



**Editor's Note:** This edition of *UPDATE* focuses on partnerships, beginning with an interview with Dr. Gene Bottoms founder of *High Schools That Work* (HSTW). Dr. Bottoms provides important insights into the ways partnerships were used to create HSTW, as well as the ways they are necessary to involving high schools and community colleges in the implementation of Programs of Study. This volume also includes two invited articles, one by Dr. Pamela Eddy, College of William and Mary University, and Dr. Marilyn Amey, Michigan State University, that give OCCRL readers a glimpse into their new book on partnerships and collaboration, and a second by Dr. Louise Yarnall, who shares a model that she and her colleagues at SRI are developing for the Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Other articles feature OCCRL projects on Illinois' College and Career Readiness Evaluation and Accelerating Opportunity. The volume closes with an article by Ms. Kristy Morelock and Ms. Amanda Corso, Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), on strategies to involve partners in Pathways To Results.

## Partnerships that Support *High Schools That Work* Reform: An Interview with Dr. Gene Bottoms

by Tracey Ratner

Dr. Gene Bottoms has served as director of the Southern Regional Education Board's *High Schools That Work* (HSTW) initiative since 1987. In July 1997, Dr. Bottoms became senior vice president of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), reflecting his role and commitment to the initiative. *HSTW*, an initiative to improve high schools, involves over 1,200 high schools in more than 30 states. In October 2011, Tracey Ratner, OCCRL Graduate Research Assistant, interviewed Dr. Bottoms about his work and the role partnerships play in improving high schools.

**UPDATE:** What led SREB to create *High Schools That Work*, and what was your role in its development?

**Dr. Bottoms:** You have to go back and put yourself in the mid 1980s, about the time that *A Nation at Risk* was released. It was about that time that the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) asked me to join their commission, while I was the executive director of the American Vocational Association. In the context of *A Nation at Risk*, the idea was that we needed to look at vocational education in high school and how to teach academics to all students. On that Commission, I kept raising the question that if we limit education to Career and Technical Education (CTE), what are we going to do about the 45% of students on the general education track? The problem was not just with CTE, but there was a larger problem with academics. In 1984, at the Boca Raton SREB meeting, I decided to launch a committee and see if I could have an impact. SREB finally said that it was time they did a publication to see how we might begin to connect academics and CTE in a way that valued academic achievement, motivated kids to stay in school, and motivated kids to learn. I came back to the SREB in 1985 with an eight-page report of ideas to consider, and I wanted to form a consortium to pilot these ideas. Hillary Clinton was one of the people, in 1984, who helped me convince the President that he ought to do this and was one of the first people to congratulate me in 1985 on the report at the SREB meeting. She, along with other prominent people, was very instrumental in helping move this forward.

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We met throughout the fall of 1985 and spring of 1986 and finally, in August of 1987, we had 13 states that had signed on to contribute some dollars and fund at least two pilot sites to do academic/CTE integration work. We had developed some goals, 10 Key Practices and a set of Key Conditions that evolved somewhat, but are still at the heart of what we are about today. We launched the effort with 26 pilot sites in the fall of 1987, and we had those 13 states who had signed on. Each state gave the SREB \$6,000 during the 1987-1988 school year, and the board kicked in \$30,000. I came on board 60%-time with the SREB, but by the end of that year we had been successful in getting more states on board. In the summer of 1988, I was working full-time at the SREB, with a support staff. With a dropout grant from the Office of Education, we were able to bring a second person on board and then a big infusion of funds came with the Wallace Foundation support in 1992. Today, we have about 125-130 staff working with us across the country. SREB remains very committed to CTE and to improving its quality.

**UPDATE:** At the OCCRL, we strongly value partnerships, which is the focus of our newsletter. Can you talk about the role of partnerships in your creation of *High Schools That Work*?

**Dr. Bottoms:** We have had many key partners over the years. First and foremost, the states we work with are our key partners. Another key partner of ours is the Educational Testing Service (ETS). They helped us develop exams to assess how well CTE students are doing. So, we really worked with ETS to form a NAEP-like exam that we could give, while collecting information about students' experiences at school. What we wanted to try to validate was if CTE students got the right academics and experienced the things we were advocating, would they start to look more like students taking college-prep courses? I think to a large extent we have been able to validate that. ETS has been a really great partner for us within the last two decades and has helped us continue to refine our survey of students. We have continued to learn that if we ask students about their experiences and if they have quality experiences, they will be higher performers. So, the ETS has helped us put into place continuous improvement efforts.

