

*The Secondary Education Movement, Phase II:
Redesigning Philadelphia's High Schools*

A Project of the School District of Philadelphia

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Introduction

Vision. Transformation. Achievement. Like three points of a triangle, the essence of true reform demands the presence of each of these connective points to ensure the completion of the whole. And like a triangle – three points surrounding open space – the relationship between these elements frames the perimeter for success, while allowing for freedom in developing the process for its attainment.

Educational reform at the high school level poses challenges that are exceptional to those encountered at the elementary and even middle school levels because high schools must prepare students to function effectively outside of the school system itself. High schools are not exits to doorways signaling completion, but are instead, entrance ways for students to embark upon new opportunities that will continue to shape their futures. Regenerating high schools in Philadelphia will require an ongoing evaluative process, specified accountability, and the ability to readily respond to identified gaps between proposed plans and outcomes and make timely plan modifications.

This report presents the School District of Philadelphia's (SDP) progress over the last three decades in developing strategies and initiatives to reinvigorate and improve the high school experience for all students. It serves as a resource and foundation for the District and its partners who are participating in the work of transforming high schools, and is offered in five sections:

- **Thirty-five Years of Reform** provides an overview of reform strategies that have either impacted or had their basis in the District's high schools. Although some accomplishments are highlighted, no formal critiques are offered regarding the relative success (or failure) of each; information is instead presented as an accounting for the reader's enlightenment.
- **Challenges** offers some of the fundamental concerns plaguing the District; conditions are depicted as inside and beyond the schoolyard.
- **Progress: Lessons Learned** expounds on how the breadth of reform has provided a foundation for the current work and helped to center the focus of the SDP on common threads that impact student preparedness for success.
- **Accelerating and Sustaining High School Reform: SEM, Phase II** proposes how the reform process will be manifested in regenerating high schools in the SDP. Envisioned by CEO Paul Vallas, component anchors and principles are discussed and concluded with specific action entries for each anchor.
- **The Quick-Start Implementation Plan** illustrates, in chart format, action steps associated with shaping the final work plan to carry out each of the identified anchors. In addition to the objectives, tasks, results, and timeline for each component, key partners who will work with the SDP in the implementation process are noted.

Chiefly funded through resources committed by the School Reform Commission (SRC) and the District's CEO, with supplementary funding from the William Penn and Carnegie Foundations and supported by the expertise of the Philadelphia Education Fund (PEF) and other partners, the work of reform will advance and be sustained to ensure successful transition into post-secondary opportunities for all students.

The report frames a discussion not only for urban high schools, but for all high schools that are undergoing or considering transformation. Many of the issues presented, while perhaps greater in intensity, are not unique to urban high schools and the scope of the discussion and principles can be applied to diverse educational environments, regardless of achievement, economic status, or other identifying demographic characteristics.

The Advent of High School Reform

For much of its 30-year history, the modern education reform movement has largely ignored high schools. With the exception of the occasional report or recommendation on career and technical education and workforce preparation, the emphases of national reports and blue-ribbon commissions have been on early childhood, elementary and middle grades, or issuances of across-the-board recommendations concerning curriculum, standards and assessment. But things have begun to change.

Reform at the high school level poses challenges that are exceptional to those encountered at the elementary and middle school levels. High schools are not exits to doorways signaling completion, but are instead, entrance ways for students to embark upon new opportunities that will continue to shape their futures.

Today, states, including Pennsylvania, and cities across the country are embarking on inventive new approaches to restructuring learning experiences for their high school students. Comprehensive high school reform programs and commission reports are being issued by states, including *Project 720*, Governor Rendell's and the Pennsylvania Department of Education's tactical and funding response to transforming the state's high schools, where only 44% of high school freshmen graduate on time with a college-ready transcript.¹ In its second year of operation, \$5.3 million was awarded by the state to 67 high schools during 2005-2006. Thirty new sites were added in the 2006-2007 school year.

Organizations like the Education Trust and Achieve, Inc. have spoken out on high school reform in general and about the need for a rigorous college-prep curriculum for all students in particular. Former Governor Mark Warner (VA) brought major attention to the importance of high school reform by making it the priority during his tenure as Chair of the National Governors Association (NGA). He echoed the words of Bill Gates in his speech to the NGA Summit on High Schools in February 2005 that "high schools are obsolete." He noted that practitioners and policy makers are actively engaged in redefining secondary education for the 21st Century, complete with "a new version of the Three R's: **rigorous** academic coursework, meaningful **relationships** with instructors who can help students meet high standards, and **relevant** learning opportunities through internships and community partnerships."² As the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) moves into the next phase of high school reform, it will seek to build and capitalize on lessons learned from these recent trends, as well as from its own rich history of innovative high school redesign.

For the past four years, the redefinition described by Gov. Warner has been under way in Philadelphia in a formal and comprehensive process. In November, 2002, the SRC adopted "*The Secondary Education Movement*" (*SEM*), a strategic plan targeting the following academic, instructional and environmental improvements:

- Rigorous, unified core curriculum including standardized curriculum in grades nine through eleven and city-wide course alignment

- Increased learning options enhanced through neighborhood school magnet program selections such as the International Baccalaureate Program, and the development of formal articulation agreements between universities and high schools
- Expanded academic and counseling support via increased PSAT/SAT training and testing, creation of ninth-grade academies, and
- State-of-the-art learning environments including the creation of small high schools

For the next three years, the SRC, School District CEO, Paul Vallas, and the School District's management team would be guided by these principles, as they undertook the enormous mission to advance the plan into a full-scale movement.

I. Thirty-Five Years of High School Reform

Historically, Philadelphia has embraced innovative approaches in responding to the process of advancing education. From the birth of the Philadelphia High School Academies in the late 1960's to today's *Secondary Education Movement*, the city of Philadelphia has been a laboratory for the thoughtful design and implementation of research-based high school restructuring. This rich history of educational innovation, with its resulting list of effective practices and lessons learned, has helped to inform the next phase of reform.

This section details several of Philadelphia's efforts to bring more rigor and student engagement to the high school experience. The thirty-plus year history has spawned a number of creative and influential models, including the Philadelphia High School Academies, Philadelphia Schools Collaborative, School-to-Work/School-to-Career, Children Achieving, and the School Reform Commission, an innovative approach to school management and governance.

The Career Academy Movement

In the late 1960's, Charles Bowser, then director of the Philadelphia Urban Coalition (now known as the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition), set out to make a difference for youth in Philadelphia, PA. Confronted with societal turmoil, rising high school drop-out rates, youth unemployment, and the inability by many young people – disproportionately African American – to qualify for what employers considered minimum employability requirements, Bowser began to work in cooperation with the School District of Philadelphia (SDP), the Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO) and Bell of Pennsylvania, to create the framework for what would become the model for the first career academy.

Linking academic skills to career training, the Academy of Applied Electrical Science opened at Edison High School in 1969. The following year, the Philadelphia Business Academy was started at University City High School. The third program, an Automotive Academy, opened its doors at West Philadelphia High School. The Academy model soon went national, with two programs offered in San Francisco. The success of these programs prompted the California legislature to establish “partnership academies” throughout the state.³

Career academies have evolved and increased in numbers. Since their early implementation, California has approximately 500 academies in 25 different career fields. Both Baltimore and Florida started academies in 1990; the Ford Academies of Manufacturing Science began in 1991, and Illinois created 20 state-funded academies in 1994.⁴ The National Academy Foundation (NAF) established in 1982, has grown to add more than 500 specialized career Academy partners in the areas of Hospitality and Tourism, Information Technology, and Finance, located in 40 states and the District of Columbia supported locally by over 2,000 businesses and corporations.⁵ The National Career Academy Coalition estimates that career academies have expanded to more than 1500 high schools nationwide. While use of the term may sometimes be subjective, most leading organizations have come to agreement that career academies should meet at least three parameters⁶:

- a small learning community, comprised of a group of students within the larger high school, who take classes together for at least two years, and are taught by a team of teachers from different disciplines;
- a college preparatory curriculum with a career theme, enabling students to see relationships among academic subjects, and their application to a broad field of work; and
- partnerships with employers, the community, and local colleges, bring resources from outside the high school to improve student motivation and achievement.

Following a study commissioned by Philadelphia business leaders, the independently operating sites within the SDP were consolidated under a single non-profit organization established as Philadelphia High School Academies, Inc., which was later renamed Philadelphia Academies, Inc. Currently, programs in 14 career fields operate in seventeen high schools and two middle schools, and serve approximately 8,000 students, with another 5,000 non-Academy students receiving career preparation assistance.

The Philadelphia Schools Collaborative

Before the widespread implementation of the legislatively-authorized charter schools we know today, the term 'charter' was used to denote the concept of "schools-within-schools". Begun in 1988 and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts Foundation, the *Philadelphia Schools Collaborative* (PSC) sought to enable educators and parents to "restructure" the governance, structures, instruction, parent and community relations, assessment practices and transitions into and out of their neighborhood high school.⁷

Working to implement the reform mandate of then SDP Superintendent, Constance Clayton, the plan to create "communities of learners" emerged following extensive exploratory conversations with urban high school educators. It was through this restructuring to the charter schools-within-schools concept that stakeholders would become more invested. While engaging existing comprehensive high schools in the task of full school transformation, teachers, staff, and students, as well as parents, would become connected with these 9th – 12th grade academic communities that constituted their Charters.

Charters were designed around the premise of 200 – 400 students comprising a charter unit with 10 – 12 core teachers working collaboratively with those students from their entrance into the Charter at the 9th (or 10th) grade level until graduation. Teachers would have a common prep period daily, share responsibility for a cohort of students, and develop curriculum, pedagogies, and assessment strategies. At the core of restructuring lay two aims – to create relationally rich Charters that cared for the emotional and social needs and wants of students, and also to engage the intellects and passions of educators and students.⁸

Working with counselors and teachers, the PSC sought to eliminate what was viewed as a two-tiered educational system consisting of two tracks for core academic subjects: on one track, students received challenging college-prep classes, while the offerings to students assigned to track two were decidedly less difficult. Simultaneously, they also endeavored to promote a

college-outlook culture in the District's comprehensive high schools. Through PSC's College Access Program, students could access an abundance of activities geared to address some of the stepping stones to attending college. The staff helped to register students for college-prep courses in their high schools, provided free SAT prep courses, offered college application and financial aid workshops, advised parents, and provided other supports to assist college-aspiring students.

