



# Workforce Training

MANAGEMENT

*StrengthBank® For High Schools - A Relationship Skills Initiative* prepares students for the workplace in needed, currently lacking areas - 6 of the 11 noted - from the workforce.com survey shown second below StrengthBank® pre and post survey.

Creativity  
Ethics  
Lifelong Learning  
Diversity  
Oral Communication  
Teamwork  
Leadership

The survey taken pre and post StrengthBank® follows:

Date:

Mentor's/Teacher's Name:

Please rate YOUR AGREEMENT with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where:  
1 = "Totally DISAGREE", 2 = "Sort of Disagree, 3 = NEITHER, 4 = Sort of Agree, and 5 = "Totally AGREE"



1 2 3 4 5

1. I like to support my high school and support our teams. ....
2. I care what other students at my school think about me. ....
3. I make friends easily. ....
4. I feel like my life has a purpose.. ....
5. I have realize I have always known what I want to do when I am an adult. ....
6. I see a positive future for myself. ....
7. I see the connection for high school to my future. ....
8. I do at least one hour of homework every school day. ....
9. I read for pleasure (books, magazines, graphic novels) three or more hours per week. ....
10. I feel confident that I will **graduate** from High School. ....
11. I feel confident that I will **go to college, join the military, or start a business** after high school. ....
12. I want to make a difference by **using my unique bank of strengths/talents/gifts** to contribute to the world...

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would like to add ...  
(You may write on the back, too.)

Please rate YOUR AGREEMENT with the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5, where:  
1 = "Totally DISAGREE", 2 = "Sort of Disagree, 3 = NEITHER, 4 = Sort of Agree, and 5 = "Totally AGREE"



1 2 3 4 5

- |  |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13. I am comfortable with people of different backgrounds, skin color, or language than mine.....                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. I have adults friends (who are NOT my parents) that I can talk to .....  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. I feel like the adults at this school care about me and my future. ....  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. I am comfortable telling <b>my friends</b> "no" if they ask me to do something that I don't want to do. ....           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. I am comfortable telling <b>strangers</b> "no" if they ask me to do something that I don't want to do. ....            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. I find it easy to get people to listen to me without having to yell at them or play tricks to "get noticed.".....      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. I understand that I have control over the choices I make; no one "makes me" make a choice. ....                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. I join or volunteer for only organizations, clubs, etc. that contribute to the <b>greater good</b> in all they do..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. I do not need crutches such as smoking, drugs, alcohol to get me through each day. ....                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. I don't seem to need so many snacks when I am focused on something I enjoy doing.....                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. I take my body and my soul seriously.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. I will remain a virgin <b>from today on</b> until I am married.....  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. I look forward to being in a marriage and having children <b>after I have prepared myself</b> to make a living.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I would like to add ...  
(You may write on the back, too.)

## METRICS

**OVERALL PREPARATION OF NEW WORKFORCE ENTRANTS**

<b>Educational level</b>	<b>Deficient</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
High school	33.9%	50.6%	15.6%
Two-year college	21.7	54.6	23.7
Four-year college	17.4	51.1	31.5

Source: ["The Ill-Prepared U.S. Workforce"](#)

**TRAINING GAP IN APPLIED SKILLS**

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Percentage reporting a high need for the skill, but offering no training in it</b>
Creativity	68.6
Ethics	55
Professionalism	47.5
Lifelong learning	44.1
Critical thinking	43.6
Written communication	37
Diversity	33.3
Oral communication	31.3
Teamwork	24.5
IT	24.4
Leadership	22.6

Source: ["The Ill-Prepared U.S. Workforce"](#)

**INITIAL GUIDANCE**

**FOR THE**

**HIGH SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING COMPONENT**

**Personalized Learning Environments**  
**Professional Development and Common Planning Time**  
**Advisory Structure**

**OF THE**

**REGULATIONS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND  
SECONDARY EDUCATION REGARDING PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS AND  
ENSURING LITERACY FOR ALL STUDENTS ENTERING HIGH SCHOOL**

**Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

**Final Version 3.8**

**April 13, 2004**



## **Purpose of this Guide**

*The Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for All Students Entering High School* set a new course for education in Rhode Island. As districts and schools move to comply, their efforts must be informed by data and align with research-based practice. The content and resources in this Section 6.0 guidance should be used to assess the current state, to strategize for systemic change, and to evaluate improvement efforts. In addition, districts and schools must consider the two companion initial guidance documents, for Section 4.0 regarding Literacy and for Section 5 regarding Graduation by Proficiency, to develop complementary, well-integrated programs and services that meet the needs of all students.

## Executive Summary

Section 6.0, School Restructuring, of the *Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for All Students Entering High School*, identifies personalized learning environments, common planning time and professional development, and advisory structures as means for creating successful schools that produce high-achieving, engaged, directed students. The goal is for schools to study and improve their systems and structures, their climate and culture, their curriculum, instruction and assessment, and their family, business, and community collaborations to meet the diverse needs of ALL students as they move through the grades to high school graduation.

### 6.1 Personalized Learning Environments

There is a strong correlation between student achievement and a personal connection to school. Research shows that those students who have supportive learning environments with strong personal relationships have greater success in school, at work, and in the community. All school stakeholders have a shared responsibility to provide all students with the opportunities, guidance, and resources they need to become productive citizens in a global society and its future leaders.

The working definition of personalization for this guidance is:

***Personalization is a learning process in which schools help students assess their own talents and aspirations, plan a pathway toward their own purposes, work cooperatively with others on challenging tasks, maintain a record of their explorations, and demonstrate learning against clear standards in a wide variety of media, all with the close support of adult mentors and guides (Clarke, 2003)***

Effective personalized learning environments in schools offer all students individualized supports toward development in the academic, career and personal/social domains and in civic responsibility. Essential relationships between and among students and adults, a positive school culture, strong family and community collaboration, and a program of curriculum, instruction and assessment that all support the growth and achievement of students characterize personalized learning environments.

Students will benefit from the intentional efforts to meet their individual and personal needs by increased progress toward Rhode Island's proficiency-based graduation requirements (PBGRs). These include academic content and skills identified in content standards and Grade Level/Grade Span Expectations (GLEs and GSEs) and the habits of thinking and applying within the discipline. Most importantly, personalization strategies assist students in developing their own skills for directing their learning and ease the transition between the dependence of the child and the autonomy of the adult. The *NEASC Standards for Accreditation* outline clear expectations for schools to personalize learning, as does *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*. Personalization in Rhode Island schools should operate under the infrastructure of Comprehensive K-12 School-Counseling as specified in Article 18 of the General Assembly .

Personalized learning environments must be a product of a system of comprehensive, multifaceted, integrated efforts that collectively provide all students barrier-free opportunities to learn and develop. The creation of a personalized learning environment within a school is, in effect, school restructuring. It requires collaborative initiatives on many fronts and must be informed by the needs identified by the analysis of data, including SALT and *Information Works!*



This document outlines six suggested **Action Steps for Creating Personalized Learning Environments**. They are:

- 1. Create district-wide and school-based organizational support for personalization.**
- 2. Learn about the promise and power of personalization.**
- 3. Plan for personalization: fully integrate personalization efforts, including professional development and measures, into strategic and annual planning processes, and delineate the responsibilities and expectations for each segment of the school community.**
- 4. Implement a comprehensive school-counseling program as the infrastructure for personalization that includes an Individual Learning Plan for each student.**
- 5. Build school community through partnerships with parents, community-based organizations, the business sector, institutions of higher education, and others.**
- 6. Gather evidence of progress toward results and report on progress on an established timetable.**

## **6.2 Professional Development and Common Planning Time**

Professional development and common planning time create opportunities for improving teaching and learning and help build capacity within the school. Specifically, the regulations stipulate that all middle- and high-school improvement plans (SIPs) submitted pursuant to these regulations must document that all certified school staff will have participated in at least 15 hours of professional development focused on the three priority areas of literacy, graduation by proficiency, and personalization. The professional staff must have training that will provide them with the skills and knowledge that will enhance other school-improvement endeavors and have the biggest impact on improving student success. For the maximum results, professional development activities must be in concert with one another and with other initiatives toward school reform.

Common planning time is necessary for the collaborative work of the professional staff. National research, state experience, and SALT data have established the absolute need for teams of educators to be able to plan together for the students whom they share. It is consistently identified as the largest barrier to reform on the SALT Survey. According to the Center for Collaborative Education: “In order to improve and sustain student learning, schools need to focus deeply on (1) improving learning, teaching, and assessment and (2) creating the structures and supports in schools that enable all students to learn at high levels and all faculty to engage in continuous professional development and purposeful collaboration.” Common planning time is an avenue to achieve both these focal points.

It is critical that teachers and other key personnel (school counselors, coaches, and administrators) use the time provided to share information that will most greatly impact student achievement, especially for those stipulated in the Regents’ Regulations as “students with the greatest need.” Through common planning time, educators can work together to research, design, implement, and evaluate programs and structures that will help students achieve the PBGRs. To achieve the necessary conditions for success, schools must establish weekly common planning time (CPT) for classroom teachers by September 2005.

### 6.3 Advisory Structure

Another component of a systemic effort to improve school performance is the advisory structure. The Regulations require all school-improvement plans to provide for a structure by which every student is assigned a responsible adult who is knowledgeable about that student and tracks his or her progress. Advisory programs work to create the conditions for improving student achievement in the academic, career, and personal/social domains and to enrich the lives of students and adults through personalization of the learning experience. The supportive relationships developed among and between students and their advisors are foundational to schools whose culture is positive, whose students achieve, and whose bonds to family and community are strong. Student advisories foster meaningful, sustainable student-adult and student-student relationships that support student achievement, improve student behavior, build community and enrich the lives of all involved. Advisors meet with students on a regular basis for the purpose of academic, career, and personal-social advising.

Advisory activities:

- 1) help students with self-assessment in the academic, personal/social and career domains
- 2) help students set goals and monitor their progress toward those goals in each of the domains
- 3) give students a chance to develop a meaningful relationship with a caring adult.

*The Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Regarding Public High Schools and Ensuring Literacy for All Students Entering High School* set a new course for education in Rhode Island. As districts and schools move to comply, their efforts must be informed by data and align with research-based practice. The content and resources in the *Initial Guidance for the High School Restructuring Component* should be used to assess the current state, to strategize for systemic change, and to evaluate improvement efforts. In addition, districts and schools must consider the two companion initial guidance documents, for Section 4.0 regarding Literacy and for Section 5 regarding Graduation by Proficiency, to develop complementary, well-integrated programs and services that meet the needs of all students

## 6.1 Requirement for Personalized Learning Environments:

*Districts shall prepare and submit to the Commissioner at a time and in a manner so designated, but no later than May, 2003, school improvement plans and district strategic plans that include strategies and a two year timeline for creating more personalized learning environments for high school students. Strategies in these plans must be implemented no later than January, 2005. These plans must be designed to ensure a collective responsibility for individual students that results in more students achieving the Regents' standards for academic proficiency. These plans should include approaches such as student advisories, schools within schools, academies, individual learning plans, flexible scheduling, senior year dual enrollment plans, interdisciplinary grade level teams organized around a common group of students, and comprehensive K-12 counseling systems. School improvement plans and district strategic plans shall address the means by which these approaches will be implemented, how they will be evaluated, and how they will be continuously improved in light of information obtained. Additionally, by May, 2004, school improvement plans and district strategic plans must address strategies for responding to, recording, and planning for each individual student's social/emotional, academic, and career needs beginning no later than grade five and consistent with the intent of the General Assembly in Article 18. RIDE will provide guidance on such planning for individual students by January, 2004.*

### **Clarification of the Intent and Terms of this Regulation**

The intent of Section 6.1 is to recognize the correlation between student achievement and a personal connection to school. Research has shown that those students who have supportive learning environments with strong personal relationships have greater success in school, at work, and in the community (Darling-Hammond, 2002). Effective personalized learning environments (used synonymously with personalization) in schools offer all students individualized supports toward development in the academic, career and personal/social domains and in civic responsibility. As an outcome, students should demonstrate proficiency in the *National Standards for School Counseling Programs* that are categorized by these domains and are the foundation of comprehensive K-12 school counseling. (Appendix A)

The working definition of personalization for this guidance is:

***Personalization is a learning process in which schools help students assess their own talents and aspirations, plan a pathway toward their own purposes, work cooperatively with others on challenging tasks, maintain a record of their explorations, and demonstrate learning against clear standards in a wide variety of media, all with the close support of adult mentors and guides (Clarke, 2003)***

While Article 18 specifies that districts should implement a comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program, the Regents' Regulations require strategies for responding to, recording, and planning for each individual student's social/emotional, academic, and career needs beginning no later than grade five. The Regents sought a minimum starting point at grade five to support student success in middle and high schools. Ideally, all districts will have a comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program. In addition, social/emotional needs referenced by the Regents encompass the personal/social domain of the *National Model for School Counseling Programs*.

The Regents' Regulations and the NEASC Standards for Accreditation are congruous in their emphasis on the importance of personalization in schools. The NEASC Standards for Accreditation are explicit in requiring:

*...a formal, ongoing program through which each student has an adult member of the school community in addition to the school guidance counselor who personalizes each*

*student's educational experience, knows the student well, and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning" (Standard 5 Leadership and Organization, No. 9) and instructional strategies that "personalize instruction" (Standard 3 Instruction, No. 2.).*

The fundamental premise is that students who are known well by one or more adults in the school are more likely to achieve these expectations for student learning because they are afforded the guidance, direction, instruction, and personal relationship(s) that empower them to do so.

**Students will benefit from the intentional efforts to meet their individual and personal needs by increased progress toward Rhode Island's proficiency-based graduation requirements (PBGRs).** These include academic content and skills identified in content standards and Grade Level/Grade Span Expectations (GLEs and GSEs) and the habits of thinking and applying within the discipline. Most importantly, personalization strategies assist students in developing their own skills for directing their learning and ease the transition between the dependence of the child and the autonomy of the adult. Brain research provides rich evidence that different learning styles and readiness require multiple and differentiated strategies (Bergasel, 2002). With true personalization, students will move through their school experience in a variety of paths, each with academic rigor, relevance, and opportunities to construct meaningful relationships.

**Every initiative around personalization must have a deliberate connection to a broader strategy to design educational experiences that fit the needs, goals, talents, interests, and aspirations of all students.** School-improvement plans and district strategic plans must by May 2004 outline approaches for personalized learning environments, along with projected implementation, evaluation, and improvement processes that ensure the collective responsibility for students' achievement of the graduation requirements set forth by the Regents.

### **Suggested Action Steps for Creating Personalized Learning Environments**

Six action steps are critical to providing more personalized experiences for students. They are:

- 1. Create district-wide and school-based organizational support for personalization.**
- 2. Learn about the promise and power of personalization.**
- 3. Plan for personalization: fully integrate personalization efforts, including professional development and measures, and delineate the responsibilities and expectations for each segment of the school community into strategic and annual planning processes.**
- 4. Implement a comprehensive school-counseling program as the infrastructure for personalization that includes an Individual Learning Plan for each student.**
- 5. Build school community through partnerships with parents, community-based organizations, the business sector, institutions of higher education and others.**
- 6. Gather evidence of progress toward results and report on progress on an established timetable.**

Guidance for each of the six action steps is discussed in the following pages. Additional information and tools are provided in the Appendices.

**Action Step #1**

**Create organizational support for personalization efforts.**

Build organizational structures within districts and schools to lead personalization initiatives.

**Personalization Study Committee**

Establish a Personalization Study Committee, as sub-group of the School Improvement Team, with broad representation by all stakeholders (students, teachers, school counselors, administrators, other professional staff, parents, community members et al.) whose activities are to:

- Review literature; collect research findings and study models of effective personalization strategies (Appendix C)
- Study relevant student, school, and community data, including *Information Works!* and SALT
- Assess the school culture from data and anecdotal evidence
- Examine the district and school strategic plan to look for language around personalization
- Design and conduct a self-study/survey to gauge the depth of school personalization (The SALT self-study process is one tool)
- Examine existing school structures and determine ways to infuse personalized learning
- Make decisions as to which personalization strategies would be most effective in the school based on data, resources, and culture
- Develop a proposal for creating a more personalized learning environment
- Engage faculty, students, parents, and community in a dialogue about the proposal
- Gain consensus and build community around chosen strategies

Once the preliminary work has been achieved by the Personalization Study Committee, it is important to build a strong team that will see to the implementation, evaluation, and perhaps restructuring of the school's personalization efforts. This team, the Personalization Action Committee, works closely with the principal and other school leaders to design a multifaceted, integrated, systemic approach to creating personalized learning environments where all students are respected, valued and given the opportunities to gain critical knowledge and skills.

**Personalization Action Committee**

Establish a Personalization Action Committee, which, with the school principal, will take the lead with the design, implementation, professional development, and evaluation of chosen strategies and will construct a timeline and assign responsibility for various phases. This Personalization Action Committee will build capacity within the school community for creating and sustaining personalized learning environments and will be key to the implementation of Action Steps 2-6.

**Action Step #2**

**Learn about the promise and power of personalization.**

Encourage all members of the school community to gain insight into the need for and nature and impact of personalized learning environments and provide specific professional development opportunities consistent with section 6.2 of the Regents' Regulations.

**Change to Personalized Learning Environments**

**By creating personalized learning environments, schools can reshape themselves so that they meet the needs of today's society.** Our global, technological world needs citizens who have the knowledge and skills to adapt to rapidly changing conditions; who have the ability to successfully transform themselves as they face new challenges. Schools must not continue to operate in a century-old mode that prepared some, but not all, of America's children for life after school. Schools must create opportunities for all school members to build meaningful interpersonal relationships that are central to their engagement within the school. There must be not only positive student-to-teacher and student-to-student interactions, but also collegiality among the adults. With effective school reorganization, the images of a factory-model school described by Linda Darling Hammond will no longer prevail.