Another early partner of ours was the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE). From the very beginning, NCRVE at University of California at Berkeley designated about \$100,000 a year to help support us with assessment data and other things. They also helped us develop 200 hours of quality professional development instruction for CTE teachers, because we found that, in many cases, teachers just weren't prepared. We are field testing this professional development work in Oklahoma and Vermont and hoping to get a grant to show that this professional development does in fact work. Another important partner for us has been the Wallace Foundation. Starting in 1992, they have given us a grant that has really helped me bring in and expand the staff working on *High Schools That Work*. They provided us with leadership development work for principals, as well. We have been very fortunate to have some key foundations' support to help move our work

forward. The belief in our work by local schools districts has been quite helpful, as well.

**UPDATE:** The *HSTW* Key Practices incorporate Programs of Study. In our work, we consider a rigorous Program of Study to include work-based learning, career-technical studies, and academic studies. How do *HSTW* high schools utilize community college partnerships to strengthen these key practices?

**Dr. Bottoms:** One of the things that we do is lead between 100 to 150 technical assistance visits a year in the high schools. We ask the local folks to have a key person from their community in attendance to help bridge the efforts together. Building our NAEP-like assessment in 2008, we brought the community college people in to help us benchmark cut scores so that those cut scores show readiness for community colleges. This should help cut down on students taking remedial courses. The first few times we pulled the data on what CTE students said they were going to do after high school, less than half said they were planning on going on for further study. When a school gets involved in our network, the percent of CTE students going on to further study exceeds 70%. We can thank both our high schools and our community colleges for that. Another thing we have advocated for high schools to do is redesign the senior year in order for students in community colleges to avoid taking remedial courses. Some community colleges will come out and give exams to identify whether or not students are ready, which helps us in thinking about the senior year.

**UPDATE:** How do *HSTW* high schools utilize area businesses to strengthen these Key Practices?

**Dr. Bottoms:** Work-based learning has certainly dwindled, but that doesn't mean it isn't important. However, there are a couple of states that have beaten the odds and one of those states is Georgia. During the early years of the Clinton Administration, they floated the idea of apprenticeships and passed legislation with workable standards. Our kids from Georgia seem to report they have a higher quality work-based learning experience than students from other states. What CTE folks in the state seem to be able to do is get quality work-based learning experiences for some minority students, at-risk students, and students who might not be able to make connections on their own. All high schools need to work on connecting work-based learning back to school learning so that students see a connection in their learning. Although the emphasis on testing has really caused work based learning to decline, high schools need to start working with more area businesses to provide students with these important experiences.

**UPDATE:** What advice would you offer to high schools trying to build these important partnerships?

**Dr. Bottoms:** I don't know whether or not a single high school principal can do that on his or her own. I had an experience in Mobile, Alabama last week and noticed that they have a strong business advocate in their community who is going to bring a

group of high school principals together with leading business people every month. For this to happen, the partnerships need to be positioned at the district level, where the district finds business partners and invites principals to meet with them. The high school principal has so much on his or her plate as it is, so I see this as a district-level responsibility. What may have to happen is states create legislation that gives some sort of incentive to businesses for pairing with high schools. I would also tell high schools to look for more internships during the summer, learning experiences for students during the year and offer credit for students to complete these internships. We have to have high school principals and districts create visions for these partnerships.

**UPDATE:** Today's workplace requires most Americans to have some form of education beyond high school. However, most high school students are not graduating well-prepared for college or career training. What do you view as the role of community colleges and area businesses in assisting high schools with the goal of graduating more students who are college and career ready?

**Dr. Bottoms:** It is the equal responsibility of high schools and community colleges to come together in order to solve these problems. Students leaving high school need to be prepared to move forward—not take remedial courses—and community colleges need to help high schools meet these expectations. As mentioned earlier, community colleges can help high schools see what cut scores are necessary for college readiness and high schools can then remediate at their level, if necessary. Area businesses can take on more students for internships, not just job shadowing.

**UPDATE:** What types of in-school collaboration do you see or hope to see in your sites? For example, do you see teams of teachers partnering to better student outcomes? Do you see teachers working more closely with guidance counselors?

**Dr. Bottoms:** First, large high schools really need to encourage smaller learning communities of 300-500 students, built around career themes and common planning so ownership of problems occurs. In smaller schools, career academies work, as long as common planning time is given. *HSTW* believes in connecting students to the same teacher in an advisory system for all four years of high school. This is an example of collaboration between students and adults. We also believe that extra help must be given to students because failure is not an option, which may mean extending learning time and support to meet standards. Adults must come together and collaborate in order to provide this. Relationships are very important in high schools. Students who are connected to a teacher, who have a goal beyond high school and who are connected to an employer in the community graduate and are prepared. Thirty to forty percent of our students are simply not connecting, which means not enough collaboration is happening. We are big on connecting students, but if you can connect adults where they must work together, that will do marvelous things.