Despite institutional challenges that included beliefs in tracking, and teachers who were wary of implementing school-based change as well as accustomed to the centralized, hierarchal system that instilled little freedom and no authority, by 1992, 81 charters had been created throughout the 22 comprehensive public high schools. Each school had a minimum of two charters, with six schools committing to fully implement the Charter model. Anecdotal evidence began to emerge including increased parental involvement, interdisciplinary meetings and teacher collaboration. Meetings that incorporated pedagogy served to stimulate teachers. As a result of conversations and findings, other supports were put in place, such as social work interns who worked with teachers to meet the needs of students. Student classes were assigned differently and with greater flexibility. For example, some students might take two classes with deep subject concentration for 10 weeks, while others had three classes per semester; still others might take four "on-site" at the school and two "in the community" through employment and/or community service.

Ultimately, however, the extent of the implementation and quality of charters varied, in some cases widely, from school to school. While endorsed by the District leadership, initial evaluations also indicated that there was difficulty in generating an environment supportive of the changes at District headquarters at all levels, resulting in the Collaborative's inability to "convince particular administrative departments to modify or rethink policies, procedures and expectations in support of restructuring".⁹ This resulted in furthering the resistance that was encountered with some school-level personnel.

During this period, the "community compact" initiative was launched in three communities across the country, with Philadelphia's selection as one of the sites. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, these compacts were to be professional development initiatives tied to the development of high standards within schools. Compacts consisted of college presidents, superintendents, teachers, and community organizations developing strategies for systemic reform, with teams of teachers from various schools involved in intensive professional development work as they developed content and performance standards, and new curriculum and assessments to ensure that the standards were met.¹⁰

In Philadelphia, implementation was designed to integrate the Compact with the ongoing work being overseen by the Collaborative. In 1991, the PSC established the North Philadelphia Community Compact for College Access and Success to advance its focus on systemic high school reform. Three large comprehensive high schools, Temple University, and Community College of Philadelphia, and a variety of community organizations worked together to help increase college readiness, enrollment, and retention. This initiative ultimately aided in forging not only collaboration and empowerment for the high school teaching staff, but provided the opportunity for the faculty of each institution to exchange ideas while developing mutual respect that had not been readily evident in their interactions.

Contributions from the PSC era generated more active involvement by parents and community members, increased recognitions and professional development and support for teachers, and modeled new opportunities that contributed to base the of educational knowledge and the policies and practices governing education within the District.

Seven years after its introduction, the PSC combined its expertise and resources to merge with PATHS/PRISM and create the Philadelphia Education Fund (PEF). A member of the Public Education Fund Network in Washington, D.C., the PEF continues its partnership with the SDP, as it contributes to the process of school reform, professional development for teachers and administrators, and improvement in the quality of public education throughout the Philadelphia region.

School-to-Work/School-to-Career

The federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) was enacted in 1994. Comprised of three separate, but related reform components – school-based learning; work-based learning; and connecting activities – the STWOA was intended to help improve students' access to knowledge and skills by integrating academic and occupational learning, integrating school-based and work-based learning, and building effective linkages between secondary and postsecondary education.¹¹ The Pennsylvania Department of Education worked through the 29 Intermediate Units (IUs) across the state to establish partnerships among the districts, with each IU serving 12 – 25 school districts, and the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) operating its own IU.¹²

Embodied within the School-to-Work (STW) movement, was recognition of the intersecting roles of the District in its relationships with employers, colleges and universities, and unions, and how each contributed to the motivation of students. Each was incorporated into the District's plan to "provide incentives to students by improving access to jobs and post-secondary education so that every student who meets the academic standards can be assured of matriculation in college or placement in a job upon graduation".¹³

Following its pioneering of the Career Academy model and Charters, the District integrated the core components of STW, known locally as School-to-Career (STC), even as it moved towards establishing new standards-based, performance-driven strategies throughout the system. The School-to-Career Leadership Council, a group of influential employers and City leaders, oversaw Philadelphia's STC system.

Beginning with a small number of students, the STC program grew to encompass dozens of career-themed small learning communities serving thousands of students, becoming one of the most influential programs of its kind in the nation. Research by Drexel University indicated that work-based learning had the potential not only to promote career preparation, but also to enhance academic skills across an array of indicators.¹⁴

The discontinuance of federal funding for the SWTOA beyond its initial five-year authorization, resulted in the crippling of school-to-work efforts across the nation, and as it approached the end of the period, the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 was signed into law. Strongly influenced by leading youth advocates, WIA's youth programs included a series of

research-based approaches that bore a striking resemblance to many elements found in STWOA and Philadelphia's STC system.

Near this same time, the SDP established the Philadelphia Youth Network (PYN) to sustain STC principles beyond the end of the STWOA federal legislation. Philadelphia's former School-to-Career Leadership Council became the foundation for the creation of the new WIA-required Youth Council, and PYN was selected to staff Philadelphia's WIA Youth Council and to manage WIA youth funds available to Philadelphia.

Through the WIA's strong youth development platform, the Youth Council became a national leader in building a citywide system of youth workforce development that promoted work experience, academic achievement, and preparation for college and careers. Working together, the Youth Council and PYN created WorkReady Philadelphia, a coordinated citywide effort to create more workplace internships for youth; instituted the Philadelphia Youth Transitions Collaborative; and forged strong working relationships with the School District of Philadelphia to continue to build programming that advanced both workplace preparation and academic excellence.

Children Achieving

The implementation of school reform does not occur within a vacuum. Strong leadership, collaborative engagement, a system of checks-and-balances, and understanding and responding to the prevailing atmosphere – both political and cultural – all play a role in determining the potential for success. *Children Achieving*, introduced in 1995 under the direction of Superintendent David Hornbeck, became one of the most comprehensive and defining systemic reform initiatives in the urban school environment. Designed around achieving a ten-point reform agenda, the District was reorganized into 22 clusters of elementary, middle, and high schools aiming to increase site-based decision making. Content standards were also a cornerstone of the initiative. Performance standards which were defined at the fourth, eighth and eleventh grades, also asked teachers to infuse “cross-cutting competencies” – skills and values in technology, multicultural competence, and communication – in all content areas.

Ambitious in nature, the plan structure to “do it all at once”, while optimal in concept, proved to be challenging in its implementation. Strategies that were comprehensive in scope to help all children, did not fully address the particular needs of middle and high schools with substantive actions to aid teachers. Evaluators noted that teachers tinkered with the structural arrangements in areas such as creating small learning communities, interdisciplinary curricula, project-based learning, and service learning. They further noted that high school faculties expanded opportunities for students to participate in internships and service learning, but were less successful at making classrooms more challenging learning environments or stimulating deep changes in instructional practice.¹⁵

What was not fully accomplished in execution still served to shift the paradigm of thinking about school reform. Gains in improved elementary student performance, and the introduction of full-day kindergarten and early literacy programs were also realized. In the report commissioned by the Children Achieving Challenge, evaluators concluded that the reform effort raised

expectations for Philadelphia's children; it forced citizens to recognize the sobering realities of public education in Philadelphia and to debate its future.¹⁶

The School Reform Commission

Ideological differences notwithstanding, legislative influence and action are subject to become more exacting in the presence of sizable school budget deficits that threaten not only the process of education, but the constituency's ability to fund it. Coupled with then yet-be-proven reforms and declining student performance, such were the District conditions in 2001 when then-Governor Tom Ridge and Pennsylvania legislative leaders pressed for market-driven models of education.¹⁷ Viewed as an invigoration to the existing system of public education, the Governor precipitated what would lead to a resounding shift in the Commonwealth's largest school district, when amid continued fiscal and educational concerns, the Pennsylvania Department of Education classified the SDP as one in "financial distress" and launched what has been characterized as "one of the largest educational experiments in the country".¹⁸

In December, 2001, the Commonwealth dissolved the nine-member Philadelphia Board of Education, replacing it with the five-member School Reform Commission (SRC). Plans to privatize many of the District's management functions and turn over sixty of the low performing schools to Edison Schools, Inc., were revised following an uproar from the community regarding both the provider selected and the process. Negotiations yielded a compromise in the selection of SRC members, with three appointees by newly-appointed Governor Mark Schweiker and two by Philadelphia Mayor John Street, to oversee the District. In turn, financial commitments were made by both the Commonwealth and the city of Philadelphia for additional funds to address some of the District's critical financial issues.

In July 2002, the SRC hired Paul Vallas, former CEO of the Chicago Public Schools, to lead one of the largest school reform efforts in the history of public education. Mr. Vallas and the SRC began implementing plans for academic, financial, and administrative reform. Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, a diverse provider model¹⁹ sought by the Commonwealth and the SRC produced five-year contracts awarded to three for-profit and two non-profit corporations, and three-year contracts granted to two universities for the oversight of 46 schools. In addition, an internal Office of Restructured Schools was established to manage 21 schools. The remaining 216 schools were comprised of 160 traditional District-run schools, 46 charter schools, and 10 magnet schools.

In 2004, the SRC established its Declaration of Education^a. A collection of beliefs, visions and goals to be achieved by 2008, specific segments of the mandate reflect goals that are exclusive to high schools: Average SAT[®] and ACT[®] scores will meet or exceed the national average; 85% of all high school students will graduate; 80% of graduating seniors will enroll in post-secondary education institutions; and 100% of all high schools will offer honors and Advanced Placement courses. In addition, 80% of all students in grades 3-11 will perform at or above the proficient level in reading, mathematics and science, and disparity based on race, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status will be less than 10 percentage points on all academic measures²⁰.

^a See appendix for full copy of the Declaration of Education.

Table I depicts the eras of reform and highlights the key attributes of each period.

Table I

High School Reform within the SDP

<i>Career Academy Movement</i>	<i>Philadelphia School Collaborative</i>	<i>School to Work</i>	<i>Children Achieving</i>	<i>School Reform Commission</i>
1970 to 1980's	Mid 1980's to Mid 1990's	Mid to Late 1990's		2001
Launched the creation of the Academy Model	Introduction of Charter Model	Integration of academic and occupational learning	Clusters designed for site-based management	Historical comprehensive approach to reform
Small learning communities focus	College Access Program	Helped forge partnerships between employers, colleges, and high schools	New paradigm in school reform increased awareness and expectations	Diverse Provider Model
College-prep curriculum with career themes	Improved teacher recognition and professional development	Cluster Resource Boards	Foundation for equity in education	Secondary Education Movement
	Community compact partnerships			Declaration of Education

Clearly signifying a shift in how education would come to be viewed and defined, the SRC presented a process of new management for the District. Through its hands-on involvement, public discourse, and strategic approaches, it further advanced the premise that the new structure also brought with it high expectations and accountability that would resonate throughout the District in spurring a turn-around of the beleaguered system.

II. Challenges

“Makes me wanna holler; throw up both my hands”

– Marvin Gaye

Families in crisis. Violence in, on, and around city schools. Juvenile drug abuse. High-risk behaviors. Economic instability. Insufficient educational preparation, performance and outcomes. Out-dated, obsolete, or inadequate facilities.