*We dare many of our children to learn in schools that were designed at the turn of the last century explicitly on the factory model—schools in which we put children on a conveyor belt and move them from one overloaded teacher to the next, from 45 minute class period to 45 minute class period, to be stamped with separate, disconnected lessons six or seven or eight times a day. We dare them to learn in schools where they have little opportunity to become well known over a sustained period by any adults who consider them as whole people or as developing intellects. We dare young people to learn when they are supposed to get "personal" advice and support from a counselor with a caseload of 500. We dare our students to learn to think when they work alone and passively, listening to lectures and memorizing facts and algorithms at separate desks in independent seatwork. We dare too many of our children to make it through huge warehouse institutions housing thousands of students and focused substantially on the control of behavior rather than the development of community, with a locker as students' only stable point of contact. While these factory-model schools may have worked for the purposes they were asked to serve 50 years ago—when fewer than 50 percent of students were expected to graduate and only a handful were expected to learn to think—they do not meet most of our children's needs today. (Darling-Hammond, Factory)*

Likewise, schools that do not have a systemic, integrated approach to meeting the academic, career, and personal/social development of students are unable to address the barriers to learning. Howard S. Adelman and Linda Taylor, of the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, describe the fragmentation of efforts that contribute to ineffective and inefficient schools (See Appendix B):

*In school districts, fragmentation and marginalization of efforts to address barriers to learning stem from the specialized focus and relative autonomy of a district's various organizational divisions. That is, the various divisions such as curriculum and instruction, student support services, activity related to integration and compensatory education, special education, language acquisition, parent involvement, intergroup relations, and adult and career education often operate as relatively independent entities. Thus,*

*although they usually must deal with the same common barriers to learning (e.g., poor instruction, lack of parent involvement, violence and unsafe schools, inadequate support for student transitions), they tend to do so with little or no coordination, and sparse attention to moving toward integrated efforts. Furthermore, in every facet of a school district's operations, an unproductive separation often is manifested among the instructional and management components and the various activities that constitute efforts to address barriers to learning. At the school level, this translates into situations where teachers simply do not have the supports they need when they identify students who are having learning difficulties. Clearly, prevailing school reform processes and capacity building (including preservice and in-service staff development) have not dealt effectively with such concerns. (Adelman and Taylor, 2002)*

## **Features of Personalized Learning Environments**

**Essential relationships between and among students and adults, a positive school culture, strong family and community collaboration, and a program of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that all support the growth and achievement of students characterize personalized learning environments.** As described below, these aspects are critical to a system where numerous, interwoven and flexible resources and individuals within the school community, including teachers, counselors, support staff, administrators, community partners, and families work together to respond to each individual student. As schools strategize around personalized learning, they must be mindful of the nature of and rationale behind these key components. (Appendix D)

### ***Essential Relationships***

**Schools have an obligation to institutionalize school practices that address the needs of adolescent development and provide opportunities for building essential relationships.** Students must have a variety of experiences to fulfill these needs and to assist them in acquiring the knowledge and skills for a successful, productive adulthood. In personalized learning, the needs of individuals can be met by certain school structures that develop the critical relationships. (Appendix E)

Studies have shown that students who have developed strong relationships with teachers based on mutual regard are most likely to perform well academically and act responsibly. Respect, trust, and fairness lay the foundation for fruitful academics (Cushman, 2003). Students want expert, committed, enthusiastic, democratic teachers who allow them to construct their own knowledge. They seek a voice in the classroom and learning experiences that are authentic and contextual and with which they connect emotionally. Students want teachers to uphold the unspoken bargain of strong teaching, caring, and equity in return for their engagement, effort, and good behavior. Through this comes the social-emotional learning that is the foundation for academic success (Frey, 1999). **Students who have developed strong relationships with teachers and other faculty based on mutual respect are most likely to perform well academically and act responsibly** (Cushman, 2003).

### ***School Culture/Climate, Safety and Health***

The systemic changes required for personalized learning environments, like other reform efforts in schools, are inexorably linked to school culture or school climate. Cultural patterns affect thoughts, behaviors, attitudes, and feelings.

In *Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership*, Terrence E. Deal and Kent D. Peterson write,

*School culture is the behind-the-scenes context that reflects of the values, beliefs, norms, traditions, and rituals that build up over time as people in a school work together—administrators, teachers, school counselors, students, parents, and community members. It influences not only the actions of the school population, but also its motivations and spirit.*

A toxic culture can destroy motivation, dampen commitment, depress effort, and change the focus of the school. It can decrease learning, frustrate growth, stymie risk taking, and foster radical individualism rather than collegiality (Deal and Peterson, 1998).

**Strong school leadership is critical to the development of a positive school culture.** The school principal and other leaders must build consensus by engaging the school community in dialogue. Educational leaders promote the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. A school that truly has all stakeholders holding a common set of beliefs and a shared vision about the power of personalization is more likely to be successful in meeting the needs of students. Particularly important is collegiality and mutual respect among the faculty. It is incumbent upon the adults in the school to model those attributes they seek in their students.

**The physical environment of the school also has a clear connection to a school’s culture.** A safe, well-maintained, and hazard-free school, free from violence, drugs and other negative forces, is necessary for personalized learning. When students feel welcome in schools, academic and social engagement improves and discipline problems diminish. In unsafe, unhealthy schools, students feel stress, are anxious, and suffer physical-health problems. These conditions often manifest themselves in anti-social behavior and low achievement. (Appendix F)

**School, Family and Community Collaboration**

**Personalized learning environments in schools require strong school, family, and community collaboration** (See Action Step 5). Personalization efforts in schools have an impact on the home and the community and vice-versa. School-family partnerships are core to effective personalization. To meet the individual needs of students, schools must embrace the family as a full partner. On-going communication between a student’s family and school personnel can help identify student needs and strategies for addressing those needs, celebrate achievements, build trust, and actively involve the family in the student’s learning. In addition, feedback from the home will assist schools in making changes and fine-tuning the curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Community involvement in schools can foster personalization. Community and family members can fulfill numerous roles including those as advisors, mentors, advisory-board representatives, internship

**2003 Selected School Climate SALT Survey Findings: High Schools**

**17% of RI High School students:**

Can talk to a teacher or other staff member about personal or family problems most of the time or always

**47% of RI High School students:**

Can talk to a teacher or other staff member about academic issues most of the time or always

\*\*\*\*\*

On a **scale of 1-5** where 5 is always 3 is sometimes and 1 is never

**High school students’ responses:**

**3.0**  
Overall score - Perceived quality of school climate experiences

**3.3**  
Negative peer interactions take place

**3.0**  
Clarity of behavioral expectations and rules

**3.0**  
Teachers provide supports

**3.1**  
Instructional innovation and variation

**Teachers’ responses:**

**3.6**  
Overall score positive work climate



and externship hosts, guest speakers, and senior-project review panelists. The community benefits from these personalization efforts because students are leaving school with greater self-responsibility, more motivation, higher achievement, clearer goals, and better social skills. Students are better prepared for the transition to post-secondary experiences in education, the workplace, and the military, and for participation as a contributing citizen in a global society.

In addition, community-based programs providing tutoring, substance-abuse counseling, mental-health services, medical treatments, recreational activities, and other assistance can be effective in helping schools personalize learning when they are linked with the school's comprehensive counseling program and integrated into a systemic school plan. Too often, the efforts of community-based programs are fragmented, fractured, and disconnected from a broader school mission of personalized learning. Integrated student supports where faculty and community providers work in tandem are critical to enabling all students to achieve fully.

### ***Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment***

**As schools personalize, they must pay particular attention to what they teach, how it is taught, and how students are assessed. Personalized learning is heightened by content that is contextual, learning experiences that are authentic, instructional strategies that are diverse, and assessments that are multiple and performance-based.**

Good instructional practices motivate and increase student achievement, while varied evaluation and assessment strategies help monitor and modify instruction to meet student needs and support proficient student work. Through each school's *Opportunities to Learn (time, support, access, equity, and resources)*, as described in RIDE's Initial Guidance for Graduation by Proficiency, each individual student must have learning experiences that enable him/her to not only demonstrate proficiency in the core areas of literacy, numeracy, and the habits of thinking, but also to pursue different learning paths.

Every student who is supported by a comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program moves through school developing academic, career, and personal/social competencies. By restructuring course offerings and content, diversifying teaching methodologies, incorporating applied learning within and beyond classrooms, honoring prior learning and knowledge acquired outside of school, and employing varied assessments students will have numerous avenues to achieve their goals and the PBGRs in a personalized way.

Developmentally, students must have opportunities to direct and shape their own learning, work collaboratively, and take responsibility for their successes and failures. Project-based learning, problem-based learning, worked-based learning, and community-service learning are all strategies for personalizing to meet individual interests and needs. Likewise, as schools use multiple measures to ascertain proficiency, they should allow students input into the selection of topics for their graduation-by-proficiency assessment. As such, students will to some degree, be in control of their own learning and personalize it by selecting the content and perhaps means of demonstrating proficiency.

**Initial Guidance for the Graduation by Proficiency Component of the Regents' Regulations describes the necessity for schools to offer and embrace a wide range of learning experiences and assessment consistent with a wide range of student interests and career goals.**

### Action Step #3

**Plan for personalization: fully integrate personalization efforts, including professional development and measures, and delineate the responsibilities and expectations for each segment of the school community into strategic and annual planning processes.**

Design personalized learning environments that are systemic and are inseparable from all school operations. Emphasize continuously the connection between personal relationships, school culture, teaching, and learning and strive for an integrated, systemic approach. Ensure that the district and school strategic plans address personalized learning and reflect a systemic approach. Recognize that instructional practice is a major factor in personalized learning and foster student-centered classrooms through embedded professional development

### **Creating Personalized Learning Environments**

**Personalized learning environments must be a product of a system of comprehensive, multifaceted, integrated efforts that collectively provide all students barrier-free opportunities to learn and develop** (Appendix B). The creation of a personalized learning environment within a school is, in effect, school restructuring. It requires collaborative initiatives on many fronts that are based on research and data and support student achievement. Schools committed to personalization employ a holistic approach and empower students to become engaged in their own learning. As schools make decisions about how to become more personal, they must be mindful that any initiative must be woven into the fabric of systemic school reform. Moreover, they must provide for the intellectual, physical, personal, social, and emotional well-being of each student.

Adelman and Taylor provide the elements of a framework around which schools must construct systems/processes for personalization. Specific activities associated with the elements of this framework are found in Appendix B. Consistent with the comprehensive school-counseling program, the initiatives around personalization should, in broad terms:

1. Create supportive classroom learning environments that are responsive to students' strengths and needs
2. Enhance the school's ability to address transition concerns confronting students and their families
3. Enhance the school's ability to respond to, minimize the impact of, and prevent crises
4. Enhance the home environment
5. Outreach to the surrounding community to strengthen students, families, the school and the neighborhood
6. Provide specialized assistance to students and their families as needed

(Source: Sarah Friedman, Director, Mental Health and Wellness Project, Hope, and Feinstein High Schools, Providence)

More specifically, personalized learning environments must be:

- Embedded in the systemic school structure
- Responsive to student, school, and local issues and needs identified through the examination of data, including *Information Works!* and SALT data
- Student-centered around development in the academic, career and personal/social domains
- Designed with high standards for all.
- Constructed with many opportunities for students and adults to build meaningful relationships
- Supported by a positive school culture
- Reflected in changes to curriculum and instructional practices that help all students achieve at high levels
- Aligned with professional development that is ongoing and relevant
- Committed to building strong family, business, and community partnerships
- Planned with mechanisms for evaluation and improvement

Strategic and annual plans must include effective measures that measure key indicators and evaluate and modify personalization structures as needed. Reports on personalization strategies are required in annual district and school strategic plans submitted through the Consolidated Resource Process (CRP) beginning in May 2004.

Schools must develop a comprehensive system to monitor and assess the effectiveness of their personalization efforts. (See Action Step 6). As part of a true accountability system, the outcomes must be evidenced in data about student achievement and student, school personnel, family, and community engagement. The success of personalized learning environments shows in changes in performance, attitudes, and feelings among all school community members. School-community members, stakeholders, include, but are not limited to: students, teachers, school and district administrators, student-services personnel (school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses), operations personnel (clerical staff, food servers, hall monitors, bus drivers, maintenance, janitorial staff, adult volunteers), parents and family, the school committee/board, and the greater local community. Successful personalized learning environments demonstrate improvement in several parameters across all stakeholders. The list of key indicators below provides direction for compiling data to support the impact of personalization efforts.

An extensive list of research to support these key indicators is found at the website of the Small Schools Workshop under Info Center at <http://www.smallschoolsworkshop.org/info3.html>

**Key Indicators of Successful Personalized High School Environments**

Improved attendance, retention, and graduation rates

Improved local, state, and national assessment scores

Improved post-secondary success

Higher achievement overall by traditionally underserved populations (i.e., non-white, female, special needs, disadvantaged, at-risk, gifted)

More instances of student achievement being highly valued and publicly celebrated

More evidence that equity and diversity is valued and supported

Wider demonstration of effective styles of teaching and learning

More clearly defined pathways for students to continuing education, life, and career options

Higher numbers of students completing meaningful projects that demonstrate academic and social/emotional proficiency

Increased participation in co- and extra-curricular activities

Increased engagement in school-improvement activities by all members of the school community

Easier transition by new students

Increased mutual recognition across and within all stakeholder groups

Greater personal connection to school by all school community members

Earlier identification of students with academic, behavioral, and social challenges and supports

Increased instances of adults in the school modeling and benefiting from stronger professional and student relationships

More frequent positive teacher-parent-student collaborations

Increased satisfaction of parents with relationship(s) to/ within the school

Greater personal safety for all

**Information Works!/SALT and other Data as sources of Key Indicators**

School attendance, drop-out rates, graduation rates

State assessment, SAT, AP scores, honor roll

Post-secondary tracking

Minority-populations disaggregations in all achievement data fields

School-climate questions, recognition in school, public & media

School-climate questions, recognition in school, public & media

School-to-Career questions, instruction questions, classroom visits, learning walks

School-to-Career questions, comprehensive school-counseling reports

School-to-Career questions, comprehensive school-counseling reports

Involvement in arts, clubs, teams and, student government  
SIT and other committees' membership

Attendance, achievement rates, counseling reports

Public recognition in school, public & media

Participation/attendance at school events, school volunteers

Referrals to special needs, counseling and social services

School climate questions, instruction questions, teacher grievances

Parent questions, communications with school, participation at school events

Parent questions, communications with school, participation at school events

School climate questions, discipline/police reports

*(many indicators adapted from Klonsky, 1995)*

## **Supports for Personalized Learning Environment in *Breaking Ranks II***

The recently released *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Education Alliance at Brown University (2004), provides a set of explicit, targeted strategies for the transformation of the American high school. It is generally consistent with and parallel to the Regents' Regulations and NEASC standards and should be used as an additional guidance document. *Breaking Ranks II* identifies seven cornerstone strategies to improve student performance that address all three core areas: Collaborative Leadership and Professional Learning Communities, Personalization and the School Environment, and Curriculum Instruction and Assessment. These seven cornerstone strategies, if implemented effectively, will form the foundation for improving student performance. In addition, the *Breaking Ranks II* Core Recommendations outline clearly those key elements that are the necessary for high-school reform. A complete listing of the 31 recommendations is found in Appendix H.

### ***Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform***

#### **Seven Cornerstone Strategies:**

1. **Core Knowledge** : Establish the essential learnings a student is required to learn in order to graduate, and adjust the curriculum and teaching strategies to realize that goal
2. **Connections with Students**: Increase the quantity and improve the quality of interactions between students, teachers; and other school personnel by reducing the number of students for which any adult" or group of adults is responsible
3. **Personalized Planning**: Implement a comprehensive advisory program that ensures each student has frequent and meaningful opportunities to plan and assess his or her academic and social progress with a faculty member
4. **Adapting to Differences**: Ensure teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.
5. **Flexible Use of Time** : Implement schedules flexible enough to accommodate teaching strategies consistent with the ways students learn most effectively and that allow for effective teacher teaming and lesson planning
6. **Distributed Leadership**: Institute structural leadership changes that allow for meaningful involvement in decision making by students, teachers, family members, and the community and that support effective communication with these groups
7. **Continuous Professional Development**: Align comprehensive, ongoing professional development program and individual Personal Learning Plans of staff members with the content knowledge and instructional strategies required to prepare students for graduation.

## Action Step #4

**Implement the Comprehensive School-Counseling Program as the infrastructure for personalization that includes an Individual Learning Plan for each student.**

Look to a comprehensive school-counseling program as the entity into which multiple personalization initiatives are woven.

### Comprehensive School-Counseling Program

**A comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program does provide the infrastructure for creating personalized learning environments for all students.** An infrastructure consists of organizational structures, roles and responsibilities, policies and protocols, interfaces between offices and individuals, and a fluid communication network. School-counseling programs have been identified as the infrastructure because counseling is already organized to address the academic, career, and personal/social needs of students in a systemic way. Existing counseling programs can be expanded to incorporate personalization strategies and coordinate their implementation without having to establish a new infrastructure.

The school-counseling program is pivotal to the success of personalization because it focuses on students achieving standards in three developmental domains—academic, career, and personal/social. It encompasses a broad range of initiatives and provides a structure for the integration of school, home, and community interventions as described in the features of personalized learning environments.

An effective school-counseling program includes planned classroom and group activities, counseling services responsive to individuals and small groups, and assistance to students in academic planning and placement. The school and community work cooperatively to provide appropriate support for students, families, and school personnel (Appendix A). “By aligning the school-counseling program with district and school mission, reform initiatives, and school improvement plans, professional school counselors are leaders and partners in systemic change to ensure equity and access to quality education and to promote career and personal/social development for all students.” (ASCA, 2003)

The three definitive elements of a K-12 school-counseling program are:

**Comprehensive in Scope** - A comprehensive school-counseling program is focused on what all students, from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, should know, understand, and be able to do in these three domain areas: academic, career, and personal/social. The emphasis is on academic success for every student, not just those students who are motivated, supported, and ready to learn. The school-counseling program helps all students achieve success in school and develop into contributing members of our society.

**Preventive in Design** - The purpose of the school-counseling program is to impart specific skills and learning opportunities in a proactive, preventive manner, ensuring all students can achieve school success through academic, career and personal/social development experiences.

**Developmental in Nature** - School counselors design programs and services to meet the needs of students at various growth and development stages. School-counseling programs establish goals, expectations, support systems, and experiences for all students. They

provide the rationale for school counselors, school administrators, faculty, parents or guardians, businesses and the community to engage in conversations about expectations for students' academic success and the role of counseling programs in enhancing student learning. The student content standards are public statements of what students should know and be able to do because of participating in a school-counseling program.  
 (Source: The ASCA National Model, 2003, pp. 13-16)

Two important documents help define the expanding role of school counselors, and provide strategies for implementing comprehensive school-counseling programs. The first is the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model (2003). This model is grounded in the ASCA National Standards and offers an implementation strategy. It provides a common language, shared set of goals for school counseling, and has generated a national discussion of the future of school counseling as a profession. The ASCA model emphasizes advocacy, leadership, collaboration, and systemic change and offers interconnected foundational and accountability structures and systems for management and delivery. The model is functional as a strategic tool for school self improvement (Appendix A).

The second document, currently in draft form, is *Rhode Island's Guide for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs*. Based on the ASCA Model, it is under development by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) in collaboration with Providence College, the Rhode Island School Counselors' Association, and the Rhode Island School-to-Career Office. Two School-to-Career statewide networks, the Comprehensive School Counseling Network and the Principals' Leadership Network, are associated initiatives. In addition, the School Counseling Project at Providence College is reviewing the requirements of its graduate program in school counseling and offering a variety of professional development on comprehensive developmental school counseling.