**UPDATE:** SREB's Strengthening Statewide College/Career Readiness Initiative (SSCRI) is a hands-on project in six southern states aimed at creating comprehensive, statewide policies and practices that promote college-ready standards, courses, assessments, and professional development in every high school. As this initiative moves forward, how have partnerships come into play?

**Dr. Bottoms:** This initiative has six interrelated and essential components. We are working with six states to accelerate the agenda for college and career readiness of high school graduates: Florida, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Texas. We are aiming to adopt statewide college and career readiness standards, denote readiness scores for state assessments, modify public school curriculum to align with college readiness standards, create a transitional course for unprepared 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students, and develop statewide teacher development plans to implement standards. The initiative will also hold statewide programs accountable for monitoring student and school performance and will hold public postsecondary education institutions accountable for application of these standards, as well. Many states are working with the American Diploma Project, the National Governors Association, the College Board, and ACT Inc. in efforts to improve college readiness. With these partners, some very exciting work lies ahead for us. ♦

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## OCCRL Engages with High Schools in PTR Pilot

by Don Hackmann and Tracey Ratner

This year, the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) began a new scope of work with two Illinois high schools that are part of the *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* network. *HSTW* was established in 1987 by the Southern Education Regional Board's State Vocational Education Consortium, its member states, their school systems, and school sites. The *HSTW* initiative is based on the belief that most high school students can master complex academic and technical concepts if schools create an environment encouraging students to make the effort to succeed. Member schools implement Ten Key Practices for changing what is expected of students, what they are taught and how they are taught. One of the Key Practices, titled Programs of Study (POS), requires each student to complete an upgraded academic core and a concentration. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) provides funding for several Illinois high schools, in order to support their involvement in the *HSTW* initiative.

The OCCRL staff is investigating and facilitating shared commitments to the implementation of POS across the secondary and postsecondary levels using the Pathways to Results (PTR) process. To complement and extend efforts on POS, this project will focus on identifying and developing implementation strategies to support POS at the K-12 level and piloting an audit process for *HSTW* sites to determine the extent to which POS have been implemented and to which the schools are ready to engage in future reform activity. Our contract with the ISBE includes two Illinois high schools, LaSalle Peru High School and Paris Cooperative High School, to pilot the PTR process. These two schools are establishing PTR inquiry teams that examine their course offerings; utilize the Illinois Career Cluster Model to design four-year plans of study for high school students; analyze the career interests of their student body as identified through their four-year plans of study; and commit to the development of at least one career cluster, career pathway, and program of study, in collaboration with a community college.

### Ten Key Practices

*High Schools That Work (HSTW)* has identified a set of Key Practices that impact student achievement through development of multiple programs of study that prepare students for postsecondary studies and careers. These Key Practices provide direction and meaning to comprehensive school improvement:

**High expectations:** Motivate more students to meet higher standards by integrating high expectations into classroom practices and providing frequent feedback.

**Program of study:** Require each student to complete an upgraded academic core and a concentration.

**Academic studies:** Teach more students the essential concepts of the college-preparatory curriculum by encouraging them to apply academic content and skills to real-world problems and projects.

**Career/technical studies:** Provide more students access to intellectually challenging career/technical studies in high-demand fields that emphasize the higher-level academic and problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and in further education.

**Work-based learning:** Enable students and their parents to choose from programs that integrate challenging high school studies and work-based learning and are planned by educators, employers and students.

**Teachers working together:** Provide cross-disciplinary teams of teachers time and support to work together to help students succeed in challenging academic and career/technical studies.

**Students actively engaged:** Engage students in academic and career/technical classrooms in rigorous and challenging proficient-level assignments using research-based instructional strategies and technology.

**Guidance:** Involve students and their parents in a guidance and advisement system that develops positive relationships and ensures completion of an accelerated program of study with an academic or career/technical concentration.

**Extra help:** Provide a structured system of extra help to assist students in completing accelerated programs of study with high-level academic and technical content.

**Culture of continuous improvement:** Use data continually to improve school culture, organization, management, curriculum and instruction to advance student learning.

For more information see: [http://www.sreb.org/page/1139/key\\_practices.html](http://www.sreb.org/page/1139/key_practices.html).

