doing.

All of these labels get in the way, and we're trying to make it very
clear that this is just good pedagogy, this is just good learning for
kids, and this is what's important.

Lastly, accountability.

We strongly believe in accountability.

We believe that everyone -- every program does need to have
accountability, but the measures need to go far beyond just academic
measures that we've kind of become used to.

And we need to look at healthy indicators of -- for youth in the
community, so that you look at drug use and you look at teen pregnancy
and you look at negative behaviors as well as some of the positive
things, like academic achievement.

But there is more than just academic achievement, and communities need
to consider that.

So that's a really quick run-through of what we have in mind for our
High Schools of the Millennium.

It's really many, many changes in there that I can't cover all in
the -- in the moments that I have with you today so I hope you will
take time to read the report.

What I would like to do now, though, is talk about a few schools that
we had visited that embody some of the elements of High Schools of the
Millennium, not all of them, because it's -- it's hard to find schools
that have everything up there.

But these are career and technical education schools that I have been
to personally in the last two years or so.

These really kind of stand out among all the others.

So just if you're to say, well, who's out there doing these things and
are there really examples, these are a couple.

I have -- there are six altogether, six schools altogether, and some
of these you may know and have heard about; others, I don't know,
maybe you don't know about. There are different models.

There's a tech prep magnet, a technology magnet -- these are all
magnets, I guess -- there's some High Schools That Work on the other
slide, career academies.

So they're different structures, you know, they don't all look alike.
And just a few words about each of them.

Saunders probably does the best job that I've seen in using
alternative performance assessments.

Now, their students have to meet the New York Regents exam, just like
every other student in New York does, which is a pretty rigorous
academic exam.

And they -- and they know that, and they work with the kids to do the
Regents.

But they have built a whole system of alternative assessments that allow the students to demonstrate their competencies and their abilities in some very personal and unique ways, and they do that throughout the school year.

So it's not just a single opportunity to showcase, but it's -- it's throughout the nine-month school year.

And the kids love it because they can stand up and be very creative and very innovative.

The rubrics are very -- are strict, and they're very clear.

Everyone knows it going in.

But they also have worked out a process where they have community evaluators come in, and the community evaluators are given the rubrics as well, and they judge the kids.

So we were there on what they call tech prep day, where all the kids in junior and senior year have worked on a project, and senior year is much more complex than junior year.

But they present it, and they have to have all of their supporting materials with them, and some of them are videos, and some of them are on poster board, and some of them are chemistry experiments and physics experiments, and some are working in computer-aided design and manufacturing, but they've got employers judging these kids.

And that's great feedback for the school as well because then the school starts to learn what the employer community is really expecting.

So that's -- Saunders has a lot of good things, but that was one thing that really intrigued us when we went there.

Sussex Tech in Georgetown is a High Schools That Work program, and they have done a couple things that I'm impressed at.

Number one, they've given their teachers and counselors incredible planning time.

They have a half hour every day to plan before classes start, and then they have a weekly meeting of several hours where the whole team comes together.

The team -- once a student chooses a cluster, the student is with those teachers for four years.

So they move together.

And the teachers have tremendous amount of time to get to know the students as well as their other team teachers in that cluster, and they get a lot more time together that way as well.

They team teach almost every class.

So one teacher may be teaching, and the other one can work either with individual students or on some other class material or planning.

So they just work out, through their block scheduling system, a tremendous amount of planning time and time for teachers to work together.

The other thing that -- well, actually, what that allows, then, is a very serious integration of academic material into contextualized and applied curriculum, and a lot of interdisciplinary courses.

And they have a lot of projects that use three or four different academic courses.

So that -- that structure was very unique.

Chicago High School for Ag Sciences, I think, also, I would say about that is the way they've been able to integrate very serious academics for a very urban, difficult population and provide the kids a lot of extra support throughout the class day.

And it's also divided up into very small communities, small classes, small clusters of students in their -- in their career paths.