Factors impacting the performance and outcomes of students at the high school level are myriad, widespread, and complex. The eighth largest school district in the country, the SDP annually enrolls more than 190,000 total students which, during the 2005-2006 school year, was comprised of 65.5% African-American, 14.5% Hispanic, 14.2% White, 5.3% Asian, and .2% Native American students.²¹ And, in many cases, they reside in disenfranchised and economically disadvantaged communities.

During the 2003-2004 school year, over 57,000 ninth – twelfth grade students, many unprepared for the rigor and challenges awaiting them as they prepared to reach and pass through the ranks of graduation, were enrolled in 53 high schools^{22,b}. According to Philadelphia Safe & Sound's 2005 Report Card²³, in 2003-04, the average public school student's^c SAT[®] score of 826 was 24 points below the average score of 850 in 1996-1997. Furthermore, for 2003-2004, the gap between Philadelphia students' and Pennsylvania students' average scores was 177 points. According to studies conducted by Research for Action:²⁴

- The percentages of students scoring in the proficient and advanced categories in reading increased by 14-15 percentage points from 2002 to 2005 for 5th and 8th graders. In mathematics, the proportion of 5th graders' scoring proficient or advanced jumped almost 27 percentage points over the three-year period while 8th graders' scores increased more than 31 points. At the 11th grade level, however, scores did not improve.
- Overall, absolute score levels remain low: on the 2005 PSSA tests, 37 percent of the district's students scored proficient or advanced in math and 35 percent did so in reading. In addition, the number of schools meeting all of their NCLB-mandated Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets went from 22 in 2002 to 160 in 2004, then dropped back to 132 in 2005 when state AYP targets became more stringent.

Inside the Schoolyard

The Environment

Students possess an array of social and economic backgrounds, and public schools – by their very nature – are bound to accept all students eligible to enroll. According to the National Education Knowledge Industry Association, “School buildings are a tool in the enterprise called

^b Includes five middle schools with 9th grade students.

^c Based on report's presentation, it is assumed that the figure of 826 is based on senior students taking the test.

learning and, like any tool they can help or hurt the enterprise. We can't control all the influences that affect a child's learning, but we can control the kinds of learning facilities to which we send our children."²⁵ Thus, while educators cannot exercise choice in the characteristics and often, preparedness of the students in their classrooms, they can, and should, help to impact the type of environment that exists once children pass through the doors of their buildings. Ideally, a qualified teaching faculty, facilities with solid, efficient infrastructures, and a school climate conducive to learning and safety would await all students. Reality, however, often presents a different picture.

Twenty-seven percent of SDP high schools enroll more than 1,000 students, with 33% of those topping 2,000 students.²⁶ Over 70% of the District's schools exceed 50 years of age. Little to no capital investment in them has contributed to ongoing and in some cases, significant deterioration. In its survey, "What Every HIGH School Should Have", conducted among 30 of the District's high schools, Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) reported that of the 27 respondents, one-third (33%) of the schools reported concerns about the physical structure, and 85% of the principals noted at least one *urgent* facility need in their school.²⁷

Renovated and new facilities, however, can become merely bricks and mortar backdrops if students don't feel sufficiently secure in their school environments. Congested corridors and classrooms contribute to an academically-challenged learning climate, as well as one of unease with the potential for conflict. These conditions not only compromise student, faculty and staff safety, but also serve to impact the self-esteem of students. According to Philadelphia Safe & Sound's 2005 Report Card, while the number of reported assaults on teachers, staff, or students inside public schools from the 2002-03 to the 2003-04 school years increased by less than one percent, actual numbers are still indicative of the prevailing challenges faced in providing the District's children with a quality education – 3,126 incidents reported in 2003 versus 3,160 in 2004.²⁸ In addition to decreased academic achievement, an environment in which students feel unsafe contributes to increases in absenteeism, truancy, and drop-out rates. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports that nationally, 6 percent of 14,000 high school student respondents said they missed at least one day of school in the previous month because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school; that was up from 5.4 percent from the last survey in 2003.²⁹ In addition, perpetrators and victims may lose additional time from school due to suspensions and time needed to recover from an incident.

Achieving a balance of adult support and trained security and police presence in schools is vital in preventing a sense of schools as alternate imprisonment facilities or students as lawbreakers. Collaboration between faith-based and community partners and other agencies helps to provide essential adult support to students and staff. Increasingly, administrators, teachers and staff within the District have had to become more vigilant, paying attention to conversations, body language, and other signs that might indicate an escalating situation. School safety personnel require training that goes beyond instructions on breaking up skirmishes or ensuring that loitering students make their way to their destinations. According to a director of the SDP's Office of School Climate and Safety (OSCS), "Now a school police officer has to know psychology, sociology, instruction, (and) curriculum."³⁰

The Educators

An insufficient supply of quality teachers grounded in subject areas and a lack of quality, substantive professional development for all levels of staff are two primary gaps that exist within the District's high schools. According to the Campaign for Human Capital (CHC), an advisory team commissioned by the SDP's CEO, "Philadelphia's 'crisis' in teacher supply does not exist because we are experiencing explosive growth in either teacher retirements or student enrollments or shortages in graduates of teacher education programs. It exists because we have a revolving door through which 32% of our new teachers leave within three years and 40% leave within five years."³¹ Of the principals who responded to the PCCY survey, nearly one-third (31%) indicated that they had an instructor teaching out of certification, while 45% indicated that there are not enough available substitutes to cover teacher absences.³²

Each of these factors diminishes learning opportunities for students; the lack of substitutes also increases the instructional load for teachers who may be called upon to fill in for their co-workers. While it may be incalculable to measure the full impact of these conditions on a school, it is a safe assumption that student learning, staff preparation and time allocation, and school climate are adversely affected, and even more so when, instead of occurring infrequently, these conditions become continuous and are eventually embedded as the status quo.

The CHC, comprised of a cross-section of corporate, government and non-profit representatives, and teachers, conducted a year-long investigation of the issues contributing to academic malaise within the SDP. It identified eight core concerns which it termed Guiding Principles³³, in need of attention to improve the academic environment and ensure that highly qualified teachers in District classrooms would become the norm and not the exception:

1. Quality - seek out, hire, and retain teachers with the skills our students need to attain academic success
2. Scale – hiring must meet the needs of schools to decrease reliance on substitutes and reassignment of students into already filled classrooms
3. Equity – the least qualified teachers must stop being placed in the lowest performing schools
4. Diversity – retain and hire more teachers who understand and can work effectively with students from various racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds
5. Preparation – every classroom must be staffed by a teacher with the basic critical qualifications to do the job: knowledge of instructional content and methods, skill in classroom management, understanding of District standards and assessment instruments, ability and desire to communicate with parents, and awareness of community assets and needs
6. Support for professional development - every teacher must receive high quality, school-based support commensurate with his/her skills and needs during the first year in the classroom and continuing until proficiency is attained
7. Engagement – teachers must become more involved in real decision-making
8. Reward – more opportunities must be created that celebrate, utilize and reward the talents of great teachers

For 2006-2007, approximately 94% of SDP teachers are fully certified. More than 125 School Growth Teacher positions were created to assist all schools in “school improvement status”, and teachers will receive nearly 100 hours of training and professional development throughout the school year.

Systemic conditions within the SDP present further challenges. Gaps in effective leadership, a rapidly aging population of principals, and inadequate, meaningful professional development that engages teachers and administrators in the process of change, are barometers that document the need for internal assessments, re-structuring and comprehensive responses to conditions that pose a threat to the timely achievement of *high school reform*. New principals with strong leadership skills will be needed to implement and guide the vision for the District's renovated, restructured, and newly built high schools. Projections indicate that 30% of the current principals will be retiring within the next 3 -5 years. Locally, too few candidates are readily available or in the training pipeline to assume these critical positions.

The Enrolled: Student Performance

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) exam is one of the key measurement tools used to assess students' academic performance and progress. Tests are administered to students in Grades 5, 8, and 11, and performance is assessed at four performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. Although test scores at the 5th and 8th grade levels have shown steady improvement at the accountability target levels of advanced or proficient, 11th grade scores have not fared as well. In comparing student performances in achieving targeted levels from the 2002 to 2005 school years, in Math, there was a decrease of 0.5% percentage points (from 23.6% to 23.1%) and an increase of 1.9 percentage points (from 28.7% to 30.6%) in Reading. This is a marked difference compared to the double digit gains made in both of the lower grades for the same period.³⁴

Disengaged and poorly performing students contribute to another alarming statistic: high school drop-outs. In the SDP, more than one in four students entering 9th grade drops out within four years; the percentage of first-time 9th graders graduating in four years for the 2003-2004 school year was 54.6%.³⁵ The Philadelphia Youth Transitions Collaboration, in its recently released report, estimates that on average, 46 young people stop attending school each school day.³⁶ Contributing factors include academic non-achievement, delinquency, pregnancy, and boredom.

Of additional concern are the continued achievement gaps between the performances of African-American and Hispanic students to that of White and Asian students. For 2004, when PSSA scores were combined for grades 5, 8, and 11, and disaggregated by group, Advanced & Proficiency results in Math for African American students were 21.7% and 23.7% for Latino students compared to 51.1% for White students and 61.8% for Asian students. In Reading, performance levels reflected similar disparities: 29.1% for African American students and 26% for Latino students in contrast to 54.9% for White students and 50.7% for Asian students. The performance of economically disadvantaged students, at 25.8% (Math) and 30.5% (Reading), were also in the range of the African-American and Hispanic students' performances.³⁷ Predictably, the scores of students with disabilities trended lower, as did those for the limited English proficient group.

Beyond the Schoolyard

The affects of conditions imposed by poverty and low-income living conditions often impact the physical and mental well-being of students' readiness for learning. The most recent U.S. Census estimates show an increase in the percentage of Philadelphia children in poverty from 1999 to 2002, 25.4% to 28.8%, and the percentage of public school students enrolled in free or reduced lunches was 70.9% in the 2004-05 school year, up more than six percentage points over the prior year.³⁸

Students, teachers, and staff in the District must also contend with environments in schools, and on and surrounding school properties, that provide temptation and risk and where the continuing presence of violence has, in some cases, become a fact of life. As homicide rates in many large cities are dropping, the number in Philadelphia has increased 11 percent since 2004 – one of the sharpest jumps in the United States. In 2005, Philadelphia police recorded 380 homicides. Forty-five victims were 18 or younger.³⁹ Additional findings from the Philadelphia Safe & Sound 2005 Report Card noted that there were 2,277 juvenile drug arrests in 2004, of which 54% were for selling, manufacturing, delivery, or possession with intent to deliver illegal drugs.⁴⁰

Engaging large numbers of parents in supporting students and educators continues to be a challenge for schools, but is particularly elusive in urban communities. Parents of students may be disconnected from their child's school and exercise only limited contact with teachers throughout the academic year, with visits relegated to discipline or emergency-based issues. Reasons are varied and can range from residual memories associated with their own feelings about school when they themselves were students, to a belief that the child is the school's responsibility during the time he or she is in school, to the very real economic demands of employment to ensure that the day-to-day needs of the household are met.