*Rhode Island's Guide for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs* offers specific information for establishing comprehensive school-counseling programs in schools, and on strategies for using school counseling as the foundation of a district's/school's redesign plans through personalization. Like the ASCA Model, it emphasizes advocacy, leadership, collaboration and systemic change and is a strategic tool for school self-improvement.

*Rhode Island's Guide for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs* is organized according to the four critical components of the ASCA Model: Foundation, Delivery, Management, and Accountability.

<b>Foundation</b>	Like any solid structure, a school-counseling program is built on a strong foundation. Based on the school's goals for student achievement, what every student should know and should be able to do, the foundation determines how every student will benefit from school counseling.
<b>Delivery System</b>	Based on the core beliefs, philosophies, and missions identified in the foundation, the delivery system describes the activities, interactions, and methods to deliver the program.
<b>Management System</b>	Intertwined with the delivery system is the management system, which incorporates organizational processes and tools to ensure that the program is organized, concrete, clearly delineated, and reflective of the school's needs. This is a relatively new concept for administrators and school counselors, who traditionally have not viewed counselors as managers.
<b>Accountability</b>	School counselors and administrators are increasingly challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of the school-counseling program in measurable terms. To evaluate the program and to hold it accountable, school-counseling programs must collect and use data that link the program to student achievement.

**Requirement of Individualized Learning Plan**

At the core of the Regents’ Regulations is the requirement for schools to address each student as an individual with unique needs. Consequently, “*school improvement plans and district strategic plans must address strategies for responding to, recording, and planning for each individual student’s social/emotional, academic, and career needs beginning no later than grade five and consistent with the intent of the General Assembly in Article 18.*” The expectation is that the elementary school (at Grade 5) will work with middle schools to develop a data-rich profile of each student to ease transition and to ensure proper placement that would lead to an individualized learning plan (ILP) or similar mechanism. In the near future, the Electronic Portfolio Network of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Graduation by Proficiency Grant will assist schools by developing formats and templates for ILPs. General images of ILPs follow:

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p><b>Individual Learning Plans</b></p>	<p>Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) help customize and direct student development in three domains: academic, career and personal/social. ILPs chart a student’s courses, activities, and achievements over his/her middle-, high-school experience. They include information, if applicable, about the student’s Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) and/or Individualized Education Program (IEP). ILPs are not a substitute for PLPs or IEPs but are a broader planning tool.</p> <p>ILPs are a mapped academic plan and profile that reflect each student’s unique set of interests, needs, learning goals and graduation requirements. A team, including the student, his/her family, the school counselor, advisor/ teacher, and/or mentor, help write an ILP, which includes authentic and challenging learning experiences that help each student succeed. As a team, they are mutually responsible for helping the student with his/her personal curriculum and they regularly review, evaluate, and update the ILP as the student progresses. The process allows students to become active, responsible participants in their educational development and planning.</p> <p>As a working document, the ILP is at the center of a flexible educational program that meets individual development toward ASCA’s <i>National Standards for School Counseling Programs</i> by graduation.</p> <p>Full participation in this process will also result in students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* establishing academic, career, and personal/social goals: developing plans for each of these developmental domains; participating in essential counseling activities designed to help them achieve their goals; and self-assessing their progress annually.</li> <li>* developing/enhancing their research, communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making skills.</li> <li>* learning attitudes and behaviors that contribute to their success and well-being.</li> <li>* developing/enhancing life-long learning skills that promote a healthy self-image.</li> </ul>



## **Selected Strategies for Personalization**

Strategies for personalization identified in the Regents' Regulations are described below. These must be integrated into comprehensive school-counseling programs. By no means are these strategies inclusive of all the avenues to personalized learning environments. Districts and schools must undertake a careful self-study led by the Personalization Study Committee to identify the ways and means to successfully personalize. Decisions must be based on the analysis of multiple data, particularly those provided by *Information Works!* and the SALT Surveys.

Schools are encouraged to use the resources provided at the end of this document to begin their research on the various school designs for personalization. The Education Alliance at Brown University has several on-going projects around school reform. It is working collaboratively with RIDE and other partners to provide materials and technical assistance to schools working to comply with the Regents' Regulations.

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p><b>Student Advisories</b></p>	<p>Advisory programs create the conditions for improving student achievement in the academic, career, and personal/social domains and enrich the lives of students and adults through personalization of the learning experience. The supportive relationships developed among and between students and their advisors are foundational to schools whose culture is positive, whose students achieve, and whose bonds to family and community are strong. There are many models of student-advisory programs, but all share the vision of one caring adult and a small group of students engaging in regularly scheduled interactions for the purpose of developing meaningful relationships. In an advisory group, a student has the opportunity to feel known, heard, and understood. The effectiveness of advisory programs in the affective domain has subsequent impact in other areas.</p> <p>Research available from the National Middle School Association describes the benefits of student advisories. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* promote student-teacher relationships</li> <li>* address general self-esteem and competence beliefs</li> <li>* provide social exchange and peer recognition in a safe environment</li> <li>* link parents and school</li> <li>* mediate between academic and social concerns</li> </ul> <p>(Source: NMSA Research Summary #9: <i>Advisory Programs</i>. <a href="http://www.nmsa.org/">http://www.nmsa.org/</a>)</p> <p>The May 2003 Newsletter of the Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation describes the advisory as follows:</p> <p><i>Unlike homeroom or study hall, advisory periods are regular blocks of time set aside for small groups of students to meet and discuss "real world" issues, improve academic skills or build on soft skills like teamwork and responsibility. Advisors help parents by serving as a primary point of contact in the school. Advisors can assess a student's progress and help identify areas of achievement or concern.</i></p>

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Small Schools / Small Learning Communities</b></p>	<p>One strategy for building a personalized learning environment is the small school/small learning community (SLC). Research indicates that students are often lost and overwhelmed in large schools. They move through the school day without developing high-quality, personal relationships with the adults in their school. Within large schools, small schools can be constructed as schools-within-school, houses, career academies, or teams. Each of these small learning communities should have a core group of students, faculty, and administrators and a unifying identity such as a name or theme. Ideally, each small learning community would have its own set of learner expectations, as well as a strategic plan with a mission, vision, and goals aligned the district’s strategic plan. A caution, however, is a small school does not automatically translate to a personalized learning environment. Small size is a necessary condition for effective schooling, but it is not enough. It is important that embedded within the small school is a culture and a system of school practices that focuses on each student as a unique individual, monitors each one’s progress, and provides the needed learning opportunities.</p> <p>Key Elements of Smaller Learning Communities:</p> <p><b>Autonomy</b> – Smaller learning communities maintain as much control as reasonable over space, schedule, budget, curriculum, instruction, and personnel.</p> <p><b>Identity</b> – The community of adults and students within each SLC has established goals that drive all decisions and create conditions unique to each SLC.</p> <p><b>Personalization</b> – The smaller learning communities implement strategies that take advantage of downsized environments and facilitate all students being known well.</p> <p><b>Instructional Focus</b> – Each SLC emphasizes the importance of instruction geared toward improved academic achievement for all students.</p> <p><b>Accountability</b> – Students in SLCs demonstrate progress on state, local, and school-wide assessments as well as progress toward established SLC goals, both academic and affective. (Derived from Cotton, 2001)</p>

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p><b>Career Academies</b></p>	<p>The career academy is a type of specialized small learning community.</p> <p>The Career Academy Model adopted by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, The Rhode Island School-to-Career Office and the Human Resource Investment Council Research is:</p> <p><b>An organized small learning community within a secondary school focused on learning experiences related to career clusters, in partnership with employers, the community, and formal and informal postsecondary education systems.</b></p>
	<p>Expected Elements of a Rhode Island Career Academy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* a small learning community utilizing integrated curriculum with a thematic focus that links to work-based learning opportunities</li> <li>* voluntary selection by teachers and students</li> <li>* a program of study that embraces multiple years of project-based, experiential learning that meets all academic and academy requirements</li> <li>* validated preparation for post-secondary education, industry training, and/or employment opportunities</li> <li>* developed and sustained partnerships with industry, the community and formal and informal higher education systems for: curriculum development and applications, industry mentoring opportunities, organized work-based learning opportunities (e.g., internships, applications, jobs, and educator externships), and Steering Committee guidance</li> <li>* common team planning time for professional development; continuous improvement of the learning environment; articulation with business, industry, and higher education; and collective problem-solving</li> </ul>

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Description</b>
<p><b>Inter-Disciplinary Grade-Level Teams</b></p>	<p>Interdisciplinary teaching teams, those that feature teachers in different content areas and that share a common group of students, are advantageous in many ways. Teams can strengthen teachers' work by eliminating isolation and fostering collaboration. Teams can engender relations among teachers that help develop a shared understanding of pedagogy and collective responsibility for student achievement. Individuals seek support from fellow team members and are all accountable to one another. Within a team, teachers can team-teach, mentor, and observe each other and engage in peer review. In teams, teachers can reach consensus on significant issues of teaching and learning, and they can discuss the strengths and needs of the students they share.</p> <p>In addition, teachers can work together to develop instructional curricula and activities that cross discipline boundaries and make learning meaningful for students. The most effective problem- or project-based learning looks at an issue from many dimensions and incorporates knowledge and skills from several areas.</p>
<p><b>Flexible / Block Scheduling</b></p>	<p>Extended periods of instruction, with accompanying changes in instructional strategies necessary for longer blocks of time, improve the personalization of schools. Longer teaching times provide multiple opportunities for the development of academic and social skills and personal relationships. Since instruction is more student-centered than in the traditional six- or seven- period day, teachers become coaches and facilitators of learning.</p> <p>Flexible /block scheduling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* creates greater personal interaction between the students themselves and between the students and teachers</li> <li>* provides opportunities for in-depth learning</li> <li>* promotes active, rather than passive, learning</li> <li>* provides more time for teachers to identify student needs, respond individually to student performance, and offer students appropriate accelerated and remedial assistance</li> <li>* increases instructional planning time for teachers</li> <li>* provides structure for interdisciplinary coordination</li> <li>* reduces the amount of time for class orientation, closure, and traveling to classes</li> </ul>

Structure	Description
<p><b>Senior Year Dual Enrollment</b></p>	<p>For those students who have achieved proficiency in core expectations set forth by their schools, senior-year dual enrollment options provide extended opportunities for learning. With senior-year dual-enrollment programs, high-school students can earn college credit either by enrolling in college-endorsed classes taught by their high-school teachers at their regular schools, by taking those classes on college campuses, or through a distance-learning provider. Included among senior-year dual enrollment programs are Advanced Placement (AP) classes, Early Enrollment Programs (EEP), course credit/advanced standing articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions, and course-credit/advanced-standing with internship, work-study, and industry-certification programs. These options provide students with the rigor of a college curriculum and the opportunity to receive both high school and college credits.</p> <p>Concurrent and dual enrollment programs offer many benefits and outcomes, including the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* promote rigorous academics and to provide more educational options</li> <li>* promote efficiency of learning (reduced repetition in grades 11-14)</li> <li>* improve student access to college</li> <li>* increase student aspirations to go to college</li> <li>* enhance admission to and retention in college</li> <li>* improve the transition from school to college</li> <li>* save students time and money on a college degree</li> <li>* encourage competition from colleges and universities that then might pressure secondary schools to be more responsive to student and parent needs</li> <li>* accelerate student progress toward a degree in order to free up additional space on campus to meet the increased demands for college access</li> <li>* provide greater academic opportunities for students at small rural schools</li> <li>* enable greater collaboration between high school and college faculty</li> <li>* provide professional development for faculty both in high schools and colleges</li> <li>* build closer ties between colleges and their communities</li> </ul> <p>(from ECS Center for Community College Policy)</p> <p>Rhode Island high schools have a wide array of articulation agreements with their public and private two- and four-year post-secondary institutions. High schools restructuring their programs of study to create more personalized learning environments must explore options for senior-year dual enrollment.</p>

### Action Step #5

**Build school community through partnerships (with homes, community-based organizations, businesses, and others).**

Work with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, emotional, career, and developmental needs of students. Establish family and community collaboration as basic to successful personalization and embed opportunities for their participation systemically within the school structures.

#### **Outreach to Family, Business, and the Community**

**Districts and schools must recognize and welcome families, businesses, and the community as active partners in the educational process.** They must work together to promote programs and services for all students. School administrators must be educational leaders who promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interest and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

#### **Family and School Collaboration**

Family and school collaboration must be genuine, in that schools seek the full participation of parents/guardians. Research shows that students who are most successful have the most involved parents. The school leader must make parents/guardians partners in their child's education and create structures for family and educator collaboration. One strategy is to link a program of school-family collaboration to the school-improvement plan. "Every school needs a purposeful, planned partnership program that creates a welcoming environment and engages families in activities that contribute to students' readiness for school, academic success, and positive attitudes and behaviors" (Epstein, 2004). Communication with the home must be proactive. Parents want schools to recognize their role as parents and the first teachers of their children, to supply them with information frequently, and to invite them as full educational partners. Schools must offer multiple and meaningful opportunities for parents/guardians to be informed about and participate in the education of and the educational decisions for their children. Such opportunities for parents/guardians include, but are not limited to: conferences, meetings, open houses, workshops for parents, special events (e.g. Math Nights), recognition assemblies, awards programs, classroom visits, school-volunteer positions, interactive homework, electronic communication, telephone calls, progress reports, and newsletters. Schools must strive to have an active Parent-Teacher Organization and strong parent/guardian representation on the School Improvement Team. Student Advisors must have regular and substantive communication with the home.

Schools must take the responsibility to educate parents in how to help their children be successful in school. *Information Works!* and SALT data indicate that most parents who are not involved would like to be, if only their children's teachers, administrators, and counselors gave them insight into strategies to improve their children's academic performance, attendance, and behavior. This can be achieved only through a comprehensive program that defines action steps for school-family collaboration. In addition, the No Child Left Behind Act requires schools to have well-planned programs of family and community involvement to support student achievement and to communicate clearly with parents. .

Joyce Epstein, the director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnership at the Johns Hopkins University identifies six types of family involvement with their schools. They are:

**Parenting** - establishing home environments that foster adaptive child development and school readiness

**Communicating** - engaging in constructive two-way, home-school communication about school programs and student progress

**Volunteering** - working on classroom and school efforts to assist teachers, administrators, students, and other parents

**Learning at Home** - helping children at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning

**Decision Making** - serving on district-level committees, school advisory councils, or the Parent-Teacher Association/Parent-Teacher Organization to represent parent perspectives in planning

**Collaborating with Community** - identifying and integrating community resources and services to enhance school programs, family practices, and student performance

As families become more involved in the education of their children, schools will see students who are more positive about school and learning

### **School and Business Collaboration**

School and business collaboration is important in both student learning and workforce development. As schools help students with their career-development goals, they must provide opportunities for students to acquire the content, skills, habits, and responsibilities necessary for contributing citizens and productive workers. By working closely with the business community, schools can understand and define these essential attributes. All students will transition to the workplace, whether immediately after high school or after a post-secondary educational experience. Therefore, they must become aware of, explore, and/or prepare for a career during grades K-12.

Partnering with the business community can provide significant resources for relevant learning experiences. Too often students moan: “Why must I learn this?” Educators can work with businesses to develop and present academic lessons that answer that question. Lessons in the various core academic subjects become more meaningful when students can see the application of the content. This contextual teaching and learning improves student understanding, engagement, and achievement. Section 5.2 of the Regulations call for all students to have applied learning experiences.

School-Business (as well as School-Community) collaboration is a natural fit with problem- or project-based learning (PBL). PBL should be a component of the local assessment system for graduation by proficiency. Exhibitions, including senior project, capstone, and CIM, should be structured around an essential question that leads to PBL. Businesses can share authentic problems, supply materials and resources, provide advisors, and generally work with students and teachers to make connections between the classroom and the world beyond school. PBL gives students an opportunity to contribute a solution to a real-world issue and a sense of achievement. PBL gives businesses the opportunity to contribute to educating today’s young people and the benefits of the inputs of students on an authentic problem. Teachers benefit by learning how to enhance their instructional practice and make it more relevant for students.

Rhode Island schools have a unique mechanism for school and business collaboration. The School-based Coordinators-Industry Field Coordinators Network, administered by RIDE with the support of the Rhode Island School-to-Career Office, facilitates business engagement in schools. School-based coordinators (SBCs) are employed by Rhode Island public high schools at a minimum of 75 days annually. Their role is to provide information, resources, and technical assistance to teachers in career/contextual learning. They are the school's or district's liaison to the Industry Field Coordinators (IFCs). IFCs represent eight major Industry Partnerships – Automotive, Construction and Transportation, Financial Services, Fisheries and Marine Science, Health Care, Hospitality and Tourism, Information Technology, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Agriscience. A Law and Public Safety Partnership is under development. Each IFC responds to requests from SBCs (who have been working with faculty members) for industry project-based learning opportunities, speakers, career-day presentations, consultant services, advisory-board memberships, student internship and educator externship placements, and other school-to-career programming. When schools utilize the SBC-IFC Network optimally, they enjoy the benefits of the knowledge, resources, opportunities, support, and advocacy their business partners bring. Students can pursue those activities with the business partners in which they have a personal interest, thereby contributing to the personalized learning environment of the school.

### **School and Community Collaboration**

Schools and district must formalize their linkage with the programs and activities offered by community agencies to support personalized learning. Community-service agencies, including non-profit and governmental institutions, can provide needed programs and services to students, educators, and parents. Schools must look to these groups as an integral part of the education-delivery system. By utilizing community programs, schools can offer a wider range of services and opportunities and perhaps eliminate duplication of efforts and financial burden. The community agencies often have the expertise and resources that are unavailable in schools. Engagement with community agencies must be structured within school-improvement plans, not be a random activity or reaction depending on need. Schools should have formal agreements with community groups about the nature, expectations, and cost of the services they will provide, and they should specify the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved.

Schools must welcome a community-agency presence by providing an environment in which the work of the agency is recognized and acclaimed and where the agency feels comfortable to operate. With effective school-community agency partnering, students get to know more about their own community and become more known by their community. Students gain a sense of identity and belonging. The community agency builds a citizenry that understands, respects, and advocates for its work.

Schools should look to community-based agencies for:

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| Heath and wellness programs, including mental health | Recreational programs   |
| Remedial instruction                                 | Enrichment activities   |
| Parenting workshops                                  | Classroom presentations |
| Field trips  | Guest speakers          |
| Mentors  | Advisors                |
| Community-service learning                           |                         |



**Action Step #6**

**Gather evidence of progress toward results and report on progress on an established timetable.**

Monitor by measuring key indicators: evaluate and modify personalization structures as needed. Report on personalization strategies as required in annual district and school strategic plans submitted through the Consolidated Resource Process (CRP) beginning in May 2004.