So they have a lot of contact with adults, and the adults are very -- very engaged in helping the kids before school, after school, on weekends, to reach the high academics.

And the three other schools are Michael DeBakey High School in Houston is a career academy; Randolph County Vo-Tech Center in West Virginia is a vo-tech center, and Bergen County Technical Schools are career academies.

Michael DeBakey probably showcases the connection to the community and connection with adults, in addition to strong academics, but they're located right in the middle of the Houston Medical Center, with all of the various labs and clinics, and so the kids are paired with health profession -- health professionals and have tremendous opportunity to work in the community and work in the labs and the clinics side by side with these professionals who then become their mentors over the three- or four-year period, depending on what age the student comes in.

So this -- just the fact of where they're located allows them to access a tremendous number of community resources.

The vo-tech center in Elkins, West Virginia is a really interesting school.

It's also a High Schools That Work program.

And they were considered a dumping ground and had terrible problems.

Nobody wanted to go there.

And they came in with strict academic requirements of the High Schools That Work, but they also developed a very serious counseling component.

Starting in the 8th grade, before students entered high school, the student has to sit down with the guidance counselor and their teacher and some of the academic teachers and the parents and figure out what this student was going to take for five years, and the fifth year was the first year of college.

So they started early on with these kids, getting them to think about college and getting the parents to think about college.

And everyone signed off on the contract.

It wasn't a real contract, you know, but they signed off on it, so it was very clear what the pathway was for these kids.

And that really has helped the students complete high school and move into postsecondary education.

And it's a group of kids -- it's very rural, southern West Virginia,

where, you know, a lot of these students never thought about postsecondary education at all, much less even finishing high school. And Bergen County is another school that places kids out in the community.

Their belief is that the kids shouldn't be there senior year; they should be out in the community, learning.

And they do have the kids come back, you know, to touch base with their academic teachers and their counselors.

But for the most part, these kids are out working in New York City.

They're close to New York City and Newark, in northern New Jersey.

And, again, because of where they're located, they have a lot of opportunities for great internships.

But they expect these kids to be away from school.

They don't want to see them.

You know, that's -- that's their philosophy, that it's time for these kids to get real work experience that's linked back to their academics.

And then the student, at the end of the senior year, in the last couple months of the senior year, is expected to do a thesis based on their experience and based on their studies that -- that wraps up all of their learning and their experiences in the community.

So those are just some examples of places that -- that we think have -- have started to move toward this vision.

We don't see too many schools that have a strongly developed youth development piece.

That's one thing that we'd like to see more of, but they're moving there in other ways.

The Bergen County Career Academy had a youth newspaper that was youth-led and that would deal with all kinds of major issues that the kids had to deal with, and that really was their voice at the school, and it started to move into governance issues as well.

And they also had a large number of students engaged in making policy at the school level.

So they were moving in that direction.

Now, I'm going to move to implications for career and technical education in a minute, but I'd just like to hear any comments from you all before I do, to see if -- yes, Charlotte Coomer.

And I have to ask you to use this mike, which goes into the camera.

I'm sorry, it's for the program.

>> Betsy, in your work did you get any resistance from some of the groups saying that youth development was not the role of the school?

>> BRAND: We got a little resistance, and we countered it by saying, "We understand that it may not be the primary role of the school, which is why you need to partner with your community and find resources in the community that can help do that," but we also think that schools do youth development in a lot of ways, and that would include all sports activities, coaching, all that, the newspaper, you know, the school newspaper, you know, plays, fund-raising that

students may be doing for the school.

There are -- there are all kinds of extracurricular activities that could be considered youth development if you kind of approached it that way.

If you wanted to get kids more involved in the decision-making side of it, you could.

But if you're not set up to do that, and you feel uncomfortable, almost every community has some kind of youth organization that -- that a school could partner with.

And so we're certainly encouraging that, as well.

Yes.

I'm sorry?