A related, but different pattern, emerging over the last several years is being shaped by the increasing number of grandparents who are becoming primary parents for their grandchildren. In Pennsylvania, of the reported 204,909 grandparents residing in households with grandchildren aged eighteen and under, 80,423 or 39.2% are also responsible for their grandchildren.⁴¹ In Philadelphia County, of the 51,159 grandparents who reside in the household with their grandchildren, 21,123 or 41.3% are the primary caregivers.⁴² Assessing and understanding the needs of this tier of parents, who may also be lacking in recent information or access to resources as they seek to raise and assist their grandchildren academically, is another dimension of urban life for which the SDP may need to identify additional supports.

Each of these factors defines the landscape within and beyond the school sphere which inhibits the educational excellence that is sought for the District's students. Pervasive conditions can ultimately create a halo effect, casting a pall over even the most hopeful and optimistic members, whether students, educators, or members of the community. Effectively addressing and implementing solutions to these and other issues are tenets of the *Secondary Education Movement, Phase II*, as it gains educational momentum.

III. Progress: Lessons Learned

The School District of Philadelphia has benefited from over thirty-five years of local reform efforts and decades of national reform efforts and research. The work has deepened the SDP's understanding of what it takes to truly transform high schools so that all students transition successfully into post-secondary experiences. Decades of research and unflagging support from multiple partners have helped to lay a solid foundation for future reform initiatives. While much remains to be achieved, the SDP is moving forward with the benefits of lessons learned from its rich history of reform. Some of those lessons are briefly described below.

Integrating the Availability of School Options

High school reform in Philadelphia is not static. As evidenced by the past thirty-plus years, identifying strategies that enhance and ensure the readiness of students for post-secondary educational and career pursuits has been undertaken through a succession of administrations. Each has contributed to the reshaping of the course of education locally and in some cases, to the examination and discussion of education at the national level. Innovative vision and ideas informed the process that launched what would become the nation's Academy Model, recognized the role of teachers as front-line change agents and augmented the promotion and availability of professional development for them, and increased awareness of the link between education and the world to gain greater inclusion of business and universities as partners.

And yet, none of these components of reform were sufficient in and of themselves to meet the demands of the complex and sometimes unwieldy system that defines the SDP both in operations and the sheer numbers and needs of students that comprise the beneficiary population. In some cases, comprehensive implementation was constrained by fragmented support and a lack of full buy-in at all levels. In others, the mixed results were too dependent on subjective decisions which were difficult to sustain through the tiers of bureaucracy. Ultimately, a soaring budget deficit, PSSA scores that were among the lowest in the state, and increasing numbers of students who were not finishing high school were the primary ingredients leading to the historic takeover of the District by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 2001. In dismantling the existing school board and installing a five-person School Reform Commission (SRC), the Commonwealth sent a clear signal that it was time for a whole-scale change in the management and operation of the nation's eighth largest school district.

Key among the Commission's charges was establishing a system that could respond to the needs of all of its students from elementary through high school, and one that would ensure that students were better prepared to pursue opportunities beyond graduation and with greater numbers of them ready to do so.

The Secondary Education Movement (SEM) was established as the vehicle through which high school reform would occur, with students, parents, teachers, administrators, private industry leaders, colleges and universities, and community groups coming together to evaluate the state of Philadelphia high schools and formulate solutions to rectify issues. *SEM, Phase II* continues to unfold critical elements needed to achieve the goals of the Commission. Chief among them is integrating and managing the range of schools within the SDP – including special admission

“magnet” high schools, citywide admissions high schools, neighborhood high schools, charter schools, and specialty high schools for over-age students and students who require other options to complete their high school education – into a more student-centered operation that provides a diversity of educational options for students.

Charged with the goal of regenerating high schools, the CEO and the SRC retained central office functions within the District, with oversight provided by the administrative management team. Partnerships and models have been developed that offer students varied options throughout the District including: Educational Management Organizations (EMOs), Educational Service Providers, Charter Schools, Contract Schools, Alternative School Providers, and University-operated institutions. All schools, in effect, remain District schools, and with the exception of the targeted enrollment provisions of most Charter schools, have the same overarching goals:

- Achieve at or above the proficient level in reading, mathematics and science
- Achieve at or above the national average for SAT and/or ACT scores
- Prepare students to enroll in credit-bearing courses at post-secondary education institutions
- Embrace cultural diversity and be productive citizens

Parent and Community Outreach

Among the findings published by The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, it was noted that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to: attend school regularly; earn higher grades and test scores; have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school; graduate and go on to post-secondary education.⁴³

Engaging parents and the community in sustained, in-depth ways has been an ongoing challenge, and no reform effort within the SDP has been successful in retaining sizeable numbers of parents in active participation, although schools within the District have shown varying degrees of success. Pressures associated with societal issues including violence, gaps in services, and a burgeoning population of students from single parent homes has contributed to an increase in the involvement of community organizations in greater numbers in pockets of the District. With the merging of lines between schools and the faith-based community, more faith institutions are working with programs at school sites and developing supplementary programs at their own locations to facilitate the safety and achievement of students. Yet, much more work needs to be done to effect extensive linkages that will result in whole-scale change.

Local school leadership, in the form of a school's principal, is viewed as a critical link in establishing the school's community presence, its receptivity to parental involvement, and its connection to neighborhood communities. Parents, faith-based members, and other supporters of students and thereby, schools, have indicated that accessibility to, and the attendance of principals and other leaders at key meetings helps to affirm their interest in the group's efforts, as well as serving as direct sources of information. However, already stretched to the limit in many ways, additional supports are needed to allow for this outreach.

Through its parent-focused initiatives, the Parent Leadership Academy (PLA) and the Parent Volunteers Program, and the creation of partnerships with community-based and faith-based organizations, the District has made inroads in its ongoing work to attract and engage parents and the community. The Parent Volunteers Program, in particular, has shown promise in building relationships with parents, while helping to increase the safety corridors needed for District schools. A minimal stipend of \$250.00 is paid to participating parents and caregivers who volunteer in their child's school at least 70 hours over a ten-week period. Their duties include staffing the Parents Welcome Desk at the school or serving on a Parents Patrol which monitors students' behavior and activities in and around the school. Since the 2005-2006 school year, approximately 800 parents have received stipends and nearly 60 Parent Patrols have been organized. Other initiatives, such as education marches and rallies, violence-prevention summits, and town hall meetings have been designed to make an impact at the group level, in the hope that participants will continue the thrust in their local neighborhood environments

There is no single solution in gaining solid footholds for parent and community involvement. Varying degrees of parent availability, as well as interest, and the prevailing influences within the local community at a given time are primary determinants in how vocal, or silent, the participation. Efforts must be endorsed and resources provided from the SDP central leadership, but ultimately, initiatives must be multi-faceted, promoted by other parents, and locally-based and led to gain the participation of parents and community members.

Improved Instructional Supports

The spotlight on instruction and teachers has been continuous throughout the iterations of reform efforts and each period has had a specific focus which served to impact instruction in some way. Establishing small learning community concepts, conducting exploratory conversations with educators to implement charter schools-within-schools, and increasing professional development for teachers were strategies that defined these earlier stages. Ancillary initiatives such as the North Philadelphia Community Compact demonstrated how creative partnerships can serve to assist students and educators in increasing student preparedness, while simultaneously helping to bridge the connections between faculties of different institutions. Teachers have been resilient and in some cases, resigned to these "educational renovations", but the process of instructional change fares better for both faculty and students when teachers are engaged early in the process.

Two pivotal points in reform – the period of Children Achieving, with its focus on content standards and core curriculum, and the Secondary Education Movement (SEM) – were highly engineered in re-focusing instructional delivery. Anchored by a uniform Core Curriculum, instructional delivery within the design of the SEM is enhanced through reduced class sizes, new materials and textbooks, additional standards for graduation, and technological improvements. Although significant improvement in scores at the high school level have not yet been demonstrated in student performance, an upturn is anticipated in the 2006-2007 PSSA tests, as high school students have had more exposure to beginning reforms such as the standardized curriculum, ninth grade academies, and increased time on task. Additionally, since 2002, each year's 10th graders (who will then take the PSSA in the upcoming school year as 11th graders) have shown significant growth in the percentage of students who scored at or above the national average on the TerraNova.⁴⁴

Ultimately, the best solutions to create a culture for improved instruction are also those which are most straightforward – teacher input, providing better professional development to ensure their preparation to implement new techniques, and making sure that sufficient materials are available for use in classrooms.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

The concept of one size fits all is a poor strategy for education. Providing students with preparation to pursue alternatives beyond the traditional, four-year college path has been a staple of education and a requirement to meet the needs of society. From the paradigm shift that envisioned and instituted the Academy Model to the legislatively-driven influences of the school-to-work/school-to-career phase and beyond, there has been a continuing and interrelated effort to incorporate academic and occupational learning in ways that lead to students' preparation for success.

Through the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), careers spanning eleven fields are offered through more than 150 programs of study.^d Stressing rigor and relevance in these programs, the four primary recommendations of 2005-2006 Job Ready PA have been incorporated to yield strong program options that incorporate (1) Academic Rigor, (2) Industry Relevance, (3) Post-secondary Connections, and (4) State Leadership.

High schools border and are scattered throughout the landscape of higher education institutions which call the city of Philadelphia home, including the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, Drexel University, and the Community College of Philadelphia. The SDP's long-standing partnership with each of them has resulted in pedagogical collaboration and guidance in exploring and developing opportunities for students. One such consultation with Temple University resulted in the university's assistance in increasing the number of certified CTE teachers through teacher recruitment, education, and professional development.

Strong relationships with members of the business community have produced recommendations for curriculum enhancements to increase students' foundational knowledge and training. To elevate the quality of CTE program offerings and students' abilities to demonstrate proficiency in a career area, all programs were required to implement industry-recognized certifications. The outcomes have been significant: In 2003-2004, only 3% of CTE students statewide earned these credentials upon completion of their programs. Within the SDP, it is anticipated that 50% of those completing programs will earn their credentials by end of the 2006-2007 school year.