**Data and Accountability**

Like any other educational initiative, the move to creating more personalized learning environments in schools must have a formal evaluation component. School-improvement plans must establish action steps around personalization that can be monitored. As schools review their yearly *Information Works!/SALT* data (see page 14), they must look at those elements that correlate with the key indicators for successful personalized learning environments and their associates. Schools might set short- and long-range improvement goals for some of the key indicators and measure yearly achievement against them. If analyzed thoroughly, this information can show the strengths and limitations of the personalization strategies and provide direction for improvement.

Additionally, the accountability component of a comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program offers a mechanism for analyzing data and documenting student achievement. When released, *Rhode Island Guide for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Programs* will describe one process, a six-step accountability system, MEASURE, will show the impact of the school-counseling program on critical data. Since the comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program should serve as the infrastructure for personalizing the learning environment, MEASURE will show the effectiveness of these efforts (Stone, 2004).

MEASURE is an acronym for:

**Mission:** connect the comprehensive K-12 school-counseling program to the mission of the school and to the goals of the annual school improvement plan

**Elements:** identify the critical data elements that are important to the internal and external stakeholders

**Analyze:** carefully discuss which elements need to be aggregated or disaggregated and why

**Stakeholders - Unite:** determine which stakeholders need to be involved in addressing these school-improvement issues and unite to develop strategies

**Reanalyze:** rethink and refine the strategies; refocus efforts as needed and reflect on success

**Educate:** show the positive impact the school-counseling program has had on student achievement and on the goals of the school improvement plan

## 6.2 Professional development and common planning time:

*By May, 2003, all middle and high school improvement plans submitted pursuant to these regulations must include documentation that all certified staff will participate in at least 15 hours of ongoing professional development annually, focused on the priority areas of literacy, graduation by proficiency, and personalization as informed by each school's student achievement data. School improvement plans must also describe the means for providing common planning time for high school teachers organized around students, especially those with the highest needs. By September, 2005, high schools must ensure at least weekly common planning time for this purpose.*

### **Clarification of the Intent and Terms of this Regulation**

**Professional development and common planning time create opportunities to improve teaching and learning and help build capacity within the school.** Specifically, the regulations stipulate that all middle- and high- school improvement plans (SIPs) submitted pursuant to these regulations must document that all certified staff will have participated in at least **15 hours of professional development focused on the three priority areas of literacy, graduation by proficiency, and personalization**. The professional staff must have training that will provide them with the skills and knowledge that will enhance other school-improvement endeavors and have the biggest impact on improving student success. For the maximum results, professional-development activities must be in concert with one another and with other initiatives toward school reform.

Districts and schools must examine their needs in the Regents' priority areas and design professional development activities that support systemic improvement. ***The Rhode Island Quality Standards for Professional Development established by RIDE must guide all professional development offerings.*** (Appendix I) Professional development must be focused on, organized around, and aligned with key district goals for meeting the Regents' Regulations in order to ensure a coherent school-wide focus to the various reform efforts.

Schools need to use their analysis of student-achievement data and other self-study activities to determine the most appropriate professional development to address the identified needs. This must occur as part of the normal school improvement planning self-study process. Correspondingly, the nature and type of professional development must be incorporated into each respective SIP and reviewed by the district as part of its annual analysis and response to each individual SIP. The submitted documentation must report the collective professional development the certified staff has undertaken during the course of the school year in each of the three priority areas. A school or district can certainly choose to exceed this minimum 15-hour requirement and focus on areas beyond literacy, graduation by proficiency, and personalization in the added time.

**A school improvement plan must explicitly reference the types of professional development that will be made available to the certified staff or reference the professional development that is being developed at the district level.**

The SIP must indicate the:

- professional development opportunities connected to the priorities of the Regulations that will be provided by the district (a) during the day and (b) beyond the school day
- professional-development opportunities that will be provided by the individual school (a) during the day and (b) beyond the school day
- additional allowable professional development experiences (externships, conference attendance, college and university courses, curriculum work, etc.)

The following list provides **some examples of professional-development** opportunities that are within the letter and spirit of this regulation ***if and only if those opportunities are directly connected to literacy, graduation by proficiency, and personalization:***

- Reading and education courses taken at a local college or university
- RIDE professional-development series
- Conferences and workshops offered by collaboratives, educational institutions and professional organizations
- Disciplinary Literacy study groups
- Local Professional Development Institutes' trainings
- Collaboratively looking at student work focused on literacy
- Lesson study
- Modeling effective practices for colleagues
- Observing peers model or demonstrate literacy lessons
- Peer coaching and mentoring
- K-12 comprehensive school-counseling training
- Graduation- by-proficiency workshops focused on exhibitions, senior projects, Certificates of Initial Mastery, or designing, implementing, and/or scoring common tasks
- Educator externships
- Self-selected I-PLAN professional-development learning experiences

### **Documenting the Professional Development**

**Each school must establish a process to keep track of the individual professional-development hours the professional staff engages in related to the Regents' priority areas.** School improvement teams must have a professional-development subcommittee that creates a professional-development plan and authorizes the use of Article 18 funds for professional development. Schools need to create such structures if none is currently in place. The template below can be used to record the professional development that faculty members attend in and out of the district. This template is drawn directly from the documents provided for I-Plans by RIDE's Office of Teacher Certification

Individual staff members have the responsibility to obtain documentation of the professional development (PD) from the provider and submit such documentation of attendance to designated school officials. The I-Plan Program Guidelines, specifically in its Appendix E: I-Plan Documentation Portfolio, contain the forms for documenting the 15 hours of PD as well as other clarifying information. Specific criteria for verification and the descriptions of acceptable professional-development activities are fully articulated in the I-Plan documents, i.e. Appendix B: Qualifying Professional Development Activities for Rhode Island Teacher Certification.

**Action Plan Template for Regent’s Regulation 6.2**

**Summary Chart for Annual Verification of Professional Development from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_**

**(Top Sheet for Verification Portfolio)**

Professional Development Activity	PD Category (from Appendix B)	Goal(s) # Supported by the Activity	Contact Hours	Time Period (Beginning and Ending Dates)	Type of Verification Submitted (Log, Letter, Transcript, Etc.)	For Use By Review Panel

You may use the template below to record the professional development that faculty members attend in and out of the district. Please include this template, or one containing the equivalent information, in your school-improvement plans and your district strategic plans.

**Action Plan Template for Regent’s Regulation 6.2 – Requirement for Professional Development and Common Planning Time**

Name of District \_\_\_\_\_ Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Strategy for professional development	Action Steps to Achieve Strategy (professional-development opportunities in and out of the district)	Person(s) responsible for action steps	Timeline for completion	Results Expected	Criteria for evaluating the strategy	Resources to support / finance the plan	Identified PD Priority Area / Contact hours

## **Common Planning Time**

School structures must support the collaborative work of the professional staff. **National research, state experience, and SALT data have established the absolute need for teams of educators to be able to plan collaboratively for the students whom they share.** Lack of common planning time is consistently identified on the SALT Survey as the largest barrier to reform. According to the Center for Collaborative Education: “In order to improve and sustain student learning, schools need to focus deeply on (1) improving learning, teaching, and assessment, and (2) creating the structures and supports in schools that enable all students to learn at high levels, and all faculty to engage in continuous professional development and purposeful collaboration.” Common planning time is an avenue to achieve both these goals.

It is critical that teachers and other key personnel (school counselors, coaches and administrators) use the time provided to share information that will most greatly impact student achievement, especially for those stipulated in the Regents’ regulations as “students with the greatest need.” Through common planning time, educators can work together to research, design, implement, and evaluate programs and structures that will help students achieve the PBGRs.

To achieve the necessary conditions for success, schools must establish weekly common planning time (CPT) for classroom teachers by September 2005 that satisfies the following criteria:

- Create structured activities (e.g. planning instruction, looking at student work, developing interdisciplinary lessons, engaging in professional-development activities that enhance instruction, meeting with parents).
- Create new or additional common planning time that focuses on discussing those academic, personal, social, and emotional issues that interfere with student achievement and develop strategies to address those issues for individual/groups of students.
- Support teaching “teams” at the middle level that include core academic teachers as well as specialists, who provide collaborative instructional supports to their students.
- Develop collaborative teaching partners who share responsibility for the same group of students.
- Enable classroom teachers and instructional coaches (standards coaches, literacy and numeracy coaches, et al.) to model effective teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Ensure that every common-planning-time session has an agenda, a shared responsibility among all participating educators for implementation, and an outcome (notes, minutes, log, lesson plan, action plan, etc.).

## **Suggested Approaches**

**Common planning time must be embedded into the school day.** It requires a new way of organizing the time and schedules of students, teachers, and other staff. Common planning time may necessitate that the school year or day be lengthened or that teachers and other professional staff meet before or after school with compensation. To free teachers for CPT, students may have learning experiences in other school or community settings. Common planning time may require student loads to be shifted on a rotating basis or it may take place when administrators or other qualified educators

present programs to students while their teachers plan. There are many models of time and schedule adjustments to accommodate common planning time. Whatever the structure, **common planning time must be a regularly scheduled, minimally weekly, event, with the specified purpose of improving student achievement through professional collaboration.**

**With common planning time comes a heightened responsibility for teachers to take control of their own learning.** Effective common planning time creates a culture of learning and sharing. Teachers bear the responsibility for making the time productive and focused on meeting student needs. Common planning time offers opportunities to engage parents through conference, telephone calls, and home visits.

### **Fostering a Professional Learning Community**

The restructuring of schools must involve not only how to organize groups of students (and the educators who serve them) to create “positive smaller learning communities” within classrooms and in “teams”, but also how to organize the professional staff into “positive professional learning communities” around content areas and across content areas for school-wide work. It is not enough to think about *some* teams of teachers and *some* common planning for *some* students – for example, the most needy freshmen. That effort is an initial one toward more school-wide strategies where educators come together routinely in formal and informal settings for professional and personal growth. Like students, educators must be engaged in their own learning. They must find value and relevance in the time they spend with colleagues. The work that schools need to do in order to adhere to any of the Regents’ Regulations requires that teachers, counselors, and school-based administrators have the *appropriate time and structures* to attend to changes in curricula, instruction, assessment, school resources, organization, and distributive leadership needed to effectively address the learning needs of all students. Moreover, teachers and staff need the *training and on-going support to efficiently use* that time and structure. This reorganization of time to foster a professional learning community among the adults in the school should include all members of the community: school-based administrators, special educators, paraprofessionals, support staff, parents, and community members. Accordingly, when reorganizing the use of time to create more personalized, and collaborative learning environments for students, teachers, faculty, and staff schools should consider:

- Individual teachers
- Team teachers (around student/learning needs)
- Content-area faculty, including itinerants (around teacher/instructional needs)
- Cross-content-area faculty, including itinerants (around school-wide strategic design/planning/implementation needs)
- Linkages to school-improvement teams
- Classroom mentoring and coaching
- Job-embedded professional development
- Routinely scheduled time for school-improvement planning
- Examination of student work
- Lesson study

### 6.3 Advisory structure:

*All school improvement plans submitted pursuant to these regulations shall provide for a structure by which every student is assigned a responsible adult who is knowledgeable about that student and tracks his or her progress.*

### **Clarification of the Intent and Terms of this Regulation**

**All School Improvement Plans submitted pursuant to these regulations shall provide for a structure by which every student is assigned a responsible adult who is knowledgeable about that student and tracks his or her progress.** Advisory programs may be implemented with elementary, middle, and high school levels. In advisory programs, caring adults are partnered with students on a one-to-one basis. Advisors may be parents, educators, business representatives, community members, or older students including college students performing community services as their work-study.

### **Overview of Advisory Structures**

**Student advisories foster meaningful, sustainable student-adult and student-student relationships that support student achievement, improve student behavior, build community, and enrich the lives of all involved.** Advisors meet with student on a regular basis for the purpose of academic, career, and personal-social advising. Advisory activities:

1. help students with self-assessment in the academic, personal/social, and career domains
2. help students set goals and monitor their progress toward those goals in each of the domains
3. give students a chance to develop a meaningful relationship with a caring adult

Advisory structures can be incorporated into the school design in a number of ways. Five key dimensions of successful advisory programs are 1) a stated purpose, 2) thoughtful organization, 3) relevant advisory program content, 4) on-going assessment, and 5) strong leadership.

More specifically, essential elements are common across all models. An Advisory Program:

- is consistent with students' needs as identified by the examination of data
- offers advisor-advisee meeting times on a regular basis
- has a curriculum and/or set of goals for the advisor and the advisee
- is aligned with the school's learner outcomes
- includes a continuous program of professional development for all advisors, particularly in the school's guidance curriculum with limits of confidentiality, referral procedures, and active listening
- involves a broad stakeholder group, including students, in the design of the advisory structure
- has a means to evaluate and improve the advisory structure



#### **6.4 Review by Commissioner:**

*The Commissioner shall review all district personalization plans at least once every four years beginning in May, 2003, and will continue thereafter to ensure compliance with these regulations.*

#### **Supports RIDE is Currently Creating or Providing**

To assist you in these efforts, RIDE is involved in the following:

- The School-Based Coordinators'-Industry Field Coordinators' Network
- Career academy initiatives, some with the support of the National Academy Foundation
- A Principals' Leadership Network offered through the RI Association of School Principals
- School-to-Career joint initiatives
- Senior Project Network
- An electronic portfolio that reflects a statewide consensus on the contents of a portfolio and provides a statewide template that supports the instruction toward and assessment of graduation proficiencies
- Model advisory programs
- A comprehensive school-counseling network and training
- Career and Technical Education Regulations Revision

#### **APPENDIX A**

### **Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Systems**

The following is a statement by the American School Counselor Association on comprehensive school-counseling programs.

*“A comprehensive school-counseling program is developmental in nature. It is systematic, sequential, clearly defined and accountable. The program’s foundation is developmental psychology, educational philosophy and counseling methodology. Proactive and preventive in focus, the school-counseling program is integral to the educational program. It assists students in acquiring and using lifelong skills through the development of academic, career, self-awareness and interpersonal communication skills. The goal of the comprehensive school-counseling program is to provide all students with life success skills.*

*The school-counseling program has characteristics similar to other educational programs, including a scope and sequence, student competencies or outcomes, activities and processes to assist students in achieving the outcomes, professionally credentialed personnel, materials, resources, and national standards for evaluation.*

*We recognize that our educational system is being challenged by the increasing needs of today’s students and society’s rising expectations. Many of our children enter school with emotional, physical and interpersonal barriers to learning. Although comprehensive school-counseling programs include necessary crisis-oriented responsive services, the emphasis is on developmental skill building for all students beginning when students enter school and continuing as they progress through the grades.*

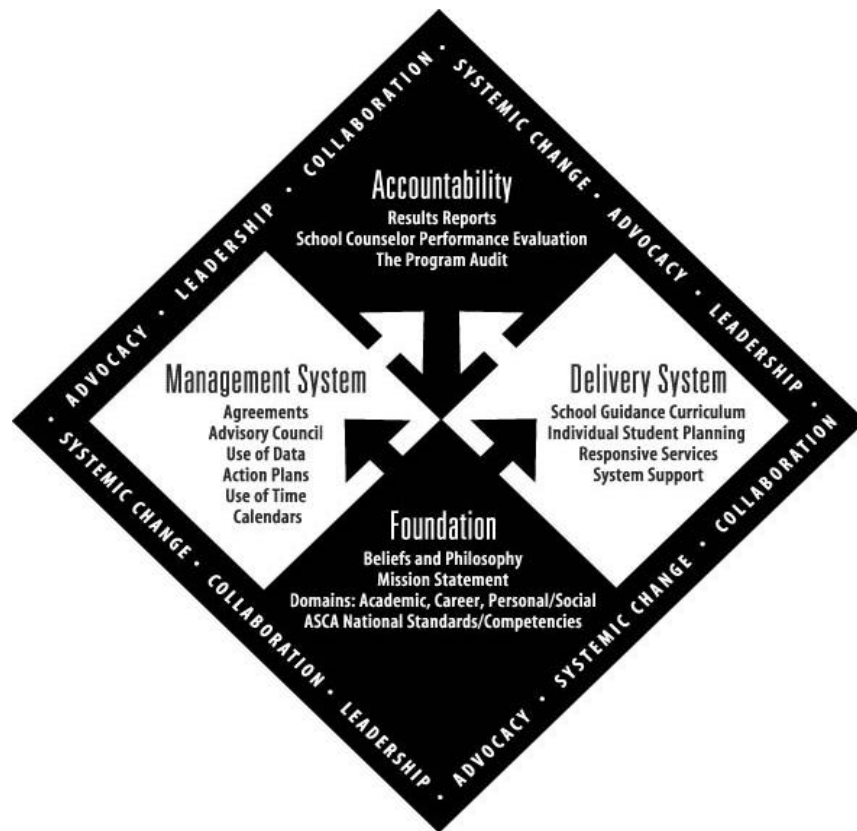
*Effective school-counseling programs are a collaborative effort between the counselor and other educators to create an environment promoting school success. Staff and counselors value and respond to the diversity and individual differences in our societies and communities. Comprehensive school-counseling programs help ensure equal opportunities for all students to participate fully in the educational process.*

*This counseling model is compatible with the National Education Goals and the National Standards for School Counseling Programs”*

### **ASCA National Model**

The *ASCA National Model* represents what a school-counseling program should contain and serves as an organizational tool to identify and prioritize the elements of a quality school-counseling program. It describes the program components and serves as a framework for developing and writing a school-counseling program. The *ASCA National Model* guides states, districts and individual schools in designing, developing, implementing and evaluating a comprehensive, developmental and systematic school-counseling program. The *ASCA National Model* is important because it helps contextualize the importance of school counseling to the children of this nation and provides a standards-based environment in which counselors can help students succeed. Rhode Island counselors are encouraged to review and discuss the *ASCA National Model* as a way of understanding the broader context and rationale for the work currently being done in the state and local districts.

### **ASCA National Model Graphic Representation**



The *ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs* is written to reflect a comprehensive approach to program foundation, delivery, management and accountability. The model provides the mechanism with which school counselors and school-counseling teams will design, coordinate, implement, manage and evaluate their programs for students' success. It provides a framework for the program components, the school counselor's role in implementation and the underlying philosophies of leadership, advocacy and systemic change.”