Throughout the course of the year, OCCRL staff members Don Hackmann and Tracey Ratner will be providing leadership and support to the pilot high school sites. Through these efforts, the OCCRL will offer technical assistance on POS to the schools as they implement the state's Career Cluster Model and PTR at the local level. OCCRL plans to develop and support the delivery of professional development in conjunction with ISBE to ensure that local secondary education agencies and K-12 schools, including comprehensive high schools and area career centers, maximize implementation of POS and PTR throughout the state. ♦

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## Bridges Across the P-16 Continuum: The Role of Educational Partnerships

*by Pamela L. Eddy, College of William and Mary, and Marilyn J. Amey, Michigan State University*

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The American Graduation Initiative (Obama, 2009) and the Lumina Foundation (2010) focused attention on the fact that the US is losing ground relative to other countries on the number of individuals possessing a college degree (Adelman, 2009). Research shows that a college degree results in higher individual earning potential, contributes to the local economy, and decreases crime and health costs (Baum & Ma, 2007). Higher education does not exist as an independent entity, however, as pre-collegiate preparation and student anticipation for college contribute to the collegiate experience. With educational attainment viewed as a lever for economic improvement and enhanced quality of life, state (Stedron et al., 2010) and federal (US Department of Education, 2006) policymakers continue to create programs that promote education across the P-16 pipeline. Recently, remedial education has been a focus for understanding the links between high school preparation and college readiness (Rutschow & Schneider, 2011). One way to bridge the P-12 and college divide is through educational partnerships.

Policy makers often are supportive of partnerships in state and federal policies. For example, the Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 (2011), which is tagged with the public title of Top Jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TJ21), focuses on issues of college access, college readiness, and transfer routes. Partnerships are also advocated by grant and funding agencies. The Obama-Singh 21<sup>st</sup> Century Knowledge Initiative, for instance, requires partnerships between US colleges and those in India. A focus on educational reform in India highlights preferences for those dealing with vocational training and two-year programming (Fischer, 2011; Neelakantan, 2011). Despite these rationales for partnering, many partnerships fail (Eddy, 2007; Farrell & Seifert, 2007). Thus, it becomes important to understand what factors contribute to successful partnerships and to provide a framework for institutional leaders seeking to partner with other colleges.

### Partnership Framework

Research on partnerships showcases a number of key factors that contribute to ongoing success. First, it is important to know what motivates each partner to participate in or seek out partnerships (Amey, Eddy, & Campbell, 2010). Alignment of motivations results in partners having a shared understanding of what they seek from the venture. Intentional alignment among partners can lead to a strategic partnership that helps advance the missions of the partnering institutions (Amey & Eddy, 2011). Second, trust provides a platform upon which partnerships can sustain the tensions that are inevitable in joint work (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Coleman, 1988; Wergin, 2003). Trust builds over time as relationships become deeper and shared norms are created. Leaders of the partnering organizations contribute to the creation of shared norms by framing a particular sensemaking perspective for and by the group (Weick, 1995). Finally, feedback venues in the partnership are important to allow for adjustments due to changes over time. For example, contextual situations may alter and require adjustments in the partnership or central partners may leave the institution and others take over. When the partnership is institutionalized, it is likely that shifts in personnel will have less impact on the process. However, if there is a single champion of the project and that individual leaves, the partnership may dissolve if it was too tied to the social capital of that individual (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). A delicate balancing act exists between being an advocate for the partnership and having the partnership overly reliant on a single individual and that person's social capital for maintaining the relationship.

Central elements of partnerships include: defining the problem, creating a plan, and implementing the project (Gray, 1989). Hora and Millar (2011) further develop these areas and

posit five principles for partners: 1) think of organizations and partners in multifaceted terms; 2) plan and get acquainted; 3) engage in a careful design process; 4) cultivate personnel who are boundary crossers; and 5) take advantage of the opportunity to foster new cultural dynamics (pp. 19-22). The framework for partnerships occurs on two levels. First, it is individuals who often broker the initial conversations and pilot activities of the partnership, whereas the second layer involves the educational organizations. Embedded in each of these levels are sources of power and motivations for participation that affect the development and viability of the partnership.

A focus of educational partnership occurs in looking at the P-16 continuum. The assumption that public schools and colleges are natural allies builds on unfounded beliefs that both sectors share motivations and understandings of educational issues. Public schools must educate all students for whom compulsory education is required, whereas colleges have an application and selection process and are ultimately viewed as a private good because of the benefits of greater income and higher standard of living potential accruing to graduates (Marginson, 2007). Because the educational sectors are not inherently aligned yet the demands on the entire educational system increase, many states have instituted P-16 councils or initiatives to address challenges and to emphasize the importance of supporting the educational pipeline. Partnering between schools and colleges may include dual enrollment programs or student transfer programs, workforce development, shared resources or space, or coordination for college readiness. Recently, the *2011 Closing the Expectations Gap* report found that 22 states have P-20 data systems in place to track progress of students throughout their education. Assessing these data can highlight the ways in which partnerships are successful and areas of need for future efforts.