Partnerships, Technology, & Small Rigorous High Schools

Partnerships from a variety of sectors – business, government and community – often provide considerable direct or indirect benefit to the students of the District. In addition to their general benefit, these relationships often fill very real gaps ranging from operational support and

^d Business/Finance (29); Communications (11); Graphic Arts (05); Health (21); Hospitality (25); Construction (09); Cosmetology (03); Fashion Design (01); Information Technology (35); Manufacturing/Agriculture (11); Transportation (08)

trainings for teachers, administrators, and staff, to contributions that help students advance in their academics. The interrelationship between schools preparing students for life beyond high school and the expectations of colleges and employers requires that the District better align its curriculum to current practices to ensure students' preparedness.

As the District moves from the conventional high school model to one that, in its renewal, instills the components of high-quality learning environments, alliances must be better cultivated to take advantage of technology, exposures, and real-world applications that enable a currency of knowledge for students and staff. The long-term value of such partnerships will be realized from projects such as Sunoco, Inc.'s quarter-million dollars donation of technical equipment to re-outfit the student resource technology lab at Edward Bok Vo-Tech High School.

Newly built high schools and those restructured as small high schools must deliver rigorous courses of study to meet the District's goal of graduating students that are ready to compete. Noted for more personalized environments, increased collegiality, and the sense of greater safety, studies indicate that small schools show the most promise for raising the achievement levels of disadvantaged students, reducing achievement gaps, and increasing minority graduation rates.⁴⁵ As part of the strategic plan of the *SEM, Phase I*, in 2002, the SDP instituted the Small Schools Transition Project (SSTP), to create smaller high schools throughout the District. At that time, 38 high schools had an average population of over 1500 students, and a student-to-teacher ratio of approximately 31:1.⁴⁶ Three years later, 15 new small schools had been established.

The SRC reflected its high expectations and beliefs in the possibilities for SDP students and issued the district's Declaration of Education which, among its edicts, stated its commitment to raising student achievement through District-wide reforms and restructuring measures. Working with several leading service providers, school personnel developed and implemented an SSTP Work Plan that addressed the following points:

- Implementing the SRC's Declaration of Education and Measures That Matters, and the School District's Secondary Education Movement
- Providing instructional strategies that are intellectually challenging while directly addressing and materially alleviating any achievement gaps
- Using technology as an instructional tool to further student development and learning
- Creating strategies for maximum exposure to college preparation, including financial aid seminars, identifying the right college, completing college applications, and writing college essays
- Creating multiple opportunities for high school students to visit college campuses for exposure to university life and meaningful exchanges between students and professors
- Providing professional development to increase content knowledge and the ability to differentiate instruction and assessments

- Working with teachers to implement instructional accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities

Clearly, gaps still exist in resources – both financial and human – that are needed to reach the goals embodied in the SDP's high school reform efforts. Exploring new ways to close a deeply entrenched achievement gap, transforming wait-and-see attitudes to get-on-board energy, and a lack of widespread, sustained parental engagement are conditions that will frustrate the progress of newly minted initiatives and accomplishments. However, through constant evaluation and response, outreach to partners and the community, a commitment to support and develop its greatest investment – its people - and sticking to its documented plans, the movement to bridge a rich history of high school reform to comprehensive reform goals will result in a District that serves all its children well.

IV. Accelerating and Sustaining High School Reform: The Secondary Education Movement, Phase II

Reform at the high school level poses challenges that are exceptional to those encountered at the elementary and even middle school levels. While providing multiple high school options for student success, regenerating high schools in Philadelphia will require an ongoing evaluative process, specified accountability, and the ability to readily respond to identified gaps and plan modifications.

The *SEM, Phase I* incorporated strategies including personal learning plans, core curriculum, honors, advanced placement, and extended learning opportunities. Relationships with small school management partners helped to provide access to the technical expertise needed. The identification of multiple preparedness opportunities through dual enrollment for students through partnerships with business, community and university entities was expanded to advance and effect educational options.

Building on key components of the School District's earlier reform efforts and the blueprint of *Phase I*, input and responses from parent and student organizations, and the experience of university, community and business partners, the SDP is aggressively redesigning its high schools to provide multiple options that will ensure success for all students – including those who have not been well served by high schools in the past and have dropped out. Advancing strong academic rigor is a cornerstone of the *SEM, Phase II: Redesigning Philadelphia's High Schools*. Five overarching anchors guide its implementation: (1) *Teaching, Instruction, and Professional Development*; (2) *Effective, Accountable Leadership*; (3) *Re-engaging Out-of-School Youth & Drop-out Prevention*; (4) *Conversion to Small High Schools; Climate Change*; and (5) *Career Pathways with Rigorous Preparation for College*. Each anchor contains identified outcomes, with ancillary strategies noted as appropriate to expand upon goals.

Envisioned by CEO Paul Vallas and endorsed by the SRC, each component defines a specific section of the framework for effective reform that embraces the comprehensive needs of a school district whose size and complexity requires systemic change at each level. In implementing these changes, under *SEM, Phase II*, the SDP, sometimes characterized as bureaucratic, autonomous, and at times, inaccessible, supports the goal that regenerating education is to “no longer be viewed as another wave of reform, but instead must be internalized as a Secondary Education Movement.”

(1) Teaching, Instruction, and Professional Development

A clear course of action and shared buy-in of the vision are essential in carrying out the tenets of this reform. While demanding that the opportunity for educational excellence exists for all of its students, the process of achieving excellence within the SDP is dependent, in great part, upon school administrators, teachers, and staff who will implement the new curriculums, be accountable for students achieving ever-increasing standards of performance, and remain creative and motivated, while managing the day-to-day deliverables. In short, they are the front-line change agents critical to the transformation and achievement of the District's goals. Quality physical environments are fundamental and radical changes and upgrades, as identified, must be

made to existing buildings to ensure they are conducive to teaching and learning. Purposeful and effective leadership at the District, regional office, and local school levels are needed to ensure clarity in direction and information. It will not be enough to recruit talented, knowledgeable and committed professionals; welcoming their inclusion in the process is mandatory.

A process of shared and consistent communications, sufficient resources, and substantive, professional development will be integral to the achievement of *SEM, Phase II*.

Ideal professional development will: (1) allow for more collegial engagement; (2) embed professional development opportunities in the course of the regular work flow instead of reliance on pre-planned workshops or sessions that provide limited time for reflection and application; (3) use technology to improve access to professional development opportunities; and (4) in its planning, more closely match the developmental needs of the professional to the hiring needs within the District.

Indeed, moving from the traditional to a more inclusive, yet expansive approach to professional development could, in itself, be reformative. Castle and Watts explain that “the traditional view of teachers’ work is governed by the idea that time with students is of singular value, that teachers are primarily deliverers of content, that curricular planning and decision making rest at higher levels of authority, and that professional development is unrelated to improving instruction”. This limited view of teaching does not allow opportunities for teachers to participate in curriculum development, learn and share successful methods of reaching students, discuss comprehensive and efficient ways to implement standards, and continue their own learning.⁴⁷

Stimulating, educational, and interactive, the advent of virtual technology is the next wave that educational systems and educators must integrate in moving beyond the traditional fifty-minute lecture style. Interactive teaching, group-dynamic coaching, and project-based learning are active components in the virtual learning world. Online learning has developed explosively over the past five years. As of July, 2005, 21 states have statewide online learning programs, and cyber-schools and/or district-level online programs operate in almost every state.⁴⁸

Overall, quality instruction will:

- Create time for teachers to plan and work together in and across content areas. Lessons and units of instruction will be consistently well-planned and focused on instruction and student progress
- Ensure that professional development is aligned with the Core Curriculum, supported by professional learning communities and strengthened by the belief that all children will learn and achieve to high standards. Professional development will be tied to observable practice and follow-up intervention
- Through instructional monitoring, provide rapid and meaningful feedback and comprehensive instructional support

- Re-establish content experts at the school level to provide subject specific content and effective instructional strategies and provide leadership to improve teaching and learning
- Utilize technology as a tool to improve instruction, gain access to information, and provide improved management and accountability
- Work with labor and trade organizations to link education with necessary and appropriate career development
- Work with university partners to ensure quality teaching candidates
- Work with business partners to ensure that teachers are grounded in the 21st Century workforce needs of an increasingly global economy
- Flourish in teaching and learning-ready environments as improvements are made to the District's aging and decaying buildings. The educational program will in part, be defined by the physical environment
- Incorporate new course options such as AB/block schedules, time for student supports, and reinvention of the senior year to allow for increased pathways for students
- Ensure through professional development and monitoring that the written curriculum becomes the taught curriculum

(2) Effective, Accountable Leadership

Paraphrasing the adage, “all politics are local”, the core of transformative leadership needed to navigate the landscape of high school reform will depend on leaders **at all levels** in great part, and those at the local – i.e., school – level, in particular. Competency at managing functions will need to be superseded by the ability to look at the bigger picture, envision longer-term outcomes, and pose alternatives that may not be rooted in education tradition. Communicating effectively and persuasively with teachers and staff will impact the success of implementing new ideas. A willingness to actively seek parental and community participation will further the acceleration of improvement in students' learning and performance.

Not surprisingly, management is often masked in the guise of leadership – managing tasks, managing people, managing information – a necessary skill of those in leadership roles, but not the defining scope of leadership. As defined by Abraham Zaleznik of the Harvard Business School: Administration/management tends to focus on maintaining existing relationships and order, using proven ways of doing things, working within what people think is desirable and, of course, working harder and longer. Leadership is about taking risks, striking out in new directions, creating visions, tapping imaginations, changing the way people think about what is desirable, creating excitement about working with children and communities, building new relationships and structures and changing the existing cultures.⁴⁹

Principals in urban schools are among the realm of leaders that require skills that cut across multiple competencies. Working in environments where students and staff are often under-

resourced, under-supported, and frequently overwhelmed by outside disruptions and conditions requires a combination of leadership skills that are fluid, based in competency and evolved in practice, with a certain amount of pragmatism.

Central and regional office leadership can possess no less. For many principals, their relationships with, and connections to, District leaders contributes to the span of their leadership. While much of the responsibility for visioning the SDP's approach to high school reform lies with the CEO, the Chief Academic Officer (CAO), and the SRC, the dual skills needed to function as a decentralized unit while working within a centralized structure are the challenge of the high school principal. District leaders will need to promote a culture of collaboration for problem solving that is motivational versus controlling. In addition to clarity in communication, styles of communication must not be relegated to emails and faxed directives. Developing trust in leadership abilities is an "up-and-down-the-flagpole" process needed to engender greater success in operationalizing the District's plans.