The model incorporates school-counseling content standards for every student, focusing the direction for an organized, planned, sequential and flexible school guidance curriculum. The model recommends the use of disaggregated data to drive program and activity development, thus enabling school counselors to intentionally design interventions to meet the needs of all students and to close the gap between specific groups of students and their peers. The model provides an organizational framework and accountability systems to determine how well students have met the standards or have achieved intended outcomes. The school-counseling program aligns goals and objectives with the school's mission and ultimately leads to increased student achievement as demonstrated by results data. [Source: *The ASCA National Model*, 2003, pp. 9-11]

**ASCA National Model Features**

- Human development theory and standards-based education
- School-counseling programs ensure that all students achieve academically
- School-counseling programs operate from a curriculum with academic, career, and personal/social domains that is based on *ASCA National Standards* and connected to state guide of comprehensive K-12 school-counseling programs..
- School counselors use individual planning, responsive services, guidance curriculum and system support
- School counselors are accountable for measurable changes in academic achievement and school-related behavior

**ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs**

The *ASCA National Standards* facilitate student development in three board areas: academic development, career development and personal/social development. There are the nine national standards:

Academic	A	Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.
	B	Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.
	C	Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.
Career	A	Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.
	B	Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.
	C	Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.
Personal/ Social	A	Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
	B	Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.
	C	Students will understand safety and survival skills.

## APPENDIX B

### **Barriers to Learning**

From Howard S. Adelman and Linda Taylor (published research and personal correspondence with Sarah Friedman)

The anonymity some students feel in school settings can be overcome by personalizing teaching and learning and recognizing students as involved partners in their own learning. Most importantly, personalization strategies can overcome barriers to learning. Howard S. Adelman, Professor of Psychology at UCLA advises, "...designing the environment with due consideration for equity and diversity by paying attention to addressing external and internal barriers that interfere with students benefiting from improved instruction and living up to high standards." (Adelman, 1997)

Schools alone cannot overcome the barriers to learning, including poverty, poor health, unemployment, violence, gangs, teen pregnancy, truancy, and drugs. They must form partnerships with community human-service agencies to meet the needs of their students. Schools can be the hub for the delivery of services that complement and support education. A school's decision to provide school-linked services, however, will be successful only if it is part of a larger restructuring effort. Through these partnerships, schools and service agencies can collaborate to provide supportive programs and services to students and their families. Howard S. Adelman concludes, "In general, developing a comprehensive, integrated approach for addressing barriers to learning and enhancing healthy development *requires working to restructure, transform and enhance* school-owned programs and community services, and includes mechanisms to coordinate and eventually integrate school and community resources" (Adelman, 1997)

### ***Framework for Personalized Learning Environments***

Students who connect with a caring adult are more likely to achieve their goals and meet the standards academically, socially and emotionally in school. Students who succeed in school are more likely to become self-sufficient, independent, life-long learners

## THE FRAMEWORK: IN DEPTH

### **I. Create supportive classroom learning environments that are responsive to students'**

**strengths and needs:** Classroom-based efforts to enable learning are aimed at three main areas: 1.) preventing problems/intervening as soon as possible once a problem arises; 2.) enhancing intrinsic motivation for learning; 3.) and re-engaging students who have become disengaged from classroom learning.

#### ***Specific strategies for classroom based efforts:***

- 1.) preventing problems/intervening: open classroom doors to bring in available supports (peer tutors, volunteers, aids trained to work with students in need); open classroom doors to student support staff and resource teachers; enhance teacher capacity to prevent and handle problems and reduce the need for out of class referrals through: personalized instruction with special assistance if necessary, reducing negative interactions and over-reliance on social control, systematic use of pre-referral interventions.

- 2.) Enhancing intrinsic motivation for learning by: expanding the range of curricular and instructional options, developing small group and independent learning options, enhancing and personalizing professional development, creating a Learning Community for teachers, ensuring opportunities to learn for staff through co-teaching, team teaching, mentoring, teaching intrinsic motivation concepts and their application to schooling.
- 3.) Re-engage students who have become disengaged from classroom learning by: development of curricular enrichment and adjunct programs, varied enrichment activities that are not tied to reinforcement schedules, bringing in visiting scholars from the community, developing schoolwide approaches used to create and maintain a caring and supportive environment with an emphasis on enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to others at school, and reducing threats to such feelings.

**II. Enhance the school's ability to handle the many transition concerns confronting students and their families:** schoolwide and classroom based efforts to support transitions focus on three main areas – 1.) enhancing acceptance and successful transitions, 2.) prevention of transition problems, and 3.) use of transitions periods to reduce alienation, and to increase positive attitudes/motivation toward learning and school.

***Specific strategies for supporting transitions:***

- 1.) Enhancing acceptance and successful transitions: welcoming and social support programs for newcomers, welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions, peer buddy programs for students, families, staff and volunteers/community partners.
- 2.) Prevention of transition problems: daily transition programs before school, breaks, lunch and afterschool; articulation programs from grade to grade, middle to high school, in and out of special education programs; summer or intercession programs, catch-up, enrichment, recreation
- 3.) Use of transitions to reduce alienation and increase motivation: school-to-career/higher education counseling, pathway and mentor programs; broad involvement of stakeholders in planning programming for transitions (students, staff, police, community, home, recreation, faith groups, higher ed)

**III. Enhance the school's ability to respond to, minimize impact of, and prevent crises with a focus on three major areas:** 1.) responding to crises; 2.) minimizing the impact of crises; 3.) preventing crises.

***Specific strategies for crisis assistance and prevention:***

- 1.) Responding to crises: ensure immediate assistance in emergencies so students can resume learning; provide follow-up care as necessary.
- 2.) Minimizing the impact of crises: form a school-based crisis team to formulate a response plan and take leadership for developing prevention programs; mobilize students, staff and families to anticipate response plans and recovery efforts.
- 3.) Preventing crises: create a caring and safe learning environment, develop systems to promote healthy development and prevent problems, develop bully and harassment abatement programs, work with neighborhood schools and community groups to integrate planning for response and prevention.

**IV. Enhance home involvement; outreach to the surrounding community to strengthen students, families, the school and the neighborhood, with focus on four major areas:** 1.) strengthening the home situation, 2.) enhancing problem-solving capabilities, 3.) supporting student development and learning. 4.) strengthening school and community.

***Specific strategies for enhancing home involvement:***

- 1.) Strengthening the home situation: address the specific support and learning needs of the family, support services for those in the home to address basic survival needs and obligations to the children; adult education classes to enhance literacy, job skills, ESL and citizen preparation.
- 2.) Enhancing problem-solving capabilities: improve mechanisms for communication, connection to school, provide multiple and varied opportunities for parents to interact with the school, ask parents to identify their needs in order to support their students' learning, phone calls home with good news, frequent and balanced conferences, outreach to hard to reach families, translation support for all parent communications, development of a parent-leadership team with a collective voice in school decision-making and support for parents to outreach to one another directly.
- 3.) Supporting student development and learning: enhancing home support for learning, give parents guidance in what they can do at home to support learning, translate curriculum/standards and break down into doable supportive tasks for parents at home (i.e. read aloud tips for comprehension)
- 4.) Strengthening school and community: strength-map parent community and invite parents to use their strengths to meet needs of school, include parents in school governance, accountability to families, families acting as advocates/voices for change improvement for school, district, neighborhood.

**V. Outreach to the surrounding community to strengthen students, families, the school and the neighborhood** with focus on: 1.) systematically building relationships, 2.) developing a system to continually identifying school/student needs and community strengths, 3.) coordinating partnerships, and maintaining quality.

***Specific strategies for outreaching the community:***

- 1.) Systematically building relationships: Create a work group with school and community stakeholders to plan and implement outreach (include: public and private agencies, colleges and universities, local residents, artists and cultural institutions, business, service, volunteers, faith based organizations, community policy decision makers); staff development and involvement on the value of community partnerships;
- 2.) Develop a system to continually identify school needs and community strengths: develop policy to sustain school-community involvement, identify the specific needs of the students and match needs with community partners,
- 3.) Coordinate and maintain high quality partnerships: create mechanisms to recruit, prepare, screen, and orient new community partners; develop programs to enhance sense of community, develop system to control quality of providers, match of provider services with school day teaching and learning, and develop infrastructure to be able to coordinate community partners/services with whole school goals and other community partners.

**VI. Provide specialized assistance to students and their families as needed, with focus on specialized assistance through personalized health and social service programs.**

***Specific strategies for providing assistance:***

- 1.) Prevention: provide support as soon as a need is recognized and doing so in the least disruptive ways, pre-referral interventions in the classroom, problem-solving conferences with parents, open access to school, district and community support programs, develop mechanisms for resource coordination to avoid duplication of services and to fill specific gaps, and enhance effectiveness.
- 2.) Early after on set intervention: develop referral system for interventions for students and families with problems, including screening, referrals, and follow-up at the school-site or linked to the school, enhance access to direct interventions for health, mental health, and economic assistance, follow-up assessments to check on whether referrals and services are adequate and effective.

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**APPENDIX C**



## **Personalization Structures**

(From *Changing Systems to Personalize Learning*: The Education Alliance at Brown University)

The elements and school structures listed below, when in some combination, have been shown to create more personalized school environments. The list is not a formula, but merely represents means schools can investigate to institutionalize adult/student interactions.

### **EXAMPLES OF PERSONALIZATION IN SCHOOLS**

Personal learning plans	Community based learning
Service Learning	Inclusive practices
Varied instruction	Portfolios of student work
Senior projects/Capstone	Independent studies/student presentation
Community mentoring	Applied learning/Career explorations
Extra time and help available from teachers	Small classrooms
Student choice in courses and class work	Teaching and learning teams
Democratic classrooms	Flexible scheduling
Heterogeneous grouping	Small schools
Advisory groups and parent conferences	Guidance/teacher partnerships
Teachers and kids eating together	Accessible counseling staff
Home visits	Special education available to everyone
Community of learners emphasized	Teachers and students as co-learners
Shared mission and goals	Sustained Adult/student relationships

(Modified from *Changing Systems to Personalize Learning*: The Education Alliance at Brown University)

## **APPENDIX D**

## **Image of Personalized Learning**

(From The Education Alliance at Brown University)

Key to successful personalization in schools is the recognition that there must be multiple and flexible strategies to accommodate each individual student. The Education Alliance states, “To succeed with individual students who are unique, the people and the programs that successfully engage those students have to be ready to adjust educational opportunities to fit a wide range of personal orientations.” (Clarke, 2003)

The ideas behind personalized learning are:

- Personalized schools promote the achievement of standards for all students.
- Personalized learning begins with individual interests so each student becomes engaged in learning.
- Teachers get to know each student’s strengths, weaknesses and interests.
- With school support over four years, students become self-directed learners who can use learning to manage their own lives.
- As students pursue an increasingly independent pathway, parents become true guides and mentors in the learning experience.
- As students explore real options for their futures in the community, community members become involved in a meaningful way.
- Adults in the school model and benefit from stronger professional and student relationships.
- Against common standards, students learn to set goals and measure success for themselves.
- Students graduate upon demonstrating high performance in a variety of media, not simply norm-based tests.
- Reaching all students depends on reaching each one. (Clarke, 2003)

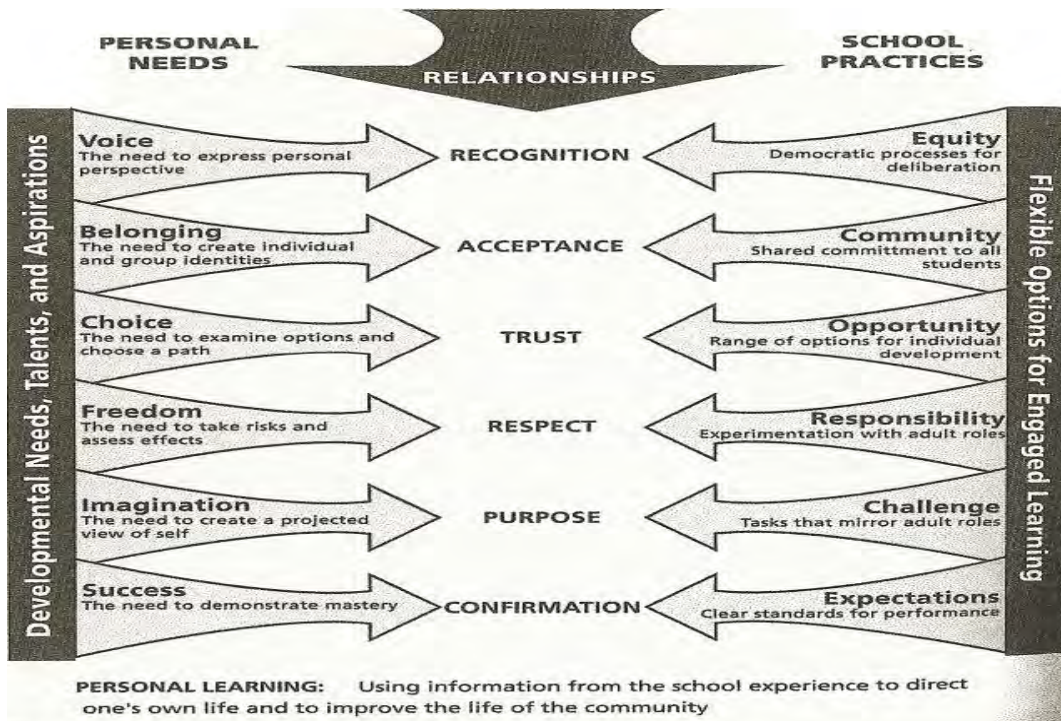
## **APPENDIX E**

### **Essential Relationships**

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(From Personalized Learning: Preparing High School Students to Create Their Futures Edited by: Joseph DiMartino, John Clarke, and Denise Wolk)

The chart below shows the linkage between personal needs, school practices and relationships.



Recognition refers to the acknowledgement of the individual student's contribution to school life. It is seen in a range of interactions from a formal award ceremony to a casual hallway hello.

Acceptance refers to fostering a sense of belonging in each student. It occurs when schools fashion deliberate community roles and processes for all students to become engaged in school life.

Trust refers to mutual trust in student/faculty interactions. Trust is evident when schools allow students to meet adult challenges and make choices for themselves.

Respect refers to mutual respect by students and faculty and self-respect. Respect is allowing students to take responsibility for their own destiny.

Purpose refers to the relevance of activities to individual students. It is the opportunity for students to practice their skills and demonstrate their competency in a real-world community setting.

Confirmation refers to opportunities for students to recognize and test their competencies. These can occur with the school setting and beyond.

## APPENDIX F

### Components and Tasks for Creating a Safe School Climate

(From The Secret Service and Department of Education's *Threat Assessment in Schools Guide*)

1. Assess the school's emotional climate: This perspective can be gained by systematically surveying students, faculty and other important "stakeholders."
2. Emphasize the importance of listening in schools: All too frequently, adults forget respectful listening is a "two-way street."
3. Take a strong but caring stance against the code of silence: Silence may encourage a young person to move along a path to violence.
4. Work actively to change the perception that talking to an adult about a student contemplating violence is considered "snitching": A school climate in which students connect to each other and to adult is one that promotes a safe educational environment.
5. Find ways to stop bullying: In safe school climate, adults do not bully students, do not bully each other and do not turn a blind eye to bullying behavior when they know it is going on in the school.
6. Empower students by involving them in planning, creating and sustaining a school culture of safety and respect: Creating a safe school climate is a process that should involve all members of the school community.
7. Ensure every student feels he has a trusting relationship with at least one adult in school: Take steps to ensure at least one adult at school knows what is happening with each student.
8. Create mechanisms for developing and sustaining safe school climates: This mechanism may involve administrators, teachers, counselors, students, school law enforcement and security staff.
9. Be aware of physical environments and their effects on creating comfort zones. Building structure, facility safety plans, lighting and architecture can contribute to whether a school feels or is safe or unsafe.
10. Emphasize an integrated systems model: People support what they believe they have had a genuine input in creating. This requires the difficult but necessary task of bringing everyone to the table.
11. All climates of safety ultimately are "local": Many local factors contribute to the creation of a culture and climate of safety. These factors include: the leadership "open door" role of the school principal; "the empowered buy-in" of student groups; and connections to the local community.

(From *Practical Strategies for Maintaining Safe Schools*, Volume 8 Issue 7 July 2002)

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Individual Learning Plans**

The following components should be addressed when developing an Individual Learning Plan process. Failure to fully address all of these components can significantly reduce the potential for its success.

- Alignment with federal (e.g., No Child Left Behind) and state (e.g., High School Regulations, Article 18) regulations.
- Counseling standards (e.g., *ASCA National Model* and *RI Framework for School Counseling*).
- Essential Counseling Curriculum. These are counseling activities deemed critical to students achieving the counseling standards. Every student should have an opportunity to participate in the essential counseling curriculum.
- Assessment of Student Progress toward Counseling Standards. Students can achieve the counseling standards if they successfully complete the essential counseling curriculum, develop their academic, career, and personal/social plans, and produce a evidence that demonstrates their progress toward the standards (e.g., portfolio).
- Support Infrastructure (e.g., roles and responsibilities, policies, protocols, data management systems, program evaluation).
- District-wide and school-based plans for personalizing every students learning experiences that are aligned with the district’s strategic plan.
- Substantive and meaningful professional development on Individual Learning Plans for counselors, teachers and building administrators.
- Parent Involvement (e.g., well-established interactions with parents to engage them in helping their children prepare for the future).
- Community support (e.g., enlisting community-based organizations in supporting the personalization effort).

## **APPENDIX H**

### **Breaking Ranks II Recommendations**

#### **Collaborative Leadership and Professional Learning Communities**

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1. The principal will provide leadership in the high school community by building and maintaining a vision, direction, and focus for student learning.
2. Each high school will establish a site council and accord other meaningful roles in decision making to students, parents, and members of the staff in order to promote student learning and an atmosphere of participation, responsibility, and ownership.
3. A high school will regard itself as a community in which members of the staff collaborate to develop and implement the school's learning goals.
4. Teachers will provide the leadership essential to the success of reform, collaborating with others in the educational community to redefine the role of the teacher and to identify sources of support for that redefined role.
5. Every school will be a learning community for the entire community. As such, the school will promote the use of Personal Learning Plans for each educator and provide the resources to ensure that the principal, teachers, and other staff members can address their own learning and professional development needs as they relate to improved student learning.
6. The school community will promote policies and practices that recognize diversity, in accord with the core values of a democratic and civil society and will offer substantive ongoing professional development to help educators appreciate issues of diversity and expose students to a rich array of viewpoints, perspective, and experiences.
7. High schools will build partnerships with institutions of higher education to provide teachers and administrators at both levels with ideas and opportunities to enhance the education, performance, and evaluation of educators.
8. High schools will develop political and financial relationships with individuals, organizations; and businesses to support and supplement educational programs and policies.
9. At least once every five years, each high school will convene a broadly based external panel to offer a public description of the school, a requirement that could be met in conjunction with the evaluations by state, regional, and other accrediting groups.