## Promising Practices

Knowing that critical points exist in creating and sustaining partnerships helps identify promising practices. Partnerships that use a strategic orientation and are intentional in fostering programming that reinforces this shared orientation are more likely to be successful. Taking time to develop relationships within a partnership and in building trust pays off with more successful outcomes, and more importantly, lasting partnerships. Finally, partnerships that address systematic change versus quick fixes also have staying power beyond individuals, distinct initiatives, and specific funding cycles.

Most strategic partnerships emerge due to a desire to change something or in response to a crisis. As such, it is important to look at partnering using a change lens. Change occurs on a variety of levels and often focuses on how individuals create schemas of understanding of what is going on in their own institutions (Harris, 1994; Senge, 1990). First-order change involves incremental adjustments following a given trajectory and thought process. These changes often involve improving processes for what already occurs in the institution e.g., a new form for charting transfer courses or an improved website of

existing course information. Whereas, second order change requires questioning fundamental assumptions about institutional goals and operations in which individuals alter their underlying schemas (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). Many partnerships experience first-order change during implementation of their joint activity. In this case, each partner proceeds in ways that support their historical operations and individual organizational mission. If issues appear that question these traditional patterns, tensions arise for individuals that may lead to the partnership dissolving. When partners look at the partnership more critically and reflectively and begin to question how shared norms and meanings are created among the group, why certain aspects of the arrangement exist, and whether the arrangement is mutually beneficial, second-order change occurs. At this stage, partnership capital emerges (Amey et al., 2010). Here, individual motivators recede and attention to the benefits for the group allows for deeper reflection of understanding of meaning.

A change model for partnerships (Eddy, 2010) builds on Kotter and Cohen's (2002) generic model for change. The partnership eight-stage model includes:

1. Verbalizing motivation and context for partnering
2. Aligning social capital of champions and leveraging organizational capital
3. Establishing partnership goals and team governance
4. Framing the partnership to stakeholders
5. Negotiating conflicts
6. Framing outcomes
7. Evaluating the process
8. Institutionalizing the partnership. (Eddy, 2010, p. 25)

At the core of change for partnerships is acknowledging the underlying beliefs of the individual partners and a willingness to question this schema. Inherent in this process is how leaders frame change for institutional members and how the partnership is framed across the partner groups. The shift to strategic partnerships requires environmental scanning on an institutional level to determine how internal strategies align with potential partnering organizations. Central to this process is a commitment to organizational learning that requires active and critical reflection of underlying belief structures (Argyis & Schön, 1974) and a willingness to regularly examine organizational functions, policies, and practices.

Following are some examples that showcase promising practices in partnerships across the P-12 and college divide. A brief analysis of each example highlights critical stages of the partnership and indicates how others might learn from these examples.

**Example 1—Sharing Space.** Watson (2007) presented the case of an educational partnership that revolved around building a new high school. Three individuals were highlighted: the school superintendent, a mid-level community college administrator, and a high-level university administrator. The blank

slate of creating a new high school building allowed the partners an ability to provide educational access and support to a broader range of students. The high school was planned to physically provide access to community college and university courses; the plan involved the creation of building wings that afforded the opportunity to offer segmented or specialized opportunities in different locations. For instance, one wing of the building was dedicated to a ninth-grade academy that supported student transition to high school. Another wing accommodated students in their junior and senior years taking college level courses taught by community college and university faculty using a flex-scheduling option. The belief was that the presence of college faculty would model for high school students that college was possible and reinforce high standards throughout the building in ways that did not occur when advanced students took college courses off-site.

Inherent in this partnership were unequal power bases among the central partners. The superintendent had more formal authority as he controlled resources and key-decision making points regarding the building's construction. Both of the college administrators possessed high levels of social capital that allowed them to move the partnership forward in their institutions and for the benefit of the group in ways that other individuals with less social capital could not. Yet, upper level college leaders with more formal authority could trump decisions or withdraw commitment from the project. Trust was a central characteristic of this collaboration because each key player needed to trust the others would follow through on agreements made, since none held all the leverage and resources necessary to accomplish the goals independently, and each knew the partnership could be overridden by outside forces beyond their control. As well, the case highlights how alignment with institutional strategic goals is critical. For the college partners, as long as the collaboration continued to meet institutional goals of student access and entrepreneurial approaches to course delivery, the program was on solid ground. If resources shifted, top-level leaders transitioned or new goals were established that did not align with the partnership objectives, however, the collaboration could be in jeopardy.