The process of school reform is contingent upon the transformational roles of administrators, teachers, and school staff. In looking through the lens of leadership, the following represent steps that will be undertaken to help develop the full potential for accountable leadership:

- Develop strong leaders throughout the system who communicate effectively, solve complex problems, motivate teams, plan and manage change, create a climate that encourages diversity, promotes creativity and innovation, and maintains a clear focus on learning and high expectations for all students
- In addition to local development of high quality principal candidates, conduct nationwide recruitment efforts to identify high caliber prospects
- Provide opportunities for new and potential school-based administrators to build the skills essential for their success. Partner with local universities to provide courses and businesses to provide internships designed to prepare individuals to be principals in the School District of Philadelphia
- Provide mentor principals to support those in the first year of becoming a principal; develop a Principals' Academy for high school principals
- Re-establish department heads to lead critical curricular work and professional development within schools; implement certified training for department heads
- Strengthen baseline data, benchmarks for improvement, and procedures for documenting and supporting continuous improvement

(3) Re-engaging Out-of-School Youth & Drop-out Prevention

The loss of youth from the school system has escalated to alarming rates. Nationally, more than 40 percent of the student loss in high-poverty districts occurs at the 9th grade, compared with 27 percent in low-poverty settings.⁵⁰ According to the Philadelphia Youth Transitions Collaborative,

research conducted by Ruth Curran Neild and Robert Balfanz confirmed that more than 8,200 students in grades 6-12 opted to drop out of school during the 2003-2004 school year.⁵¹ Further, in recent years, six-year graduation rates for students in SDP schools range from 54% to 58%.⁵² These numbers emphasize a crisis in the District with implications that extend throughout the social and economic strata with implications for loss in both arenas. When surveyed, reasons given for dropping out were not relegated to only academic performance, but also included boredom, irrelevancy of coursework, school climate and safety, and a belief that teachers and other adults were not interested in them. Social service connections and life issues also influence the decisions of a student's continuance in school. The Neild and Balfanz study noted that 90% of students who experienced a stay in a delinquent placement facility during their high school years ultimately dropped out (while) 70% of females who gave birth within four years of starting high school also dropped out.⁵³

The consequences of these statistics is staggering when taken into full context – in addition to social and human capital losses, the economic loss to a region and society are tremendous. There is also a relational increase in social costs – the increased use of welfare and social service agencies contributes to the over-taxing strain of caseworkers with greater caseload numbers, and an over-reliance on medical and hospital facilities to deliver primary medical care. In a perverse twist, while penal system increases may be a boost to the economics of some communities, the incarceration of men and women who have floundered, due in part to the incompleteness of their education and subsequent employment opportunities, is a key factor in the spiraling destruction of communities and families. One study noted that a one percent increase nationally in high school completion rates of men 20 to 60 years old would have saved the United States as much as \$1.4 billion annually in reduced costs from crime.⁵⁴

Reducing and eradicating this loss through re-engaging out-of-school youth and drop-out prevention is a collective concern requiring a collective response. Proposed solutions to these problems are identified in the sections throughout this report. They range from smaller schools, smaller class sizes, and more meaningful connections to adults to instructional strategies that connect what students learn in school to what they want to achieve post-graduation.

In 2004, the Philadelphia Youth Council established the Philadelphia Youth Transitions Collaborative. Comprised of representatives from the SDP, city government, community organizations, and students and parents, the Collaborative worked over an 18-month period to study and analyze data; interview young people; identify cross-system strategies; and develop a city-wide campaign to address the loss of youth from the school system. In their report, released in October, 2006, an ambitious plan entitled Project U-Turn, detailed a city-wide action agenda with recommendations directed to stakeholders – the public sector, elected officials and other policymakers, the business community, parents, educators, students, and the public at large – in effect noting that everyone can make a contribution to solving this problem. In its consideration of the report's findings and recommendations, the District will pursue an ambitious plan in the coming years with several action steps to include:

- Using data analysis which identifies drop-out risk factors in the 6th, 8th and 9th grade to build effective interventions targeted at students prior to dropping out. The efficacy of targeted interventions should be tracked and evaluated over time

- Augmenting current analyses with new data sets (e.g. GED attainment, workplace history and postsecondary participation) that will provide more complete information to target interventions for struggling students and out-of-school youth
- Evaluating the quality and quantity of current offerings, and designing and implementing new educational programming for struggling students and out-of-school youth. Particular attention will be paid to tailoring and targeting educational approaches for youth with varying degrees of literacy skills and high school credit accrual as part of a multiple pathways approach
- Building an effective 9th through 12th grade continuum of experiential college and career focused activities that: expose youth to a broad range of post-secondary options; build 21st Century skills and competencies; make relevant connections between what is learned in the classroom and what is required for college and career success; and allow youth to make informed decisions resulting in solid post-secondary plans
- Creating meaningful incentives and opportunities throughout students' high school years such as summer jobs, year round internships and industry certifications that are connected to what they are learning in school
- Developing meaningful connections to adults within and outside the school build that build lifelong networks for young people
- Building capacity across city and community agencies to promote educational achievement for young people in their systems of care
- Evaluating the progress of students in accelerated high schools and those who are employing the low-literacy tool kit in accelerated high schools, Educational Options, Student Success Centers and juvenile placement facilities
- Incorporating community voices into planning, development and implementation of the new educational programming
- Undertaking a series of strategies that will elevate the importance of these issues in the minds of the public in general and of public officials in particular, including media coverage, town hall meetings, a speakers' bureau, and regular reports on the status of these young people

(4) Conversion to Small High Schools; Climate Change

Across the country, but particularly in urban areas where large schools are often located, the advantages of smaller school size have captured the attention of administrators, teachers, and parents, as well as elected officials and business leaders. Student isolation, over-crowded conditions in hallways and classrooms, greater propensity for conflicts, and a de-personalized environment are just a few of the conditions experienced by students, parents, and their teachers

in the larger high schools within the SDP. According to a survey reported in 2002 by Public Agenda, parents whose children were in large schools were more likely to report that students were alienated (40 percent to 23 percent) and bullied (41 percent to 27 percent) and likely to drop out (43 percent to 21 percent).⁵⁵

One of the most innovative concepts marrying technology, education, and the smaller high school principle occurred in the fall of 2006, with the opening of the School of the Future. A partnership between the SDP and Microsoft Corporation, the \$63 million state-of-the-art institution was designed to infuse technology into every aspect of an 'anytime, anywhere' learning environment as a means to prepare students for the future workforce and optimize their entry into a college, university, or technical school of their choice. Laptops or PC tablets are standard for all students which provides 1:1 computing in a wireless environment. Based on studies that showed that students do better with late starts, school hours are from 9:15 AM to 4:19 PM. The school's Interactive Learning Center replaces traditional library and textbook use, providing students and teachers with access to streaming media content on a variety of subjects, from a variety of content experts. Enrollment capacity is 750 students; seventy-five percent of students come from the surrounding neighborhoods and twenty-five percent from a district-wide lottery.

In 2006-2007, 29 small college preparatory high schools with enrollments of less than 700 students were introduced, expanding the District's high school options to a total of 62. Included, in addition to the School of the Future, were three other small high schools: The Academy at Palumbo, a special admission magnet school which will replicate the successful college preparatory model that has consistently placed Central High School among the top public schools in the nation for its academic standards; The Constitution High School, a city-wide admission school created in partnership with the National Constitution Center featuring a curriculum grounded in American history, law, and government that is designed to foster active civic engagement; and The Science Leadership Academy, a special admission school created in partnership with The Franklin Institute offering a college-preparatory program focusing on science, mathematics, technology and entrepreneurship. By 2008, the SDP expects to have 66 high schools and at least 20 charter high schools with an average of population of 800 students. In addition, it is projected that more than half of the new high schools will enroll less than 400 students.

These and other new, smaller high schools will expand high school choice and availability for students throughout the city, and make more exemplary school selections accessible in all regions of the city. All schools within the Small Schools Transitions Project (SSTP) will undergo general renovation and classroom modernization prior to the transition. Operationally, SSTP is designed to:

- Create small schools and/or small learning communities where students and teachers are known to each other, with cohorts of students and teachers scheduled for core courses, and where physical facilities are of high quality
- Support new innovative designs for schools based on sound theory, research and practice that increases options for students to pursue their education in a variety of settings

- Create a climate of respect and caring among administrators, teacher, students and parents that supports learning, safety, and personal growth
- Develop student-leaders and ensure that students have a role in decision making
- Establish strong partnerships with parents, colleges and universities, unions, employers, and community organizations to enrich, guide, and support high school redesign efforts
- Create collective responsibility for student success
- Develop research-based transition strategies anchored in best practices that shape a solid foundation for success in, and completion of, high school, with a special emphasis on the transitions into 9th grade and from 9th grade to 10th grade
- Implement a four-year advisory program to supplement and enhance guidance efforts and provide needed supports for students
- Create college and career centers that support the implementation of learning plans for all students ensuring access to and successful completion of AP and honors courses, rigorous field-based experiences connected to the Core Curriculum, and structured co-curricular opportunities

(5) Career Pathways with Rigorous Preparation for College

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, for the 2003-04 year, less than 70% of SDP high school graduates had plans to pursue post-secondary education: 61.4% of them indicated plans to attend a 2 or 4 year college or university; 2.2% planned to attend other specialized associate degree-granting institutions and another 4.4% had plans to attend a non-degree granting postsecondary school.⁵⁶ In addition, exposure to, identification of, and preparation for prospective careers does not exist for enough students. To augment students' knowledge of career choices while advancing academically, the *SEM, Phase II* will continue to emphasize career preparation through the SDP's Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

Industry-based certification is a portable, recognized credential and tangible evidence that an individual has successfully mastered and demonstrated skill competencies on a core set of content and performance standards in a specific set of work-related tasks, single occupational area, or a cluster of related occupational areas. Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, a new policy was implemented mandating that an industry-recognized certification be an earned requirement for completing a CTE program. Integrating academic, vocational and technical training, standardized course sequencing, and providing links between secondary and post-secondary vocational education are components that undergird the OCTE's approach in its objectives of reading and math skills improvement, program completion rates, and increased advanced academic passage rates. Students' attainment of these credentials enhances their

preparation for postsecondary studies, validates their accomplishment, and also creates validation for the rigor and relevancy of the program's content.

Crafting meaningful partnerships that result in students earning college credits, apprenticeships, and scholarship consideration not only augments students' skills, but contributes to their immediate employment options and long-term earning capacity. Creating pathways that lead to both college and work, and developing articulation agreements with universities and labor partners are integral to advancing the SDP's goals of career options for its high school students. A benchmark in SDP history was achieved on June 7th, 2006, when SRC Chairman, James E. Nevels, introduced a momentous Partnership Agreement with the Philadelphia Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO. The four-year pact is an unprecedented alliance and marks the first such direct partnership in the state by any trade union. A minimum of 250 new apprenticeship opportunities will be provided for graduates over the life of the agreement. In addition, the Council will work closely with the school district to create a curriculum that will prepare students for apprenticeships with the electricians, carpenters, plumbers and other skilled trade unions.