### **Personalization and the School Environment**

10. High schools will create small units in which anonymity is banished.
11. Each high school teacher involved in the instructional program on a full-time basis will be responsible for contact time with no more than 90 students during a given term so that the teacher can give greater attention to the needs of every student.

12. Each student will have a Personal Plan for Progress that will be reviewed often to ensure that the high school takes individual needs into consideration and to allow students, within reasonable parameters, to design their own methods for learning in an effort to meet high standards.
13. Every high school student will have a Persona! Adult Advocate to help him or her personalize the educational experience.
14. Teachers will convey a sense of caring so that students feel that their teachers share a stake in student learning.
15. High schools will develop flexible scheduling and student grouping patterns that allow better use of time in order to meet the individual needs of students and to ensure academic success.
16. The high school will engage students' families as partners in the students' education.
17. The high school community, which cannot be values- neutral, will advocate and model a set of core values essential in a democratic and civil society.
18. High schools, in conjunction with agencies in the community, will help coordinate the delivery of physical and mental health and social services for youth.

### **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

19. Each high school will identify a set of essential learnings - in literature and language, writing, mathematics, social studies, science, and the arts - in which students must demonstrate achievement in order to graduate.
20. Each high school will present alternatives to tracking and to ability grouping.
21. The high school will reorganize the traditional department structure in order to integrate the school's curriculum to the extent possible and emphasize depth over breadth of coverage.
22. The content of the curriculum, where practical, should connect to real-life applications of knowledge and skills to help students link their education to the future.
23. The high school will promote service programs and student activities as integral to an education, providing opportunities for all students that support and extend academic learning.
24. The academic program will extend beyond the high school campus to take advantage of learning opportunities outside the four walls of the building.
25. Teachers will design high-quality work and teach in ways that engage students, encourage them to persist, and, when the work is successfully completed; resulting student satisfaction and their acquisition of knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, and, other abilities valued by society.
26. Teachers will know and be able to use a variety of strategies and settings that identify and accommodate individual learning styles and engage students.

27. Each high school teacher will have a broad base of academic knowledge with depth in at least one subject area.

28. Teachers will be adept at acting as coaches and facilitators to promote more active involvement of students in their own learning.

29. Teachers will integrate assessment into instruction so that assessment is accomplished using a variety of methods and does not only measure students, but becomes part of the learning process.

30. Recognizing that education is a continuum, high schools will reach out to elementary and middle level schools as well as institutions of higher education to better serve the articulation of student learning and to ensure that at each stage of the continuum, stakeholders understand what will be required of students at the succeeding stage.

31. Schools will develop a strategic plan to make technology integral to the curriculum, instruction and assessment accommodating different learning styles and helping teachers to individualize and improve the learning process.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Professional Development**

#### **RI Quality Standards for Professional Development**

In the past, professional development has been synonymous with people attending workshops in which experts tell them the latest ideas about teaching and learning. Currently, we think of professional development as a component of lifelong learning. This includes training programs with intensive follow-up and support as well as other experiences that individuals may select to enhance and develop their capacity to help all students achieve high standards.



At one time, professional development was viewed as something primarily for teachers. Today, however, we recognize the need for professional development for everyone who influences student learning from community members, parents, support staff, teachers, principals, central office administrators and school committees to members of the Department of Education; all of whom need to improve their knowledge and skills to support student learning.

We can no longer place the responsibility of professional development solely with the expert presenter. It is imperative that all members of the school community be involved in the planning, designing, implementation, and evaluation of professional development. To meet diverse needs of all learners, a variety of professional development experiences is necessary.

**Fundamental Premises:** Professional development is a system of continuous growth and learning which builds the capacity of the educational community to respond to the needs of all learners. The primary purpose of professional development is school improvement as measured by the success of every student. All educators share the responsibility for both individual and organizational growth. Effective professional development is based on theory, research, and proven practice.

Effective professional development must:

- View schools as communities of learners capable of and committed to measurable ongoing growth and development;
- Reflect an emphasis on high standards, effective instruction, and quality assessment for learners, decentralized decision-making, integrated social services, equity, and diversity;
- Acknowledge and respond to the diversity of participants, as well as the students they serve;
- Promote growth and build capacity of individuals and organizations;
- Build collaborative, collegial, and continuous learning.

**Planning:** What and how decisions are made in preparing Professional Development programming.

STANDARD	INDICATORS (how we measure standards)
1. Is consistent with district and school strategic plans and improvement goals	A professional development plan is part of a written school improvement plan (e.g. beliefs, mission, vision).  1.2 This professional development plan is linked to school improvement goals. (e.g. strategies, action

	plans, etc.
2. Is based on periodic needs assessments which focus on both organizational and individual needs and the relationship between them.	2.1 Needs assessment(s) are conducted and results are analyzed.
3. Creates opportunities for learners to participate in planning and decision-making.	3.1 Learners are engaged in the design and implementation of professional development activities (e.g. who, and in what ways?).
4. Focuses on all participants who need to share knowledge and practice, fostering collaborations and partnerships.	4.1 Activities include opportunities for thinking and working together.
5. Acknowledges the importance of new practices as well as existing effective practices.	5.1 Needs assessment(s) include opportunities for pursuing new ideas and/or improving existing effective practices.
6. Clearly identifies goals and addresses anticipated results for adults and students in terms of these goals.	6.1 Activities clearly state goals and anticipated results and describe how results will be measured.

**Design and Implementation:** The content of Professional Development programming, how it is organized and how it is delivered.

STANDARD	INDICATORS (how we measure standards)
1. Incorporates various forms of professional development and acknowledges different approaches to learning.	1.1 Activities include a variety of approaches (e.g. individual learning, small group learning, reading, listening, problem-solving, hands-on learning, demonstrations, etc.)
2. Creates opportunities to learn, which will lead to the attainment of the goals and anticipated results.	2.1 Activities are clearly linked to attainment of the goals and anticipated results.
3. Allows for implementation over time.	3.1 Activity timelines provide multiple opportunities to learn.
4. Is based on valid research.	4.1 Activities reflect appropriate research.
5. Varies group size and composition depending upon purpose and goals.	5.1 Activities reflect purpose and rationale for the number and types of individuals involved.

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School Redesign Network: <http://www.schoolredesign.net/srn/server.php?idx=861> provides the following Advisory Programs Resources :

[Planning Resources for Teachers in Small High Schools: Advisories](#), by the Small Schools Project. This 34-page resource on advisories includes a collection of planning guides, program descriptions, and recommended readings for coordinating advisory systems. Best practices of advisory systems at the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center ("the Met") in Providence, Rhode Island, and Parker Charter Essential School and Fenway High School in Massachusetts are highlighted. This resource is a thorough and useful tool for advisory planning.

[Are Advisory Groups "Essential?" What They Do, How They Work](#), by Kathleen Cushman. In this article, Cushman explores the benefits and challenges of establishing an advisory system including issues of scheduling, organization, curriculum development, and professional development.

**“Getting Started”** (Chapter 1), from *How to Design an Advisory System for a Secondary School*, by Mark F. Goldberg. This chapter explains what an advisory system is and how to start one. The rest of the book includes chapters on placing students, meetings with students, communicating with parents, and “special issues,” including the role of the advisor in discipline. The book includes sample documents, such as forms for gathering student information and recording advisory meeting notes. Information on purchasing the entire book is included along with Goldberg’s first chapter.

**Making Great Teachers into Great Advisors: Advisory Training at Parker Charter Essential School**, by Jill Davidson. “... (T)errific teachers don’t always make terrific advisors.” This brief piece explores the professional development efforts of this Massachusetts school as staff explored the question, “What does it mean to be an effective advisor at Parker?”

**Advisories**, by the Small Schools Project. The Small Schools Project offers a number of resources on personalization, including advisory, on their website. In addition to the planning resource listed above, resources include an overview exploring the purpose of advisory, a tool for designing an advisory sequence, information from schools that use advisory including Vanguard High School in New York City, and key questions to consider in advisory design.

**“Points of View: Student-Advisor Interviews”**, from an *Online Portfolio of the Minnesota New Country School*, by What Kids Can Do. A student and an advisor reflect on MNCS’ personalized learning environment.

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**Student Advisory**, by the Center for School Success at New Visions for Public Schools. This 10-page booklet offers practical suggestions for creating advisories and features brief portraits of the advisory systems at the New York City Museum School, the Beacon School, and Baruch College Campus High School. It also provides a list of additional resources including contact information for a number of other New York high schools with advisories.

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[Advisory Design Sequence](#), by the Small Schools Workshop with Jeff Petty. This worksheet is intended to assist school communities in the design of advisories that function within a coherent school program to support higher achievement for all students through increased personalization. You can also download a [blank copy of the Advisory Design Sequence](#) to use at your own school.

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Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Other Clearinghouses

<http://www.ed.gov/EdRes/EdFed/ERIC.html>

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National Academy Foundation

<http://www.naf.org>

National Research and Development Centers

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#### ***Parental and Community Involvement***

- [Seven Tips To Building a Successful Partnership](#) and [Creating a Partnership Plan](#) on the Partnership for Family Involvement Web site
- [Shared Responsibility Among School, Family, and Communities](#)  
Learn new ways schools, families, and communities can share the responsibility for children's learning
- [A Guide to Promising Practices in Education Partnerships](#)  
Building and sustaining strong partnership relationships



- **[A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for Family-School-Community Partnerships](#)**
- **[Six Standards for Parental Involvement in Schools from the National Parent Teacher Association](#)**  
Standards designed to help leaders develop dynamic and meaningful parental involvement
- **[The National Network of Partnership Schools](#)**  
Web site offers a no-cost program designed to slide into any CSR approach and serve as the parent and community involvement component
- **[The Corporate Imperative: Results and Benefits of Business Involvement in Education](#)**
- **[Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships](#)**  
Helps schools measure how they are reaching out to involve parents, community members and students in a meaningful manner.
- **[An Action Guide for Community and Parent Leaders](#)**  
This 80-page booklet has been created as a guide to understanding the No Child Left Behind Act. Designed for parents and community leaders, it outlines their roles and responsibilities in enforcing the statement that "no child be left behind."

# Gallup Student Poll National Report

Dr. Shane J. Lopez, Senior Scientist in Residence

## The Gallup Student Poll National Report

The Gallup Student Poll is a landmark new measure that will track for 10 years the hope, engagement, and well-being of students across the United States. Through a Web-based survey administered in America's schools, cities and school districts are partnering with Gallup and America's Promise Alliance to gather sound, actionable data that can explain and address the graduation crisis.

The youth voice is a critical missing part of the national dialogue about the graduation crisis, and the Gallup Student Poll gives America's young people a voice to convey their daily experiences and aspirations for the future. Research has shown that hope, engagement, and well-being are positioned as actionable targets and indicators of success, with links to grades, achievement scores, retention, and employment. Poll data facilitates new family, school, and community conversations and solutions that lead to community engagement and school and student success.

## Measuring the Hope, Engagement, and Well-Being of America's Students

The conversation about the future of American youth starts with a shared understanding of what is right with our students, rather than what is wrong. Through a review of social science and educational research, Gallup researchers chose three variables (hope, engagement, and well-being) as the target of the Gallup Student Poll because they met the following four criteria: (1) they can be reliably measured, (2) they have a meaningful relationship with or impact on

educational outcomes, (3) they are malleable and can be enhanced through deliberate action, and (4) they are not measured directly by another large-scale survey or testing program. After an extensive literature review, pilot testing of engagement items with 97,000 students and well-being items with 48,000 students, and a predictive study examining academic achievement and attendance data of 198 high school freshmen, here are the fundamental findings that are incorporated into the Gallup Student Poll project.

**Hope** - the ideas and energy we have for the future. Hope drives attendance, credits earned, and GPA of high school students. Hope predicts GPA and retention in college, and hope scores are more robust predictors of college success than are high school GPA, SAT, and ACT scores.

**Engagement** - the involvement in and enthusiasm for school. Engagement distinguishes between high-performing and low-performing schools.

**Well-being** - how we think about and experience our lives. Well-being tells us how our students are doing today and predicts their success in the future. High school freshmen with high well-being earn more credits with a higher GPA than peers with low well-being. Specifically, the typical student who is thriving earns 10% more credits and a 2.9 GPA (out of 4.0), whereas a student with low well-being, completing fewer credits, earns a 2.4 GPA.

## Launching the Gallup Student Poll

The Gallup Student Poll surveyed 70,078 students in grades 5 through 12 from 335 schools and 59 districts located in 18 states and the District of Columbia. (Gallup, America's Promise Alliance, and the American Association of School Administrators invited 130+ school districts to participate in the March 2009 poll. A wide range of school districts was included in this invitation from America's Promise 100 Best Communities for Youth and America's Promise 24 Dropout Prevention Summit cities to Gallup Education client districts.) The online poll was completed on school computers during one of four March fielding options; polls were open Tuesday through Friday during school hours.

Key findings from the Gallup Student Poll include: \*

- Half of students are hopeful; these students possess numerous ideas and abundant energy for the future. The other half of students are stuck or discouraged, lacking the ideas and energy they need to navigate problems and reach goals.

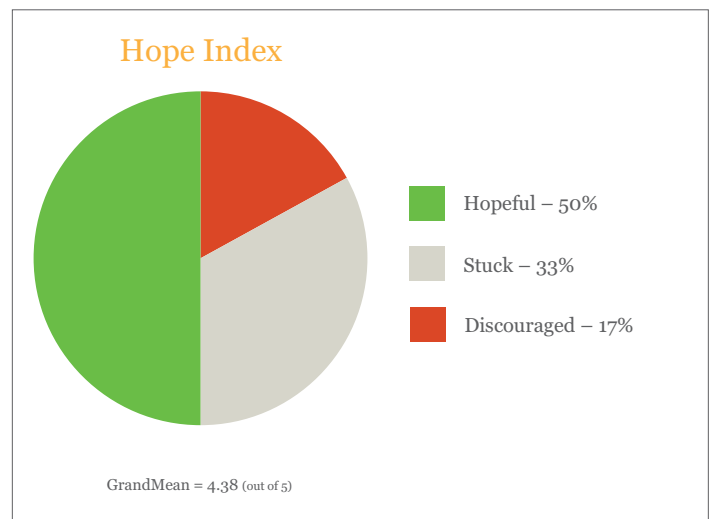
Hope varies little across grade levels. Most students (95%) agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I know I will graduate from high school." The belief that a student will graduate from high school is positively correlated with student responses to the following items: "There is an adult in my life who cares about my future" and "I can find lots of ways around any problem." Unfortunately, there is a slight disconnect between this expectation for graduation and the potential outcome suggested by data on the dropout crisis. While 95% of today's students say they will graduate, fewer than 75% of students will receive a high school diploma.

\* Findings are supported by a nationally representative sample of students collected in April 2009.

- Half of students are engaged; they are highly involved with and enthusiastic about school. The other half of students are either going through the motions at school or actively undermining the teaching and learning process.

Student engagement peaks during elementary school, decreases through middle school and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and plateaus through the rest of high school — seemingly after some of the most actively disengaged students drop out of school. This downward trend suggests that we may be losing the hearts and minds of some students in middle school, with involvement in and enthusiasm for school declining from 5<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Student responses to "My teachers make me feel my school work is important" account for some of the engagement decline across the grade levels, suggesting that students see school as less important and relevant as they advance through grades. Student responses suggest that a lack of recognition or praise in the last seven days and too few opportunities to do what they do best also may contribute to the engagement slide.

- Nearly two-thirds of students are thriving; they think about their present and future life in positive terms, and they tend to be in good health and have strong



social support. Just over one-third of students are struggling or suffering.

When students were asked to respond to this classic well-being item: “Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you, and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?” the average response was 7.32. When asked: “On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now?” students’ average response was 8.42.

Well-being varies little across grade levels. However, there is a downward well-being trend when positive daily experiences associated with well-being are considered (treated with respect yesterday, smiled or laughed a lot yesterday, learned or did something interesting yesterday, had enough energy to get things done yesterday). About 80% of students indicated that they smiled or laughed a lot yesterday.

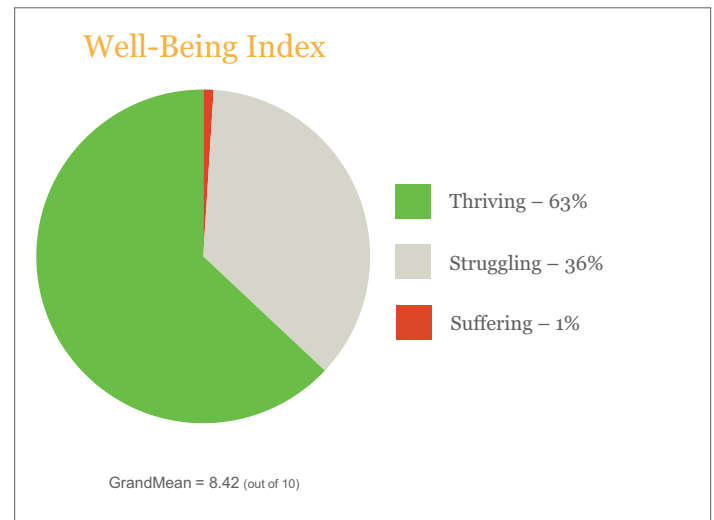
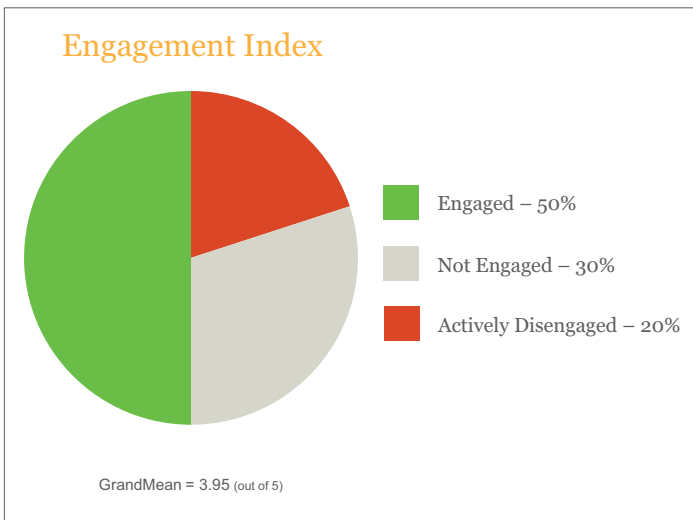
- One-quarter of responding students meet the criteria for the classifications of hopeful, engaged, and thriving. These students have abundant energy and ideas about the future and are enthusiastic about school and what it has to offer.