>> I don't think that (inaudible)

>> BRAND: No, it's not because -- it doesn't affect the internal microphone system; it's the taping.

>> Your report is excellent, in terms of the findings.

What I'm going say may sound like criticism; it is not.

Every high school report since 1960 -- and I've tried to stay fairly close to them -- comes up with the same thing.

They make -- even youth development, and every good high school I ever saw did all of those things.

The problem we found in the venture capital program in Ohio and in some work I did with the Melville Corporation is this runs so counter, for some strange reason, to the culture of education that dominates all the way from the community talks about it to the higher ed preparation programs, that you can't get much going on it.

The educators who do this usually are squeezed out, seen as enemies of the profession.

I've never seen a good high school principal who was liked by everybody in his system.

What -- are you going to move ahead on some ideas on what you do to improve preparation programs?

And simply -- I won't make a long speech, although the people who know me know I make those. Virtually no consultant in the country ever saw a school like this.

Virtually no state ed department worker ever saw a school like this.

Virtually no professor ever saw a school like this.

Virtually no researcher ever saw a school like this.

So we're in the business of lifting ourselves by the bootstraps, really, and I just wondered if you had some ideas on that.

>> BRAND: Sure.

The business that I'm in is trying to change policymakers and to get our policymakers to better understand what these schools do look like so that they can change their policies.

And, yes, we will absolutely continue with this work.

We just received a grant from a major foundation that has taken on high school reform in urban school districts to -- for -- for us for three years to focus on high school reform at the policy level -- at

the national -- at the federal and the national level.

So a lot of our work over the next three years will be to get people to think about these kinds of schools and to think about the kinds of changes that need to be made.

We will take them out to these schools.

This is what we do.

The groups -- when I went to those six schools, we had groups of policymakers with us.

They're not always at the state levels, because we're a national group and we deal with state and -- I'm sorry -- national and federal folks, but we try to include some state people in our groups.

So when they see a school like that, they all of a sudden have the concept that yes, things can look different, and then we will get into deeper discussions.

One of the things that I would really like to pursue -- well, a couple things we will pursue -- are the whole area of alternative assessments and performance assessments and, you know, what really should they look like, and what are some ways that educators can effectively use alternative assessments without either breaking the bank or taking up all their time, and how can they be developed, and can we develop alternative assessments that are as good measures as -- as some of the standards -- the more academic standardized systems in place right now?

So that's one topic we're going to look at.

One that I'd like to really change is the whole issue of seat time and Carnegie units, and to get to competency-based education.

So we'll take on issues like that and just get deeper and deeper into them and continue conversations with folks who make the decisions and hopefully get them to change.

Higher ed and teacher prep is another one.

We'll kind of keep pounding away, so we'll try.

Any other comments?

Yes?

>> Three of those schools I'm acquainted with, and they go back a long time.

I wondered if you, in your study, have looked to see what was the thing that triggered them to get started in this way.

You know, Hackensack was involved with Model 1 back in the very early '70s.

The career -- the ag school in Chicago has been 20 years, probably.

And the Elkins school has been quite some time.

Did you find anything that was really the trigger that got them headed in this direction?

>> BRAND: Probably two things.

One -- both at Sussex Tech and the West Virginia school were self-admittedly bottom of the barrel dumping grounds, and -- and the community -- and, also, I think in Bergen County, a lot of the community members came together and said, "This is unacceptable," you

know, "we just can't have a school like this."

So there was -- there was that feeling in the community that, you know, something has got to change.

But the other thing that comes out loud and clear from all of our visits and research is the quality of the leadership and the fact that there was a person who decided to take this on and had a clear vision. It goes back to the vision and the expectations, that belief and the clear vision of what they wanted to achieve and held high expectations for every student so that there wasn't -- they weren't segregating students according to ability.

And the leaders of the schools, at least the ones that we talked with, have -- you are absolutely right, have been at it a very, very long time.

It does not happen overnight.

And one of the superintendents said, "It took me 20 years to get where we are today, and we're not even there."