Access to early college opportunities has been expanded as a result of the university partnerships originated in 2003 under *SEM, Phase I*, and 1,200 students are expected to participate during the 2006-2007 year, in the Dual Enrollment Program in partnership with 12 area universities and colleges. Dual enrollment enables students to earn up to a year of college credits while simultaneously completing their high school diploma. In expanding students' options for post-secondary education and employment success, program sectors and partnerships are expected to:

CTE Programs

- Integrate academic, vocational and technical training to ensure relevancy and expand student's ability to compete
- Increase the use of technology, provide professional development opportunities to staff, and develop and implement evaluations of program quality
- Expand and modernize quality programs, and link secondary and post-secondary vocational education
- Ensure rigor and relevance of program offerings through credential audits

University and Industry Partnerships

- Expand students' awareness and exposure through on-campus experiences including class attendance, research opportunities, and mentor relationships
- Develop teacher certification courses, teacher professional development, and student tutoring and mentoring, and business management assistance
- Leverage strengths of respective institutions to support and expand District-wide reforms, while providing expertise and resources to specific programs of partnering schools
- Provide internship, externship, training and employment opportunities for students

- Work with District and schools to maintain current knowledge of business and industry expectations and practices, and recommend supplementary curriculum supports and revisions
- Lend technical expertise and guidance in assessing on-site school facilities and recommendations for improvements and innovations that will increase students' preparation
- Replicate effective industry pipeline programs such as those sponsored by Sunoco
- Build new industry pipeline programs in high growth, high demand areas such as Life Sciences, Financial Services, etc.

Summary

Vision. Transformation. Achievement. Each of these elements is present within *SEM, Phase II*, as it unfolds and serves as a road-map to identify and establish new land-marks in education. Many of the markers for effecting systemic change – core curriculum, developing smaller, more rigorous high schools, expanded use of technologies, and improving school climates – have begun to provide indicators that affirm the direction of the CEO and SRC. Supplementary funding from key foundations to our partners are further indicators that the transformative vision has struck a chord and if imperfect, is on the right track to identifying and implementing the types of progressive and bold steps needed to move this process forward.

We are encouraged by the support from multiple factions, positive feed-back, and tangible confirmation of the direction in which we are headed. The development of new and emerging partnerships such as Microsoft Corporation and the Building and Trades Council are historic and verify that the business and union industries envision our students as viable contributors in the new era of Philadelphia high school education, with bright, prospective futures as college students and employees. This effort is in no small part, a revolution and like all such movements, while there are no overnight solutions, we are confident in the long-term benefits that will accrue to each of our stakeholders – students, parents, business and general communities, the region and state. Indeed, as noted by progressive educator and author, Deborah Meier, “The trick is how to sustain interest in a reform that requires a generation to complete.”⁵⁷ Rather than being stymied by the proposition, however, we are inspired by the prospects. We invite the reader to join with us and continue in the navigational process as we progress towards full implementation of these strategies for success.

Quick-Start Two Year Implementation Plan

The Quick Start Implementation Plan which follows is in its formative stages, and must be fully developed. A work in progress, this report is intended to provide the reader with some depth of understanding of the goals and expediency of the *Secondary Education Movement, Phase II*, its applicability in increasing outputs for educational success, and how its efficacy will form the foundation for future study and evaluation. Both substantive and practical, the report and plan will serve multiple stakeholders – school administrators, teachers and personnel; students and parents; elected officials; and business, higher education, and other community partners – to inform the process of expectations, need, design, output, measurement, and policy, while reinforcing a constant: student achievement.

The following list details the abbreviations and acronyms for District offices, programs, community partners, and other entities referred to in the plan.

AFP/HOS	Academy for Principals/Heads of Schools
CAO	Chief Academic Officer
CASA	Commonwealth Association of School Administrators
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCP	Community College of Philadelphia
CFL	Center for Literacy
COO	Chief Operating Officer
C&I	Curriculum & Instruction
DHS	Department of Human Services
EPOP	Eastern Pennsylvania Organizing Project
JHU	Johns Hopkins University
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
OFELES	Office of Family Engagement and Language Equity Services
OSE	Office of Secondary Education
OSY	Out of School Youth
PCCY	Philadelphian Citizens for Children and Youth
PDE	Pennsylvania Department of Education
PEF	Philadelphia Education Fund
PFT	Philadelphia Federation of Teachers
PYN	Philadelphia Youth Network
PSSA	Pennsylvania System of School Assessment
SDP	School District of Philadelphia
SIP	School Instructional Plan
SRC	School Reform Commission
SS	Saturday School

SECONDARY EDUCATION MOVEMENT – PHASE II

**Strategic Plan to Redesign High Schools
Quick Start Two Year Implementation Plan**

Objective	Tasks	Expected Results	Lead Responsibility	Timeline
Anchor One: Teaching, Instruction & Professional Development				
1.(a) Create a roster that supports students' instructional needs	Convene a committee that will develop rostering options to support instruction based on student achievement data by school	Creation and implementation of rosters that support instruction for ALL students	OSE; C&I; Principals; Roster Chairs	Fall, 2006 Working groups established, Spring, 2007 Create rosters Fall, 2007 Implementation
1.(b) Create time for teachers to plan and work together in and across content areas.	Convene a committee to make recommendations to policy to support common planning time in all high schools. Committee should include SDP, PDE/ SRC, PFT, CASA, Business and Community representatives	Recommendations to revise schedules for the 2006-2007 school year to reflect weekly common planning time.	SDP, State, PFT, CASA	Spring, 2007 Working groups Fall, 2007 Implementation
1.(c) Monitoring the implementation of the core curriculum with fidelity	Develop processes to help Principals and members of their leadership teams to conduct walk-throughs, debrief and identify proficient/ advanced instruction and areas of needs in a manner that is consistent and ensure inter-rater reliability	Identification of proficient/ advanced instruction based on the core curriculum that can be leveraged to build capacity in the school.	SDP, C&I, Regional Directors of Instruction, Principals, Teacher Leaders	Fall, 2006
		Identification of areas of instructional need based on the core curriculum so that supports can be put in place		
		Overall improvement in student achievement evidenced by PSSA, TerraNova, Benchmark Assessments, teacher made tests and performance/project based assessments		

Objective	Tasks	Expected Results	Lead Responsibility	Timeline
1.(d) Effective use of the benchmark assessments to improve instruction		Overall improvement in student achievement		Fall, 2006
1.(e) Implementation and monitoring of the High School Plan for Content Area Literacy		Overall improvement in student achievement		Fall, 2006
1.(f) Implementation of professional development for teachers focused on 21 st Century skill standards	Design professional development strategies	Overall improvement in student achievement and post-secondary outcomes for students	Philadelphia Academies, SDP	Spring, 2007 Working groups Fall, 2007 implementation
	Build strategies into teacher professional development			
1.(g) Increased number of school connected summer and year-round internships for youth	Recruit and train employers; train and prepare youth	Overall improvement in youth engagement in school	Philadelphia Academies, Chamber of Commerce, United Way, PYN	Beginning Summer, 2007
Anchor Two: Effective, Accountable Leadership				
2.(a) Develop strong leaders who communicate effectively, solve complex problems, motivate teams, plan and manage change, create a climate that encourages diversity, promote creativity and innovation and maintain a clear focus on learning and high expectations for all students	Create an assessment center where potential leaders have an opportunity to practice skills and receive feedback. Leaders work through a process to establish goals and develop a personal development plan	Potential leaders work over a fifteen-week period at their jobs working on their individually designed personal development plans	CAO, Secondary Education Office, University and Business Partners	Beginning Summer, 2006
	Assign a peer coach to each potential leader to provide support and guidance during the implementation of the personal development plan	Potential leaders reach the goals outlined in the personal development plan	CAO, Secondary Education Office, University and Business Partners	Beginning Summer, 2006
2.(b) Partner with colleges, universities and businesses to establish a Leadership Academy for Principals/Heads of Schools (AFP/HOS)	Develop a Request for Participation for colleges and universities	Attract colleges and universities to offer courses at a reduced rate and to partner with the SDP in the implementation of the AFP/HOS	Secondary Education Office	Beginning Spring, 2007
2.(c) Advertise for the AFP/HOS	Develop and distribute applications for AFP/HOS	Attract qualified candidates	Human Resources, Secondary Education Office	Beginning Spring, 2007

Objective	Tasks	Expected Results	Lead Responsibility	Timeline
	Invite business CEOs to a breakfast meeting to obtain support for the AFP/HOS	Attract business to offer executive coaching for Academy participants	Secondary Office, Chief of Staff	Beginning Spring, 2007
2.(d) Develop AFP/HOS program components that should include a one year, school-based practicum	Building on successful experiences, lessons learned, research and best practices, design the courses and internship experiences	A clearly articulated program to develop principals and/or heads of schools	SDP, university and business partners	Beginning Spring, 2007
2.(e) Select participants for the AFP/HOS	Create a competitive screening process to select program participants	First class of 15 – 20 candidates	CAO, Secondary Office, Regional Superintendents	Beginning Summer, 2007
2.(f) Improve collection and use of data and benchmarks, as well as procedures for documenting and supporting continuous improvement	Establish procedures for using data to inform instruction and improve student achievement	Procedures for documenting and supporting continuous improvement	Assessment Office, Professional Development Office, C&I, Secondary Office	Beginning Summer, 2006
2.(g) Identify mentor principals	Identify and select experienced principals with documented success as school leaders	Principals who will serve as mentors for participants in the AFP/HOS	Secondary Office, Principals	Beginning Spring, 2007
Anchor Three: Re-Engaging Out-of-School Youth & Drop-out Prevention				
3.(a) Evaluate and recommend improvements to SDP's current educational programming for Out-of-School Youth	Review existing evaluations of SDP's OSY programming and undertake additional studies to identify recommended redesign of Educational Options	New high-quality pathways for OSY who are within the middle band of high school credit accrual	SDP, PYN	Implementation of new model in Fall, 2006
	Expand number of E ³ Centers and their programs for OSY and court-involved youth returning from juvenile placement	Three new centers will be established, including replication of the literacy coaches' model	DHS, PYN, Family Court, CFL	Fall, 2006 and Winter, 2007

The Secondary Education Movement, Phase II: Redesigning Philadelphia's High Schools