### Registering for the Fall 2009 Fielding of the Gallup Student Poll

Beginning May 6, 2009, district and school administrators may register at [www.gallupstudentpoll.com](http://www.gallupstudentpoll.com) for the fall administration of the Gallup Student Poll. There are four possible field periods. Fall administration will begin Tuesday, September 29 and end Friday, October 30, 2009.

### Starting a Community Discussion About the Gallup Student Poll and Raising the Graduation Rate

The Gallup Student Poll gives American students a voice. It also provides schools and communities with meaningful data about their young people. With this new information, communities can expand discussions about solutions to the dropout crisis. Involved youth, concerned parents, educators, after-school program staff, and business and community leaders are charged with the goals of doubling hope, building engaged schools, boosting well-being, and raising the graduation rate.



# Measuring the Hope, Engagement, and Well-Being of America's Students

1. Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you, and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?  
On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now?
2. I know I will graduate from high school.
3. There is an adult in my life who cares about my future.
4. I can think of many ways to get good grades.
5. I energetically pursue my goals.
6. I can find lots of ways around any problem.
7. I know I will find a good job after I graduate.
8. I have a best friend at school.
9. I feel safe in this school.
10. My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.
11. If I miss school, an adult from school calls home to ask how I am doing.
12. At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
13. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.
14. In the last month, I volunteered my time to help others.

**Please think about yesterday, from the morning until the end of the day. Think about where you were, what you were doing, who you were with, and how you felt as you respond to the next six items.**

15. Were you treated with respect all day yesterday?
16. Did you smile or laugh a lot yesterday?
17. Did you learn or do something interesting yesterday?
18. Did you have enough energy to get things done yesterday?
19. Do you have health problems that keep you from doing things other people your age can do?
20. If you are in trouble, do you have family or friends you can count on whenever you need them?

**For more information, visit [www.gallupstudentpoll.com](http://www.gallupstudentpoll.com).**

## Majority of Youths Found to Lack a Direction in Life

### Researcher Calls on Schools, Communities to Address Malaise

By **Debra Viadero**

A majority of young people are struggling to make the leap into adulthood, and educators, parents, and communities should make a more concerted effort to help rudderless youths find a clear direction and overarching sense of purpose, according to a new book.

In *The Path to Purpose: Helping Our Children Find Their Calling in Life*, Stanford University psychologist William Damon shares the first wave of findings from a study in which he and his graduate students have been surveying 1,200 young people between the ages of 12 and 26 over a period of five years.

"There have always been kids that drift," Mr. Damon, a noted scholar on children's moral development and contemporary child-rearing practices, said in an interview.

"But I do think we have a special problem today in the numbers of kids and the kind of trouble they're having in finding a sense of direction."

For the study, Mr. Damon's team has conducted in-depth interviews with a quarter of the youths surveyed, and compared the responses with those from other surveys taken of earlier generations of young people.

One-fifth of the survey participants said they had found something meaningful to which they wanted to dedicate their lives—whether that meant raising a family, pursuing a career that

mattered to them, starting a business, or choosing a religion, according to Mr. Damon.

At the other extreme, the researchers identified a quarter of the young people as “disengaged,” meaning that they expressed no particular wider purpose for their lives and were not involved in activities that might help them find one.

“Apart from the kids on either end of the spectrum,” Mr. Damon said, “there’s a majority of kids who are looking for something but haven’t found it. They’ve either tried something that doesn’t work, or they have some big dream but they haven’t pursued it in a practical sort of way.” Mr. Damon classified those young people as either “dabblers” or “dreamers.”

Mr. Damon’s findings speak to a wider body of evidence showing that young people around the world are putting off marriage and parenthood until well into their 20s, longer than their parents and grandparents did. The trend has spurred some psychologists to coin the term “emerging adulthood” to describe the period from 18 to 25 as a new transitional phase between adolescence and adulthood.

The popular media also use “failure to launch” and “boomerang generation” to characterize the phenomenon and the increasing numbers of young people returning home after college, rather than charting a more independent life course.

“People are beginning to look at this and figure out what is going on in this period when young people seem to be in a holding pattern, waiting for something to happen,” said James Youniss, a professor of developmental psychology at Catholic University of America, in Washington. “[Mr. Damon is] opening a new line of research that’s very valuable to the field.”

### **Coin-Toss Coursetaking**

Mr. Damon was prompted to study adolescents’ developing sense of purpose after working with two other prominent psychologists—Harvard University’s Howard Gardner and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi of Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, Calif.—on a 10-year project to investigate adults and institutions doing “good work,” in the sense that their professional output was of high quality, socially responsible, and meaningful to them.

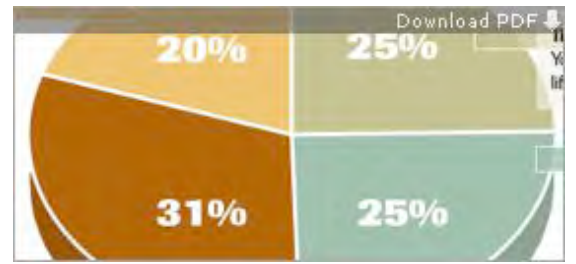
Curious to see how a sense of mission develops earlier in life, Mr. Damon set out to survey and interview young people in five different communities, which he does not name. They include: an inner-city community on the East Coast, an affluent suburb on the West Coast, a small Southern town, and two diverse cities set in agricultural regions. The John Templeton Foundation of West Conshohocken, Pa., and the Thrive Foundation for Youth, based in Palo Alto, Calif., are underwriting the 10-year study, which began in 2003.

### **Failure to Launch?**

William Damon led a study that involved surveying 1,200 young people ages 12 to 26 in five U.S. communities and conducting further, in-depth interviews with about a quarter of the group. Based on that research, Mr. Damon classifies adolescents and young adults into four categories, which he believes can be applied across the board to students in that age group.



Among the disconnected youths the researchers came across were people like Tommy, an 18-year-old from Pennsylvania, who tosses a coin to select his college courses and is candidly unbothered by his lack of goals or ambition. (Mr. Damon does not give many of his subjects' last names in the book.)



SOURCE: *The Path to Purpose*

Mr. Damon places Jessica, now 27, somewhere in the middle of the spectrum between disengagement and leading a purposeful life. An academic and athletic standout, she cannot escape the feeling that "everything I've been doing my whole life has been for someone else," and she shrugs off job offers to travel and find herself.

While young people in the 1960s may have exhibited similar feelings of alienation from society, their dissatisfaction was also tinged with optimism and idealism, Mr. Damon said.

One study he cites, for instance, shows that, from 1966 to 2002, interest in political affairs among college freshmen dropped from 60 percent to 30 percent.

Mr. Gardner of Harvard agrees with Mr. Damon's assessment. He said rapid societal changes, the "defrocking of heroes by the media," the new digital media, such "shocks" as the Watergate scandal of the 1970s and the 9/11 attacks, as well as other trends and events may have exacerbated the difficulties young people face in finding a life's passion.

"My own impression is that, particularly in the 21st century, many young people have extreme difficulty in 'identifying' [in the psychological sense] with their elders, and this makes the spark to which Damon refers more elusive," Mr. Gardner wrote in an e-mail message.

That's not to say that committed young people don't exist. Apart from the general survey, the researchers identified and interviewed 12 young people with an unusually strong sense of purpose in life in an effort to ferret out factors that made a difference in their development.

One of those people described in the book is Nina Vasani, a 19-year-old West Virginia woman who was inspired, at age 5, by a throat-cancer victim to launch a lifelong campaign against the disease. She founded and became president of a teen-oriented offshoot of the American Cancer Society, won a national science competition, hosted a radio show, and became West Virginia's Junior Miss, among other accomplishments.

### **Implications for Education**

Mr. Damon concludes from his study that schools, communities, and parents can do much to reverse the malaise that plagues many young people. In the classroom, for instance, he said teachers can show students how the skills and content they are learning are useful and share stories of how they found their own callings.

But the author's main target in education is the current emphasis in schools on testing



students, exemplified in part by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. He criticizes that trend for narrowing the curriculum and imposing what he sees as shortsighted educational goals on students.

"Unfortunately, all the emphasis on high-stakes testing has squeezed out time for guidance, the time that teachers can take to impart the usefulness and meaning of the skills they teach, activities like writing for the school newspaper or joining the French club," Mr. Damon said in an interview. "Not every kid is going to find meaning in the three R's. We are single-mindedly focusing on test scores as if the test scores in and of themselves are some kind of important goal for education."

Outside of schools, Mr. Damon offers praise for youth-building efforts like the Search Institute, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit organization that works with schools and communities to identify and strengthen community assets that can promote healthy psychological growth for children and adolescents.

He says parents can contribute at home to children's developing sense of purpose by listening closely to children's expressed interests, fanning the flames of those sparks, discussing their own careers, and introducing their children to outside mentors for career guidance.

"This is giving policymakers the tools for looking at young people with a different lens," said Richard M. Lerner, a professor of applied developmental science at Tufts University, in Medford, Mass., who shares Mr. Damon's orientation toward young people's strengths.

"I say the glass is not four-fifths empty," he added, referring to the proportion of young people that the book identifies as lacking purpose. "It's one-fifth full," he said. "Imagine what we could do if we were intentional about this."

*Coverage of education research is supported in part by a grant from the Spencer Foundation.*

## StrengthBank Inc. Lines Up With The Research and The Results

*StrengthBank® for High Schools – A Relationships Skills Initiative* is an integral part of developing communities of character. Qualities are developed in high school students that include morality and ethics for positive communication and true appreciation and gratefulness that engenders patriotism. When the school-to-work relationship gap is bridged communities are stronger, more productive, and are what keeps America strong for future generations. Great relationship skills are foundational to the high impact life. Kids used to get them “over the ironing board” or with “cookies and milk” or a game of toss after school... the world has changed and education must be on the forefront of the change, willing to reach them so that they “hear.”

The foundation for the high school initiative is StrengthBank®- each person's inborn, designed bank of strengths that when used as designed creates possibilities for more healthy relationships. StrengthBank® is a relationship map that uses solid, well-researched principles in a clear and uncluttered application, a usable process for better relationship strategies. The principles draw on and expand the work of Abraham Maslow, Kurt Lewin, and Gordon Allport to name a few.

None of us has learned relationships in a formal way. Mostly, we have waited until life taught us or we needed to figure them out to do something or get something we wanted. Perhaps only then did we attend a seminar or seek counseling to learn how to get along with others better. Even then, we typically focused on how to “make” others do it our way or “learn to live with it” rather than learn true relating skills.

Notice management or leadership topics and the preponderance of relationship issues. What it comes down to for teenagers is: stellar academic skills are an important part of the high school experience but

The Wisdom of Simplicity:

- A two-sheet map used to “work-out” any situation on the spot...
- Volunteers join the ranks of just-in-time mentoring, before the issues get big and the consequences create obstacles.
- Not another curriculum, test sequence,, gimmick, or fad. Instead, talk groups that are directed, fun, and loaded with positive power.
- Each student has the opportunity to “talk things out”so each can make scholastic excellence relevant and marketable.

- Every human being simply wants love and to consistently know acceptance and worth. Keeping the “main thing” thought-out and functional is the “main thing.”

**Comments about a Fox News report on “self-esteem” education from The Wall Street Journal, *Online Opinion Journal*, March 8, 2002. StrengthBank Inc. lines up with the critics.**

A teacher sends a “magic box” around class, tells the students to look inside and answer the question: “Who is the most special person in the world?” The answer they’re supposed to give—“Me”—is a no-brainer. The box has a mirror in it. This reminds us of a poem we once wrote called “Ode to Myself”:

It started when I was a child  
I took a mirror from the shelf  
I gazed at my reflection  
And exclaimed: “My God! I love myself!”

I wooed myself with roses  
And I wrote me sentimental letters  
I found my love kept right on growing  
As I got to know me better

I shared my first apartment  
With myself; my parents disapproved  
They said I was too young  
For a commitment, but I was unmoved

My love for me’s sincerely felt  
Not superficial, false, or forced  
But all the same, it’s practical—  
I won’t be widowed or divorced

Oh, I get angry now and then  
Myself and me will start to fight  
But always I make peace with me  
Before I go to bed at night

Some people, when they’re by themselves  
They get so lonely they could cry  
Not me—I find companionship  
And comfort with myself and I

Of course, we never had self-esteem training in school. We're an egocentric autodidact—or, to put it in layman's terms, our self-esteem is self-taught.

***The original discussion : Thursday, March 07, 2002 By Catherine Donaldson-Evans follows:***

...Such self-esteem building programs have become widespread in public schools across the country, and are widely praised by supporters. But they have also been slammed by critics who call them ineffective at best, and perhaps even harmful to students' well-being. "It promotes too much self-absorption and focus on the self," charged Dr. Charles Elliott, a psychologist who co-authored *Hollow Kids: Recapturing the Soul of a Generation Lost to the Self-Esteem Myth*. "It can even run the risk of promoting narcissism." Elliott, his wife and co-author Dr. Laura Smith and other opponents say that's because self-esteem programs rely on exercises that lavish empty praise on kids, whether they've earned it or not. "This is linked with the feel-good movement," Elliott said. "It's very dangerous. That's part of what drug and substance abuse and grade inflation are all about. Research says the most important thing is to learn delayed gratification and frustration tolerance."

Most public schools in the country, as well as a number of private Catholic schools, currently have some form of self-esteem curriculum for children as young as 5 or 6, and as old as 17 or 18. The movement, which took hold in the early 1980s and has since grown, began with the goal of combating teenage ills like violence and delinquency, unwanted pregnancy, high dropout rates, and chronic absenteeism. "I was looking for a way to keep kids out of trouble," said Robert Reasoner, a forerunner of the movement and author of *Building Self-Esteem*, one of the first curricula used. He maintained the programs have reduced discipline problems in school districts by 50 to 75 percent.

***Critics questioned those figures, however. [StrengthBank Inc. falls into the critics corner. That is why it is presenting StrengthBank® for High Schools A Relationship Skills Initiative.]***

"People used to think that low self-esteem was associated with drug abuse, violence — the truth is the literature on that is a little bit thin," Elliott said. "But overly inflated self-esteem and narcissism appear to be huge risk factors." Reasoner, currently president of the International Council for Self-Esteem, contended opponents are out of touch with what is going on in schools today.

"Many of the criticisms written are relating to programs that are well outmoded. Ten or 15 years ago, there were some that weren't based on

accomplishment, and focused primarily on helping kids feel good about themselves. Those weren't complete."

Reasoner agreed one-dimensional "I am wonderful" exercises are futile. Instead, he said, successful self-esteem lessons aim to develop five components within children: a sense of security, identity, belonging, purpose, and competence: "Healthy, authentic self-esteem is a feeling of self-worth and a feeling of competence," he said. "You can't just have feelings of worth without competence; that leads to conceit and defensive self-esteem."

Still, skeptics aren't convinced every curriculum is multifaceted and helpful, and say there's no real way to regulate how a teacher or school incorporates the lessons.

"These programs are not all perfect," said John See, a spokesman for the American Federation of Teachers. "It's true that kids do better when they believe in themselves. But if the programs separate achievement from self-esteem, whether they do well or not, that's not good." See said the best way to improve students' self-esteem is "to set high goals and help them reach those goals ... We don't direct a lot of our attention to self-esteem programs; we focus on raising standards." **[Exactly where StrenghBank Inc.'s program focuses - combined achievement in healthy relationship with others]**

The movement has extended beyond schools and into homes — where, Smith believes, baby boomer parents have avoided negative encounters with children out of guilt over divorce or other difficult family situations. "You want to have the time with the kids be positive," she said. "Parents don't want to set limits or say no. She said it's important for teachers and parents to strike a middle ground, so children understand true self-confidence doesn't come easily. "You don't get self-esteem by saying, 'Aren't I wonderful?'" said Smith. "You get self-esteem by doing good work, being good to other people and being appreciated for who you are."

From *Principal Leadership*

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### **The Art of Personalized Learning**

Creativity is often reserved for the traditional arts, but personalized learning is an art of its own. By J. Eva Nagel and Patti Smith

Rather than describing the arts in the traditional way, they can be viewed as the creative gesture out of which connections and meaning emerge to change the culture of a high school. The creative attention generally attributed to painting, drama, dance, and music can enliven other aspects of the school day. This creativity can have a strong effect on the students' sense of belonging and identity development and on the spirit of the entire school. It could result in decreased violence and bullying and increased tolerance and school spirit.

Educators in large comprehensive high schools can increase their students' feelings of belonging and connectedness by bringing a creative approach to the everyday things in schools. A new art form of personalized education is born out of the needs students have to be treated as individuals. Out of creative personalization a community of care arises. Traditional arts, underestimated for their ability in actively engaging students in academic pursuits, provide illustrations for developing this new art. Everyday events using traditional arts and Side by Side, a youth leadership program, characterize this new art form.

The current challenges in high school reform are framed by the recommendations in *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution* (NASSP, 1996). Several of these recommendations demonstrate how the practices discussed here are aligned with research-based suggestions for improving high schools.

### Art and Community

Let us first examine what we mean by art. Dewey says, "The actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience." Almost 70 years ago, he urged us to "restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience" (Dewey, 1934, 1963, p. 1).

The art that Dewey spoke of can be anything if its aim is quality: striving for excellence, searching for meaning. Langor (1989) writes, "Learning is a process of re-imagining the world. Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling" (p. 40). Eric Booth, faculty member of the Julliard School, defines art as making things, exploring things others have made, and bringing the skills gleaned from making and exploring into daily life. In life we are always making things, our connection to others, that tempt us to explore things others have made, their connection to us.

Breaking Ranks emphasizes these connections: "A high school will regard itself as a community in which members of the staff collaborate to develop and implement the school's learning goals" (NASSP, 1996, p. 89). Why is community building so important? Sergioivanni (1994) asserts that the need for community is universal. This includes "a sense of belonging, of continuity, of being connected to others and to ideas and values that make our lives meaningful and significant—these needs are shared by all of us. Their loss, for whatever reason requires us to search for substitutes which are not always functional" (p. xii).

The growth of a caring community is essential to developing resilience. Research from the Developmental Studies Center in Oakland, CA, shows that increases in sense of community are causally linked to concern for others, democratic values, altruistic behavior, and enjoyment of helping others learn (Schaps, Lewis, & Watson, 1997).

The quality of a community is determined by the amount of positive attention that is given to the simple, yet essential, human encounters that happen everyday:

The principal and everyone else responsible for the high school must create a climate favorable to education, whether it occurs inside or outside the main building, and do everything possible to sustain that climate (NASSP, 1996, p. 29).

Creating a favorable climate for personalized learning and the means to sustain it involves developing techniques. The following four everyday occurrences can be transformed into artistic events that explore techniques that deepen the experiences of the community as a whole and its individual members.