So it is a long-term process.

It does take strong leadership, and it takes somebody who can really see what they want to achieve and be able to convince other people and get other people on board with them so ...

Okay, let me move on, just because this is probably the part you want to get talking about as well.

Our implications for career and technical education -- and I don't think this is going to be any big surprise.

Let me try this, stick some of my slides here for you.

The first is -- the first one is to be very clear that you must, must meet and articulate to whatever standards are in place in your state and community, the academic standards.

Unfortunately, we still have had discussions, and we had discussions in our High Schools of the Millennium group with a couple of people, not many, but a couple of them, saying that they didn't think that career and technical education students should have to meet academic standards.

I'm sorry, that is a double standard; that's a two-class system.

There are states that are considering developing high schools diplomas that will be tracked.

They're for different ability students.

And they're saying, "This will be a vocational high school diploma, and it won't be as good as the academic diploma."

Now, why would we want to go back to that?

Why?

You know, it just slays me that people are thinking that that's a good decision.

I think that's a terrible decision.

Maybe not every kid is ever going to -- you know, will reach those standards.

There are certain students, there are certain children, for whatever reason, may not make -- may not reach those standards.

And -- and we all have to admit that and understand that that's a possibility.
But that doesn't mean that we should, you know, prematurely assign them to a low level, without even trying.
You know, that's just it.
These people aren't even trying.
They haven't even made the effort to try and get these kids up to standards.
So that was -- that was a -- that was not a good discussion, in my opinion.
This should be -- in my opinion, this should be crystal clear, absolutely crystal clear.
And we should just be well beyond this discussion at this stage of the game.
And I know that some of these tests are terrible, and, you know, they're not great tests, and maybe they really are narrowing the curriculum, but they are changing the culture.
When we were in Houston, Texas, we met with a number of parents of Latino students, and, you know, they were the first ones to stand up and say "The TAAS test is good, it is great, because it's changed the expectations of teachers for my son and my daughter, and nothing else did that before."
We really would like to see big, mega high schools broken down.
You know, the 1,300-, 1,500-, 2,000-, 5,000-person high schools need to be completely shaken up.
And, you know, if you have programs in those high schools, you -- as a career and technical educator, you may be a little bit better off because you may have some identity for yourself or for your program, and that's good, but for all the other kids that are in that general track, that is not good, that is not a good thing.
So coming up with some rationality for breaking the kids into smaller groups is really critical, and tech prep and career academies and the career clusters are great models.
They're not the only models that are out there, but they're great models, and they should be used.
So that's one way that career-technical education can really help promote this discussion of small learning communities.
The Department of Education just made, I think it was \$140 million in grants to high schools around the country to create small learning communities, and they're -- they're struggling with what -- "Well, what does that mean now?
You know, I have 3,000 kids in my school?
Do I just divide them up by, you know, level of school or building or whatever?"
This is where career and technical education can really shine, where you can come in and say, "Do career academies, do clusters, do tech prep.
This is the model."

So this is a huge opening, I think, with this debate on smaller learning communities.

Contextual project-based teaching and learning.

We need more work here, we need more research, to show that this really does meet -- you know, the kids who do learn this way will meet academic standards, and there's some research coming out from California in a school district out there where they've been tracking this for 12 years now, and they really are beginning to collect some good longitudinal data that shows that kids that are in project-based contextual learning are doing just as well, and in some cases better, on the standardized tests that they're using in California.

This is a difficult area because it's hard to define contextual learning, it's hard to define project-based learning.

>> (Inaudible).

>> BRAND: Yes, the person in California is Laurel Adler, and if you want to check with me later, you can, but she's with the East San Gabriel Valley ROP, which, those are their regional occupational programs.

It's outside of Los Angeles.

And she -- it's all university-based research, so it's really quite well done.

Senior projects and portfolios.

Again, I think a lot of people in career and technical education have been using these models, but maybe not as fully developed as they -- as they could be.