Objective	Tasks	Expected Results	Lead Responsibility	Timeline
3.(b) Create new educational pathways for Philadelphia's OSY	Create new retrieval strategy that builds on dual enrollment, Gateway-to-College and other research-based approaches	High-quality pathways for students with 8 th – 9 th grade reading levels that are within middle and upper bands of high school credit accrual	CCP, SDP, PYN	New models in place Sept., 2006 for at least 100 youth.
	Design new approach that focuses on older, low-literate, under-credentialed students and OSY and supports credit acquisition	Implementation plan for new pathway that enables these most vulnerable youth to move expeditiously towards an education credential	SDP, PYN, CFL	Prog. design completed in 2006-07 school year Sept., 2007 Implementation
	Develop new cross-system funding for prevention models based on JHU research	Funding in place to support pilot sites in September, 2007	SDP, PEF, PYN	Development efforts begin Spring and Summer 2006
	Adapt Young Adult Diploma Program for use with OSY	Self-paced diploma pathway for youth with at least 9 th grade reading levels	SDP, CFL, and other partner CBOs	Prog. design completed in 2006-07 school year Sept., 2007 Implementation
3.(c) Build capacity of relevant City agencies to promote educational achievement	Map and assess curricular offerings at juvenile placement sites and other non-SDP educational programs and develop a plan to ensure a standards-based approach that aligns with SDP requirements and ensures credit transfer	Plan for alignment in place for implementation in Fall 2007	SDP, DHS, PEF	Curricular reviews will begin in Spring and Summer, 2006
	Build on recommendations of occupational skills assessment of pilot - six delinquent placement facilities	Improved quality and relevance of programming with better connections to industry recognized credentials and jobs	DHS and Family Court	Beginning Summer, 2006 and ongoing

Objective	Tasks	Expected Results	Lead Responsibility	Timeline
3.(d) Ensure quality of educational programming for OSY	Assess progress and outcomes for 775 students currently enrolled in accelerated high schools, particularly in terms of credits earned and student persistence	Improvements to existing accelerated school model in preparation for expansion	PYN, SDP	Evaluation takes place beginning in Summer, 2006, based on two-year histories of accelerated high schools.
	Expand piloting of low-literacy toolkit to new venues, such as new EOPS, accelerated high schools, Student Success Centers and juvenile placement facilities.	Expanded availability of high-quality tools for youth with very low literacy levels	CFL, DHS, SDP	Begun in Spring and Summer, 2005 and ongoing
	Undertake a seven-school pilot that places "dropout prevention specialists" in high schools with low promotion power and rates to re-engage/enroll OSY	Connect struggling students to needed services; augment work of academic counselors; diminish invisibility of vulnerable youth.	DHS, SDP, PYN, PCCY, EPOP	Beginning Fall 2006
	Develop a protocol to help determine appropriate educational placements for returning OSY	OSY returning to educational programming will be more likely to succeed based on good placement decisions	PYN, SDP, DHS, Family Court.	Begun in Summer, 2005 and ongoing
	Continue to convene Alternative School Network and take full advantage of its potential to promote effective practices	Strategies to improve instruction and to shape effective alternative programming	PYN	Ongoing
	Develop quality benchmarks, evaluate programs in SS/OSY compendium, and array by neighborhood and program type	An interactive resource for organizations, families and youth to identify quality service options appropriate to needs and circumstances.	PYN	Begin Winter, 2007

Objective	Tasks	Expected Results	Lead Responsibility	Timeline
3.(e) Incorporate community voices into planning, development and implementation of new educational programming	Continuing efforts to involve the public in identifying needs and solutions to OSY issues	Informed community members who can provide advice, help to shape new programming and advocate for its creation and support	EPOP	Spring, 2006 and ongoing
3.(f) Expand skills and learning opportunities that respond to the needs of at-risk students as they enter high school	Pilot 9 th through 12 th grade continuum in 3 to 5 high schools	Improved foundational skills leading to college and career success, more relevant instruction for students	PYN, Philadelphia Academies, Inc., SDP	Planning, Fall and Spring, 2006 Implementation 2007
Anchor Four: Conversion to Small High Schools; Climate Change				
4.(a) Continue to break down large schools into smaller structures	Develop a plan to revise feeder patterns and strategies to de-populate schools	Smaller structures to support educational programming	Secondary Ed. Office, C&I, COO	Begun in 2003
	Explore new innovative designs that increase options for delivering the educational program	High schools that support rigorous, innovative programs	Secondary Ed. Office, C&I, COO	Begun in 2003
4.(b) Create a climate of respect and caring among staff, students, parents and partners	Develop and implement multiple opportunities to create and strengthen school climate	Successful learning communities that promote high expectations and high student achievement for all students	Professional Development Office, Secondary Ed. Office	Begun in 2004
4.(c) Establish strong partnerships with parents, colleges and universities, unions, employers and community organizations	Meetings with key stakeholders and elected officials at local, state and national levels	Increased understanding and greater support for small, rigorous high schools	SRC, CEO, CAO, Chief of Staff, COO	Ongoing
	Professional development offering participants various opportunities to improve communications and build partnerships	Decrease stereotypes and barriers to working together Cooperation among groups with differing approaches even though they may unaccustomed to group success	Office of Staff Development, OFELES, Office of School Management, Regional Superintendents	Spring or Summer, 2007

Objective	Tasks	Expected Results	Lead Responsibility	Timeline
	Introduction to NCLB and overview of parent advisory councils, their roles and functions	More informed and empowered parents; better enlightened educators and increased community collaboration	PDE, Statewide Parent Advisory Council, Office of Staff Development, OFELES, Office of School Management, Regional Superintendents	
4.(d) Implement the four-year advisory model	Revamp staffing patterns and schedules in high schools to support a four-year advisory model	Adults and students working together over a four year period to ensure on-time graduation and successful transition into college or a meaningful career	SDP, partners, parents	Begun in 2005
4.(e) Review graduation requirements	Review graduation vs. college-prep requirements	A postsecondary plan for each student	University Partners, White-Williams Scholars, SDP	Spring, 2006
4.(f) Develop a College Access Pilot Program	Develop a comprehensive set of services and supports for Sayre High School students, their families and the school to improve student readiness for careers and college	A model that can be replicated citywide	University of Pennsylvania, White-Williams Scholars, SDP	Spring, 2006
Anchor Five: Career Pathways with Rigorous Preparation for College				
5.(a) Create an analysis of current needs as measured against national standards	Conduct focus groups for principals, teachers, parents, students, and community members.	A gaps analysis to further inform the study group research process	SDP, PEF	October, November, 2006
5.(b) Create a study group process to gather further recommendations from principals, teachers, parents, students, and community members	Convene a steering committee to create a protocol to gather data from high school teams. Committee should include SDP, PDE/ SRC, PFT, key partners, CASA, business and community representatives	A process protocol to strengthen the plan and gain support for the final plan	SDP, PEF	Fall, 2006

The Secondary Education Movement, Phase II: Redesigning Philadelphia's High Schools

Objective	Tasks	Expected Results	Lead Responsibility	Timeline
5.(c) Recognize the historic antecedents of the current Secondary Education Movement	Convene an anniversary celebration of the tenth anniversary of Research for Action's <i>Five School Study</i> at which time the SEM, Phase II will be unveiled	A wider understanding of the SEM, Phase II	SDP, PEF	Winter, 2006-2007
5.(d) Deepen the understanding of what is needed for high performing secondary schools	Convene high school teams to gather data through a study group process to elicit further recommendations from principals, teachers, parents, students, and community members	A process to gather information to strengthen the blueprint and gain support for the final plan	SDP, PEF	Winter, 2007
5.(e) Expand understanding of what is needed for high performing secondary schools to all schools	Disseminate the findings of study research groups through a series of conferences for secondary teams	School teams incorporate findings in SIP where possible	SDP, PEF	Spring and Summer, 2007
5.(f) Integrate the Blueprint into the District's planning process	Work with appropriate offices to integrate the Blueprint	Use of findings in school improvement planning	SDP, PEF	Fall, 2007
5.(g) Replicate successful industry pipeline programs	Identify new business and school partnerships to replicate existing initiatives	Increase in numbers of industry certification and connections for students to high growth areas	Philadelphia Academies, PYN, SDP	Fall, 2007
5.(h) Build new industry pipeline programs in high growth/high demand areas	Recruit business and school partners to design new pipeline models	Replicable industry pipeline programs in 2 new industry areas	Philadelphia Academies, PYN, SDP	Spring, 2008

INTERVIEWS

The following were interviewed in completion of this report:

Ms. Claudia Averette, Chief of Staff, School District of Philadelphia

Mr. Albert Bichner, Deputy Chief Academic Officer, School District of Philadelphia

Ms. Quibila Divine, Office of Family Engagement and Language Equity Services, School District of Philadelphia

Ms. Joyce Harrison, Former Associate Superintendent for High Schools, School District of Philadelphia

Ms. Rhonda Lauer, President, Foundations, Inc

Don Spangler, Consultant, Philadelphia Youth Network

Dr. Gregory Thornton, Chief Academic Office, School District of Philadelphia

Focus Group Interviews: District partners, community groups, and SDP administrators

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ATTACHMENT

The School District of Philadelphia
School Reform Commission
Declaration of Education

MISSION:	The mission of the School District of Philadelphia is to provide a high quality education that prepares, ensures, and empowers all students to achieve their full intellectual and social potential in order to become lifelong learners and productive members of society.
GOALS:	The School Reform Commission has identified a number of criteria called Declaration of Education, defining target goals to achieve by June 2008.

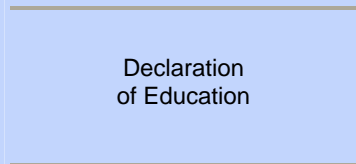
2008 GOALS

Early Literacy

- 85% of all students entering kindergarten will have participated in a formal preschool experience
- 80% of all grade 3 students will read on grade level

Academic Achievement

- The District will meet the Adequate Yearly Progress criteria of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation
- 80% of all students in grades 3-11 will perform at or above the proficient level in reading, mathematics and science
- Average SAT and ACT scores will meet or exceed the national average
- 85% of all high school students will graduate
- 80% of graduating seniors will enroll in post-secondary education institutions
- Disparity based on race, ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status will be less than 10 percentage points on all academic measures



Safe and Orderly Environment

- 95% of respondents on an annual survey will indicate they feel safe at school
- 100% of schools will score a grade "B" or better on the District's Safe Schools Audit

Community Collaboration

- 100% of schools will have active Home and School Associations or School Councils



- 100% of schools will have active partnerships with community organizations that foster the implementation of the District's mission

Equity

- 100% of schools will have equity in facilities, programs and resources
- 100% of all high schools will offer honors and Advanced Placement courses
- 100% of District teachers and paraprofessionals will be highly qualified for their positions
- All Philadelphia students will have access to school choice options that include high quality public, privately managed and charter schools

Efficient and Effective Support Operations

- Support services to all schools will be delivered on time, on budget, and with high quality
- The District will achieve a balanced budget that provides for a high quality education for all students