## **The Art of Speaking and Listening**

Breaking Ranks: "Teachers will convey a sense of caring to their students so that their students feel that their teachers share a stake in their learning" (p. 21).

To understand another's point of view we need to listen first. To be understood, we must speak. Art is about listening and speaking. Actor and social activist Augusto Boal (1982) says that the difference between a monologue and a dialogue is the difference between a dictatorship and a democracy. The ability to engage in conversation and dialogue is essential to a democracy and to any

community. Most young people have a longing to be truly listened to. They often feel like Emily in *Our Town* who comes back from her grave to circle the living, crying, "Oh, Momma, just look at me one minute as though you really see me" (Wilder, 1938).

A study (Nagel, 1999) asked teenagers who listened to them and what mattered in their lives. The majority of the respondents spoke of not being listened to and expressed a longing to have an adult to talk to about important life issues. They said, "Schools don't relate; they don't teach what matters," "I talk to my family, but they don't listen," "There is no time to talk," and "People our age have no practice talking about these things."

One simple technique educators can use is to have conversations with groups of students and with individual students. School leaders can share personal anecdotes, such as challenges they faced earlier in life. This activity is a form of storytelling that draws from the long-existing oral tradition of passing on wisdom and caring. Modeling appropriate levels of disclosure, something students need to observe in the tell-all talk-show atmosphere that currently exists in the United States, is a challenging goal for faculty members engaging in these interactions.

Music can also provide opportunities for dialogue. Ruth Mickelson, principal of the Yuba County Court School, explained her love of music as a vehicle for creating harmony from dissonance. She taught leaders from two warring gangs to play a Mozart sonata on flutes. When playing music, they were at peace (Smith, 1998). Advisor-advisee programs can use life stories in texts to spark conversation. Another technique, used in *Side by Side*, is the exercise *A Conversation in Color*. This is a collaborative activity in which two participants use pastels to draw a picture together silently, with no previous planning, and then discuss what happened. This is a dynamic, interactive experience of relating to each other.

#### The Art of Building and Maintaining Relationships

*Breaking Ranks*: "A high school builds itself on a series of strong and positive relationships. . . . These relationships start with the ways in which teachers, students, and others in the school relate to each other and continue through the links that the school forms with parents, public officials, community agencies ...and others on the outside" (p. 88).

At the heart of building a community of care is making connections, forming and sculpting relationships as artistic creations. Relationships develop out of



effective listening and speaking. Relationships with parents, teachers, and peers are of primary importance to adolescents. The more growth-fostering interaction we have, the better psychological health we will display. "Being in relationships, empathetically sharing with another and maintaining the wellbeing of relationships functions as important motivations for action, as well as a sources for self-esteem and self-affirmation" (Kaplan & Klein, 1985).

Identity development, considered the pivotal task of the adolescent years, involves a developmental process of integration, differentiation, and expansion of cognitive capability leading to increased self-mastery. This development occurs on an individual level but within the social context of family, peers, community, and culture. Mentoring is an effective way to create intergenerational connections. Hearing about the crucial junctures of others' lives, especially their elders, can help students to put their own lives into perspective. Side by Side uses a structured process of exchanging life stories to build trust. In addition to cultivating relationships, these sessions increased students tolerance for ethnic and social difference.

#### The Art of Serving the Common Good

Breaking Ranks: "The high school will require each student to participate in a service program in the community or in the school itself that has educational value" (p. 89).

Weaving the tapestry of the community through considerate deeds and useful, meaningful tasks, we craft a culture of care. Opportunities for personalized learning experiences are created and deepened when students become involved in service. Students expand their capacities as projects and relationships cross customary social and academic boundaries.

We know from tragic events that have occurred in high schools that many students face isolation and its repercussions. Service has been repeatedly shown to be an antidote to this sense of isolation. Service can be organized or unplanned as long as it exemplifies an attitude of respect that is continually reaffirmed and fostered by all members of the community.

Still more research has demonstrated that serving the common good helps students develop a sense of civic and social responsibility and increases their belief that they can make a difference. Teachers and students report that service to the community results in higher levels of mutual respect and stronger academic performance (Billig, 2000). It has been suggested that when young people use their talents to affect other people's lives they strengthen their own

identities. Kurt Hahn, the founder of Outward Bound, thought students learned best when in service of others. Thousands of adolescents have experienced the benefits of community while on an Outward Bound adventure or doing the service component of a school-based learning expedition. What if schools were organized so students felt a sense of adventure and commitment to a task, to themselves, and to one another?

Service comes in many forms and many sizes, but it is always an art form. It connects learning to life, motivates action and thinking, stretches people's capacities, and shapes lives of hope and optimism. We can look for each student's "island of competence" (Brooks, 1992) and support the student in sharing that competence with others. The art is in building an authentic community and in being creative enough to find the competence of each student.

#### The Art of Reflecting

Breaking Ranks: "The manner in which a school organizes itself and the ways in which it uses time create a framework that affects almost everything about teaching and learning in the school" (p. 44).

All art is the artists' reflection on life. Yet students have practically no time to reflect on their learning. Moving from class to class, they have no thread to hold their experiences and connect the content of learning. They need pauses to assimilate experiences and ideas. When and how do students share the thoughts about the learning and social encounters of the day?

According to Langor (1989), reflective or mindful learning involves receptivity to change, alertness to distinction, sensitivity to difference, awareness of multiple perspectives, and ability to stay in the present moment. She believes that we shape experience through intensive perception. By reflecting on the learning experience we actually create new options.

Ideally, students should have time to reflect at the end of every experience. Soliciting students' reflections at the end of a lesson demonstrates that students' input is important, and enhances the respect necessary in a strong community of care. Another way educators can foster reflection is to encourage students to write in journals, which reduces stress and trauma (Pennebaker, 1990). Other forms of self-expression include poems, collages, photos, paintings, and drama. The art of reflection replenishes energies, opens minds, and builds optimism. In our busy, stressed lives, reflection is a welcome oasis.

## Summary

As we develop innovative personalized learning experiences for all students in high school, we will forgo anonymity and embrace mutual respect. Listening and speaking, forming multiple relationships, serving the common good, and reflecting transform schools. Focusing on one student enhances the entire community. And paying attention to the context in which community is being formed affects every member.

Art is often unseen; it is found in what is felt, heard, and experienced. Although schools are places for students to learn content knowledge, it is not possible to exclude the whole student from the learning experience. Students' sense of belonging influences their ability to participate in school and their ability to allow teachers to influence them. Students' ability to reflect on and relate their learning to their lives increases their ability to participate in their education. Knowing themselves to be members of a community with something to contribute increases their self-confidence, hope, and motivation.

Each of these arts is interwoven with the other three. The art of listening and speaking enhances relationships, the art of reflection adds depth to serving the common good, and the art of serving boosts listening and speaking abilities. These arts all encourage a community of care in which everyone reaps the rewards and we all become artists.

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Somebody to lean on

Both community volunteers and students say they have benefited from the mentoring program

By Jessica Dele"n

Star-Telegram Staff Writer

STAR-TELEGRAM/M.L. GRAY

Jeff Johnson, left, has been mentoring Jon Simmons at Colleyville Heritage High School. "I have someone to look up to," Simmons says.

Sixteen-year-old Jon Simmons used to have disciplinary and academic problems.

Now the Colleyville Heritage High School sophomore has stopped cutting class and has improved his grades. And it's all thanks to a mentoring program sponsored by his school.

"I have someone to look up to," Simmons said.

Other Northeast Tarrant County schools have developed similar programs in hopes of helping students such as Simmons. The mentoring programs can feature one-on-one relationships in which an adult serves as a sounding board for the student or consist of adults advising groups of students about academics and life after college.

Regardless of the format, the programs all serve the same purpose.

"The real mission behind this is to connect with the students and show them we care," said Randy Cobb, principal of Richland High School in North Richland Hills.

Simmons and students at Colleyville Heritage and Grapevine high schools are involved in one-on-one programs. Students and mentors meet weekly and do homework or a community service project.

At these schools, mentors don't usually advise the students, said Robin Davis, safe and drug-free schools coordinator at Colleyville Heritage. They're there to listen to the students.

That's the approach Jeff Johnson, who works as a worship leader with church youth groups, took when he began mentoring Simmons. They have attended church, gone to Six Flags and hung out at Starbucks.

"You can't really tell the kid what to do," Johnson said. "You have to get involved in their life. "

Other schools use a different format. For example, teachers serve as mentors to a group of students at the Birdville and Northwest school district campuses.

At Trinity and L.D. Bell high schools, community members volunteer to mentor an entire group of students. The mentor, along with a

teacher, follows a curriculum designed to develop character and leadership skills.

Carla Park, a counselor at Bell, said the program makes the teens aware that they have someone in the community on their side.

"They know if they're having trouble with something, they know I'm their advocate," she said. "I won't pass judgment and I won't do anything but support them.

But sometimes, it's the mentors who are most affected.

Burnie Vaughn, 57, an employee of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, dreamed of being a teacher. But the Vietnam War sidelined that ambition.

For the past three years, he's mentored students at Trinity and has given them advice on how to get into the job market.

"In a way, it's fulfilled that little dream I had," he said. "At least I can use my life experience and business experience to share the knowledge with the student who, in just a few years, will be out there in the workplace."

## Mentoring programs

Here are some of the mentoring programs at greater Northeast Tarrant County schools.

### L.D. Bell High School TEAMS

Mentors meet with a group of students every third Friday of the 2003-04 school year. To volunteer, call Carla Park or Sue Ann Jackson at (817) 399-3188.

### Birdville High School HAVOCC (Hawks Attaining Valuable Opportunities in Community and Career)

Teachers and staff members meet with a group of 15 to 22 students every three weeks to discuss college and career planning.

### Colleyville Heritage High School

One-on-one mentoring about once a week. To volunteer, call Robin Davis at (817) 358-4700.

### Grapevine High School

One-on-one mentoring about once a week. To volunteer, call Beth Walkup at (817) 251-5284.

### Haltom High School Buffalos United for the Future

Teachers serve as mentors to a group of 15 to 17 students about once every six weeks.

### Northwest High School Texan Advisory Program

Teachers and staff members serve as mentors to a group of about 18 students to discuss topics such as writing resumes, preparing college applications and dating.

### Richland High School LASER (Looking At Success for Every Richland Rebel)

Teachers and staff members serve as mentors to a group of about 18 students to discuss grade-appropriate subjects, from study tips for freshmen to college applications for seniors.

### Trinity High School Trojan Talk

StrengthBank Inc. completed first year talk groups format 2003-4 with 30 students at THS. Mentors meet with a group of students on Tuesday about twice a month. To volunteer, call Becky Ewart at (817) 399-3636 or e-mail her at [ewartb@hebisd.edu](mailto:ewartb@hebisd.edu).

## **Idea Tracks With StrengthBank®**

In this issue: **Positive Psychology for Ninth Graders**

Summary: New study underway to explore ways to teach positive psychology in high school and measure the results.

### **Positive Psychology for Ninth Graders**

By Martin E. P. Seligman

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded us 2.8 million dollars to teach positive psychology in the ninth grade for the next four years and learn what works. Susan Snyder described the purpose of the grant nicely in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on December 10, 2002: "[The grant is] to research whether infusing the study of positive character traits in the curriculum will help students academically and emotionally." She went on to add, "If it works, the program could become a national model to be promoted through an Education Department clearinghouse." Here's how it happened.

### **An opportunity for research**

In late May of this year, the Department of Education sent out a call for proposals as part of their Character Education initiative. They particularly want exemplary science and at last seem to be following the route that NIMH forged about thirty years ago when it lifted research in mental, illness from near-voodoo to respectable and cumulative science. My research group saw the call, we went into high gear.

### **Finding students**

First, we contacted Sharon Parker, the visionary superintendent of the Wallingford-Swarthmore school system outside of Philadelphia. Having read *Authentic Happiness* and *The Optimistic Child*, she eagerly agreed to work with us. So we fleshed out a design in which half the students in the ninth grade (from among the students and parents who volunteered, of course) would be randomly assigned to Language Arts plus positive psychology and the other half to Language Arts as usual. Each of the four Language Arts teachers would teach one section of Language Arts with positive psychology and one without.



### **Planning the curriculum**

Second, we spent the whole month of June, under the leadership of Dr. Jane Gillham and Angela Duckworth, looking over the dozens of positive psychology interventions that I have been teaching to Penn undergraduates and adapting fifteen of them for ninth graders--gratitude night, fun versus philanthropy, recrafting tedious work into flow, and others. We integrated the interventions into the ninth grade curriculum, so, that, for example, when the students read *Antigone*, they would also learn about strong families and about the strength of loyalty. The lessons will include

### **[Aligns with StrengthBank® for High Schools – A Relationship Skills Initiative’s Methodology]**

Introductions: Each student telling a story about their highest strength

Taking the VIA test for signature strengths

Interviewing a paragon of one of your strengths

Gratitude letter

Fun vs. altruism

Giving the gift of time

Turning boring schoolwork into flow

Having a magic moment

Using a talent to display a strength

Using strengths in leisure

Learning optimism

Teaching positive psychology to a seventh grader

Civic engagement using a signature strength

Gratitude night

Portfolio of Strengths

### **Measuring results**

Third, our measurement wing, under the leadership of Dr. Chris Peterson put together a battery of measures, not only to see if positive psychology prevents the usual negative suspects--depression, anxiety, absenteeism, drug use, and the like--but also to see if the interventions would increase the things that make life worth living, such as happiness and life satisfaction, flow, civic engagement and community service, and more learning. And we decided that we would follow the students until the end of high school to see if the changes lasted.

Fourth, the intervention wing under Dr. Karen Reivich devised ways of measuring the "fidelity" of the interventions to positive psychology, so we could test

whether increases in the skills of happiness were causing any improvement we saw.

### **We get the grant**

By July 11th (the impossible deadline), all was ready and we sent the proposal to Washington. We were pleasantly surprised this Fall to find out that the grant was fully funded and received the highest funding in the nation.

From Susan Snyder's *Philadelphia Inquirer* article: "The Wallingford-Swarthmore district, of which Strath Haven is a part, received the largest grant among 39 nationwide."

She found students, parents, and teachers in favor of adding positive psychology to the curriculum:

During one class, students discussed the concept of 'a pecking order' in reading *Lord of the Flies*. They said the chicken second from the bottom was likely to be the most nasty. . . .

Although such issues are discussed, [Language Arts teacher Ginny] Scott said, "often times we don't go the next step and say: OK, what about me?" She thought this character education program would help students take that step. . . .

Ninth grader Mallory Shelter, who had just discussed the *Lord of the Flies* in class, said she can envision using what she learned about character traits later in life, but said she wasn't as sure about some of the literature. "I don't know if we'll be bringing down the *Lord of the Flies* 50 years from now, but we'll be bringing that [character traits] down," Shelter said. I have been seeing remarkable changes in the undergraduates in my positive psychology courses: students realizing that they got more happiness out of helping another human being than shopping; students realizing that they should recraft their education around their strengths of kindness and fairness; students eliminating shortcuts to their pleasures. But these are just anecdotes, mere case histories. We now have the first opportunity to find in a rigorous study if ninth graders can learn positive psychology, and if these students then find themselves on the road to the Pleasant Life, the Good Life, and the Meaningful Life.

**Singing From a Similar Page but not quite as fine-tuned as  
StrengthBank® for High Schools**

A 2002 Drucker Innovation Award Entry  
**Leigh Steinberg Human Relations Institute**

Organization

Orange County Relations Council

Description

The Leigh Steinberg Human Relations Institute (LSHRI) brings together students from diverse economic, social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds from throughout Orange County, CA. The Institute is a certificate, weeklong intensive summer day program that provides advance training in human relations issues and skills. Students develop a deeper awareness of issues affecting youth by participating in discussions, presentations, simulations and interactive activities. The Institute aims to prepare young people to be leaders who will help in creating and sustaining a human relations program at their school, and be involved in their community.

Organization

The Orange County Human Relations Council (OCHRC) was created in 1991 to provide programs to foster mutual understanding among residents in order to make Orange County a better place for all people to live, work and do business. The Council provides proactive inter-ethnic relations and violence prevention programs in schools and communities throughout Orange County.

Challenge

Over the past ten years, schools have experienced an increasing number of bias related incidents, name-calling, school violence and hate motivated behavior. A lack of inter-ethnic communication, cohesion and a sense of community on campus made effective change difficult. Often conflicts, discordance and apathy resulted from a lack of awareness and empathy about other's experiences and differences. This level of insensitivity combined with a lack of student participation in schools and communities and limited access to educational and community resources were formidable challenges. A program was needed to emphasize the development of emotional competency through understanding different perspectives, cultural and personal experiences, and as a foundation for social bonds among people.

Resolution

The goal of the Institute is to strengthen human relations in Orange County by developing awareness and leadership among youth to promote a safe and inclusive community that is respectful of society's diversity. The main way this is accomplished is through increasing student involvement in schools and

communities, implicit in this involvement is increased awareness and sensitivity, access to information and resources and skills acquisition in the form of speaking engagements, facilitating, interviews and project planning. For example, in summer 2001 nineteen students spent a week learning about globalization and gained the skills to examine different products for labor practices, environmental impact and manipulative marketing tactics used to popularize brand names. That same summer twenty-two students explored gender, culture and beauty and gained an understanding of what social constructs are in relationship to the idea of nature vs. nurture. These critical thinking skills easily transferred into the daily lives of students as one noted, "I started analyzing people's stories at camp and began to realize that...also happened at my school. I would like to help change the situation by talking about (homophobia) more and get people to question why they are so discriminatory towards homosexuals." Additionally, students from at least five schools hosted over 50 workshops by Council staff on their campuses that involved students who would not have been exposed to Human Relations issues otherwise. In showing these personal commitments to knowledge and action students have shown they leave the Institute prepared to assume leadership roles in their school and community.

## Results

For many students this is their first experience with human relations issues. This new type of exposure has impacted lives in that it creates long-term behavioral changes in the participants. By coupling information with experiential learning the effects of the Institute are lasting. The first signs of this came when students reprioritized their values to put human relations near the top. This was evidenced in students seeking out additional training opportunities through OC Human Relations conferences, events and additional Institutes; some students even researched other like organizations to attend more trainings. Additionally, siblings of graduates began to apply and parents went to adult programs. This year, more than one-quarter of the applicants are graduates showing a long-term commitment to human relations, especially from the students who make a yearlong commitment to be involved. Furthermore, students have even based major life choices on their time with OCHRC such as the college they attend and their field of study. A year after the institute, a middle school student painted a perfect picture of the changes she experienced in saying "I used to think that you didn't always have to be a leader...but ever since (the Institute) my horizon on things has opened and I haven't been afraid to speak my mind on my beliefs. I have a lot more respect for myself and other people too."

Discoveries