**Example 2—STEM Initiative.** Urban District Education Project (UEDP) was a publically funded program to improve math and science education for students in K-12 schools by establishing partnerships among university-based STEM and education faculty, and K-12 administrators and teachers. The premise of the project was making organizational changes in school districts and colleges and universities that would lead to improved student learning in schools. The five-year funded project started in 2003, and Hora and Millar (2011) studied the processes and evolution of four working groups within the larger partnership. They developed a conceptual framework for understanding UDEP and other partnerships that includes examining individual mental models; cultural models; relationships; structure and technologies; and routines and practices. Some highlights and important recommendations for practice emanating from their study are briefly mentioned.

There were pre-existing relationships among several members of UDEP that were also assumed to exist after the partnership ended; moving forward, it was believed that UDEP would fit within these relationships and not confound them. This necessitated certain individuals to act as spokespersons and information conduits so as not to disrupt what was in place for the long haul. Negotiating these parameters and relationships at the start of UDEP was important and also gave opportunity to air assumptions about capacity, resource availability, scope and responsibilities of members of the partnership. These conversations are always critical at the start of a partnership but perhaps differently so when pre-existing relationships may cause individuals to base decisions on past actions that may not be relevant in the new circumstances.

In studying UDEP, Hora and Millar (2011) differentiated the importance of structural and cultural features to partnership operations over time. They found that getting beyond the stereotypes and assumptions partners have of each other at the onset is necessary in effectively orienting everyone to the partnership organizing principles e.g., that K-12 teachers have more daily pressures and timelines forced upon them than university faculty so that task allocation should be distributed accordingly. Because formal structures will undoubtedly change, or at least adjust as the partnership develops, the authors focused on the importance of cultural models of partners because they are more indelible and subconscious, and will most likely move with members of the partnership from their "home organization" into the new one. Hora and Millar also identified three partnership structures as examples of the forms partnerships may take: business transaction (limited structural interaction and little change); friendship (coordinated structures, and some adjustment); and marriage (collaborative and more integrated structures). This variation suggests that other factors in the partnership may be more important across the structural continuum even if structure is the more obvious place to focus. Taking stock of mental and cultural models may be as valuable in helping the partnership effectively move forward.

Finally, Hora and Miller describe the "3<sup>rd</sup> space" as that conceptual arena in which the work of partnership development actually exists and "where competing interests and perspectives play out as different organizations come together" (p. 207). This space creates a dynamic environment of on-going negotiation of ideas, values, cultural beliefs, structures, patterns of work, and identities. As the partnership develops, the 3<sup>rd</sup> space represents the emerging organizational identifiers of the new partnership entity similar to the ways in which teachers talk about interdisciplinarity emerging from many disciplines (Klein, 2010) or partnership capital as the recognizable artifacts evolving from cross-unit collaboration (Amey et al., 2010). An important component of partnerships is the space required to do the work of organizational development in addition to the actual goals and tasks of the partnership in order for the member units to meld and morph into a recognizable "other" that can be owned by members and recognized on its own.

**Example 3—Developmental Education.** The community college system in Virginia is redesigning its developmental education program as part of its strategic initiative, *Achieve 2015*. The six-year strategic plan identifies student success as one of its goals, which targets increasing graduation, transfer, or certificate awards by 50%. A cornerstone in achieving this goal is moving more students successfully through developmental coursework. Three specific outcomes were identified by Virginia's developmental education task force: 1) reduce the need for developmental education; 2) reduce the time to complete developmental education; and 3) increase the number of developmental education students graduating or transferring within four years (*The Turning Point*, 2009, p. 5). Math courses represent the first point of focus for change efforts. Beginning in 2012, the entire developmental math curriculum will change system wide with students now successfully passing modules in which they have need to improve skills versus taking a traditional semester-long course that might review material they already know (Gonzalez, 2011). At the heart of discussions regarding developmental coursework is the fact that many high school students are not college ready upon high school graduation. Operating concurrently with the VCCS strategic initiative is a cooperative effort, the Virginia College and Career Readiness Initiative (CCRI) with the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Education that includes the VCCS, the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV), and the Virginia Department of Education. The CCRI targets improving high school student preparation to help eliminate the need for remediation in college. This outcome would be achieved by aligning the state assessments to measure mastery of more rigorous math and English standards as co-determined with college faculty.