And we'd like to see more of an emphasis on authentic assessments and senior projects.

And the senior projects really then begin to integrate a lot of coursework, so they become multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary and force the curriculum together, which, again, is a strength for the students.

Service learning.

I can't emphasize this enough as a technique or as a way to get kids learning their -- the kinds of skills they need to be good workers. Any time a kid is working, whether it's for volunteer, community, whatever, they're going to be learning the -- the skills needed in the workplace, the career skills.

So it may not be with an employer, it may not be a paid internship, but service learning programs that build on what's being learned in the classroom and help out in the community are really powerful models for youth, and they have become very, very popular.

So you might want to look at -- look for those.

Professional development is key.

We say that over and over in the report, and it's repeated many, many, many times, but professional development to use contextual and project-based learning is really critical, and I don't think this happens enough in teacher education or in professional development. That's really where dollars need to be put, in order to get kids

engaged.

It goes back to one of my earlier points that kids are not engaged in learning because it's boring and it's irrelevant to them.

And to get them into activities where it makes sense, and it's based on things that they know.

All this brain research is really true.

You know, we thought contextual learning was just nice, but now there's all this brain research which shows this is how people learn, so teachers need to really be grounded in these kinds of skills.

Guidance and counseling, you know, I think I've said a lot about the importance of an adult, more than one adult in a child's life, somebody who can really connect with them and help them, and to do that long-term planning.

You know, that West Virginia example was a really important example, starting in the 8th grade and going five years into college.

It's that longitudinal look at it.

That goes into strong pathways with postsecondary ed.

I didn't talk a lot about the things about college articulation that we -- that we have in the report, but we have a lot.

I put in strong academics for trade programs.

I mean, I don't think that we can just assume that we're going to get rid of all trade programs, because there's a huge demand for those people in today's economy of, you know, home construction and everything else.

But, you know, the students that enter a trade program should be expected to meet the same standards.

That's my bottom line.

Because you never know where they may end up.

We would like to see programs track their students two to four years after high school.

Does anybody do that right now?

Do you know what happens to your kids when they leave from high school?

Most programs don't really know where they go.

I mean, they may have an idea that some of them go to college.

But they may get into college, and then they may drop out, because the first year of college is the most critical.

And if you don't have somebody helping the student between freshman and sophomore year, there's a -- there's a very strong possibility, especially if the student is any -- is disadvantaged at all, that they'll drop out of college.

And it's really great feedback for you to know what happens to your students.

>> Betsy, that becomes a policy issue, and when you talked about this, you know, your work in forming policy, being able to use Social Security numbers, as you know, Texas, Florida, and North Carolina can do that.

>> BRAND: Good point.

And it is -- you know, it is a serious issue, and it's very time-consuming.

I realize that.

But it's very important.

It's important to get feedback.

You know, if you look at the continuous improvement models, you should know what's happening to your product.

And build on student organizations.

I think, again, this is a tremendous opportunity for career and technical student organizations to move into the limelight, you know, as we're talking about developing better citizens and developing young people who actually might vote in the election tomorrow and get involved and things like that, because more and more, they're kind of dropping out of society.

So these are ways to connect them to society.

And then just lastly, my last slide quickly -- and these are just some quick thoughts of what this means for the Perkins Act.

And these are really -- these are my ideas.

These are not -- these were not endorsed by the High Schools of the Millennium group, so don't blame that on them, if you have problems with this.

But I think it's time to separate the secondary from the postsecondary and to be very clear that these are two separate programs with really different goals in mind.

That we need fewer, larger grants.

Now, that will not go over very well, but a lot of the small grants that go to high schools I don't think really make much of a difference at all, and they're not linked to the vision and the mission of the school in any strategic way; they're just extra dollars thrown at some programs, and they really don't contribute to the overall quality of the academic program.

I think money should really be aimed at professional development as one of the top activities, going back to the contextual learning, project-based learning, to develop people with good technical skills as well.