This burgeoning partnership highlights how shared goals and vision serve as prime motivators to partner and how the collaboration aligns with strategic initiatives of both VCCS and the DOE. Framing has occurred within the individual organizations with the top level leaders of each group signing a joint agreement outlining expectations and with progress being measured and evaluated and ultimately publically reported out each year. Individual college campuses have leaders on campus that are framing the initiative and communicating the plan to campus members. Using the change framework outlined above showcases how the key stages are being addressed. Continued evaluation of this partnership will determine the ways in which it is ultimately institutionalized, but the progress to date indicates that steps are in place for the strategic partnership to be successful.

### Implications for Policy Makers

The continued decline in state funding for higher education and the perpetual underfunding of community colleges results in policy makers looking to partnerships in the educational sector as a means to solve these problems. History indicates, however,

that mandates for partnerships based on financial rewards typically are not sustainable (Eddy, 2007) because once the funding is gone, the need to partner often disappears. McDonnell and Elmore (1987) identified four main frameworks employed by policy makers to obtain change. These include mandates, inducements, capacity-building, and system-changing. Typically, we see policy addressing the first two options, requirements and incentives, utilizing coercion or extrinsic motivators (Herzberg, 1959). Results in these instances are usually short-lasting and unsustainable.

The prime element used in capacity-building is money, a similar motivator as in inducements, however, the funds target increasing the capacity of the organization to benefit from changes. There is an unknown element operating as the benefits are anticipated versus directly linked to funding as in inducements. Ultimately, system-changes alters underlying modes of operation and is only possible when mental-models (Senge, 1990) are challenged and assumptions questioned (Argis & Schön, 1974). In this policy approach, authority serves as the conduit of policy change (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Complementing this policy process is seeing leadership as transactional, e.g., if you do this for me, I'll do this for you, versus transformational, e.g., we are empowering followers to meet ends via means that are most appropriate. As policy makers consider the various levers at their disposal to achieve change, attention should be paid to the type of outcome desired and the means used to achieve it. Mandates and short-term inducements will elicit particular outcomes, but are not necessarily the best levers to help sustain partnerships whereas capacity building and system-changing routes can create a context that is ripe for sustaining partnerships.

Attention to the P-16 continuum has been inconsistent. Some states have put substantial resources behind efforts (e.g., Kentucky, West Virginia), whereas others that had created P-16 councils waver on their on-going support (e.g., Michigan, Virginia). Recent attention to student outcomes and a focus on graduation rates calls attention again to student progress through the pipeline. How we look at the critical stages of student success and how we create partnerships across the divide are now more important than ever.

Looking forward, areas of particular attention for partnerships between public schools and community colleges will focus on developmental education, support for students of color, first-generation college students and low SES backgrounds, non-traditional student needs, and college persistence. Partnerships that focus on alignment of strategic initiatives and build on the creation of shared norms and understanding have more chance for success. Policy makers will find more success in implementation when policy moves beyond short-term mandates and addresses instead underlying structures that may create barriers to the type of changes desired. ♦



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# College and Career Readiness in Illinois: What Illinois' Pilot Projects Tell Us about the Challenges of Alignment

by Debra D. Bragg, Lorenzo D. Baber, Daniel Cullen, George Reese & Matthew Linick

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## Introduction

Illinois has many important initiatives designed to improve the alignment of K-12 and postsecondary educational systems. Among these various efforts (e.g., the Common Core Standards, Career-Technical Education reform with Programs of Study, State Longitudinal Data System), the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Pilot Program Act is an important opportunity to align core high school math, reading and writing with entry-level college-credit courses offered by community colleges. Funding for the project was authorized by the Illinois General Assembly in 2007 through the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). Since the beginning, the Office of Community College Research and Leadership (OCCRL) has gathered data to assess the implementation of CCR programs and to support state decision-making based on those data.

As a way of introducing and framing the major goals and strategies included in OCCRL's evaluation project, we reference the language in the "College and Career Readiness Pilot Program" legislation that created a three-year pilot project. CCR funds require pilot sites to engage in activities to assist the ICCB with meeting five elements of the Act, including:

- (1) Diagnosis of college readiness by developing a system to align ACT scores or alternative college placement examination scores to specific community college courses in developmental and freshman curriculums;
- (2) Reduction of remediation by decreasing the need for remedial coursework in mathematics, reading, and writing at the college level;
- (3) Alignment of high school and college curriculums;
- (4) Provision of resources and academic support to students to enrich the senior year of high school through remedial or advanced coursework and other interventions; and,
- (5) Development of an appropriate evaluation process to measure the effectiveness of readiness intervention strategies.