A main -- a major focus on curriculum integration, with the Perkins money.

And I do recognize there are equipment needs.

I don't think that we can get away from that, unfortunately.

I would -- I personally would like not to have Perkins used for equipment needs because I think it's really in some ways missing the educational purpose of the Act.

But I understand that in order to do good education, you need that equipment.

But I would really like to lessen some of the reliance on the equipment and to focus more on the pedagogy and the professional development and the quality of the programs.

But that's a tough one, I think, that we're going to have to kind of

just accept that.

So, questions?

>> When you talked about separating secondary from postsecondary, what are the implications for tech prep?

Because if we're trying to create a continuum, I guess I didn't quite follow that.

>> BRAND: Yeah, my main point with that is really to separate the basic state grant money that goes either for a secondary program or a postsecondary program because right now they're used in -- in vastly different ways.

I support tech prep very strongly.

I think the model of tech prep is one that really should be used for -- for voc ed in general, with the articulation.

I mean, I would -- I would be happy having tech prep being the model for Perkins, to -- but -- so I'm not meaning to say that there shouldn't be that articulation, but for the, I don't know, 30% or whatever of the dollars that go to community colleges, let's just, like, put that to the side and not mess it up with, you know, what we're trying to do with the Perkins Act.

It's very confusing right now.

So I was really talking about that adult split.

Tech prep, I'm very supportive of, and I think the articulation is critical.

Other questions?

>> Yes, you talked about portfolio development and senior projects. How much research has gone into the actual value of those type of activities, because they are very time-consuming, and how much have you seen as far as gain in research for students, as an example, passing tests?

I recently read an article, I think it was in "Education Weekly," that indicated that there really was no significant improvement in student gain on testing as a result of writing -- spending all the time on portfolios.

But there has been shown a gain in -- in testing as a result of learning how to write on topics like mathematics.

But they took that as a separate topic, so have you had any extensive study on portfolios?

>> BRAND: That's a very good question.

And, no, I don't know that there is a lot of extensive research on

using portfolios, per se.

There is a lot of -- I -- I wouldn't say anecdotal information, a little bit more data available on senior projects, using senior projects, which is a type of portfolio that -- that would -- that's very positive, based on the schools that use it, because their students perform at high academic levels and go on to college and seem to have good graduation rates and college entrance rates.

But just in the use of a portfolio throughout the high school career, no, I don't know of research that has looked at that.

We're basing it on the fact that we see it more as an ongoing kind of assessment, that the student becomes more engaged in their learning and that they're able to get, you know, more immediate sense of feedback and gratification for what they're doing, that it's something that they can carry with them, that it shows their development over time.

So we're looking at it from that perspective, but it's a good question and actually one that I probably need to follow up on.

Other questions?

Charlotte?

>> Did your group address the different contexts of learning, or were you more grounded in the workplace, or did you address multiple contexts, like the student context, the community -- you mentioned the community of the context quite a bit.

I just wondered if you could talk about the different contexts for contextual learning.

>> BRAND: We probably didn't go into great detail about the different kinds of contexts because we thought that that would be up to the school to determine, that it would be part of the mission and the focus of the school, and that if you had a clear focus, that everything would kind of fall within that context.

And that could be something within the community, as well as something that's more student directed or student guided, if you had, you know, a lot of student-focused and student-centered curriculum.

You know, if that's the kind of school that you had, that would be okay.

But we didn't go into great detail about what the context would be, assuming that that would be -- you know, that would generate from the community itself.

Is that it?

There you go.

>> MCKENNEY: Thank you very much, Betsy.

>> BRAND: You're welcome.

>> MCKENNEY: We appreciate your being here, and certainly you've addressed critical issues.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Our next presenter in this series is Garth Mangum from Utah.

Morgan, what is he doing?

>> (Inaudible)

>> MCKENNEY: So we hope we see you.

Tell all your friends and bring all of them, and we'll find a larger room then.

Thank you for coming.

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