As FY12 got underway, five pilot programs that began in 2007-08 entered their fifth year of participation and two pilot programs that began in FY10 entered their third year of participation in CCR.

## Promising Partnerships

In the initial years of the pilot evaluation, numerous examples of partnerships emerged and demonstrated the potential for enhanced collaboration between high schools and community colleges. These examples include:

- Collaborations between teachers and administrators from community colleges and high schools have generated awareness of curricular issues. The process also educated involved professionals about some of the academic challenges that students face when they are not prepared to enter college ready to learn. Awareness of the prevalence of graduating high school seniors who place into remedial coursework based on college placement exam scores produced greater understanding of the need for improved articulation and curriculum alignment. Once awareness is established, educators from the secondary and postsecondary levels work together to determine what constitutes aligned curriculum and establish methods for measuring improvements in student outcomes.
- Community colleges and high schools work together to recruit high school students by informing parents about the CCR program, including sharing information about the goals of CCR and resources related to the programs. These stakeholders have developed greater awareness about college readiness and the consequences of graduating high school students unprepared for college level work. Especially important to CCR have been efforts to reach out to parents to increase their awareness of the program so that, through the CCR program, they can help their students understand the potential value of college readiness. A part of this coordinated secondary-postsecondary communication has been focused on showing parents the potential to reduce college costs by addressing college preparedness issues while students are still in high school.
- Collaborations among high school and college administrators, including senior leaders and high school and college faculty and counselors, have proven fruitful, but challenges remain. For example, logistical barriers make it hard for educators to come together in face-to-face meetings to engage in joint planning. One CCR team member observed

difficulties in bringing secondary and postsecondary educators together, saying, “The biggest hurdle we see... is logistics. Some of the team [members]... could only continue if we [met] after school, some only during [school].” Finding times to meet that work for everyone is sometimes difficult, and this slows progress. Taking advantage of modern technology has the potential to reduce logistical barriers, but few pilot sites have these resources. This capacity issue is particularly acute at the secondary level.

## Ongoing Challenges and Recommendations

One challenge is the lack of an adequate college readiness assessment tool that can both diagnose students’ preparedness for college-level instruction and also effectively measure gains that result from students’ participation in a CCR program. The pilot sites have used the ACT knowledge exam as well as COMPASS and ASSET, ACT’s college placement tests. Together, these exams have provided information that is useful for determining students’ starting points in the college curriculum, but they have not provided the rich diagnostic information CCR site personnel need to remediate skills gaps. Further, the computer adaptive COMPASS exam was not designed to be used as a pre- and post-test instrument, and this central issue is being examined in OCCRL’s evaluation during FY12.

In addition, the evaluation project has faced difficulties gathering consistent quantitative data on student performance, due, in part, to the variety of models that have been used by the CCR pilot sites and inconsistencies in institutional data systems. Fortunately, issues with collecting student-level data that were experienced in the early years of the grant were addressed in FY11. During this period, OCCRL provided technical assistance to site personnel to help them use a new online data collection system that has led to more uniform data reporting.

Having completed several years of the CCR pilot program, the seven sites have a base of experience, but an ongoing challenge is to share lessons with colleagues at other institutions and build the most effective local interventions possible. More facilitated communication would allow CCR leaders to learn what is working in the various sites and might also encourage the development of a CCR model that has the potential to be sustained and scaled up across the state.

Whereas these challenges are large, there are also opportunities to leverage the collaborations initiated through CCR. One such opportunity is provided by the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts. The new standards stress focused and coherent curriculum and instruction that will require greater communication across grade levels.

## Future Plans

This year’s focus for the CCR pilot evaluation will address the questions of how many students have been served and whether college-level remediation has been reduced for participating students, whether policies and programs have the potential for implementation in other sites, and how continuously improving student-level data collection can help to better measure student transition from high school to college.

The OCCRL team also strives to build closer relationships with the pilot sites and to facilitate inter-site relationship building, with the evaluators engaging the CCR pilot program staff in five workgroups on: 1) curriculum alignment and community college-high school collaboration; 2) innovative instruction and pedagogy; 3) assessment; 4) college and career success; and 5) community engagement. By addressing these issues, the CCR has the potential to help enhance partnerships between high schools and community colleges and improve college readiness in Illinois. ♦

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# Accelerating Opportunity Initiative Awards Grants to Eleven States to Transform Adult Education

by Maria K. Flynn, *Jobs for the Future*

This article is reprinted by permission of Ms. Maria Flynn, Vice President of the Building Economic Opportunity Group, Jobs for the Future, and Mr. Jeffrey Fantine, Senior Project Director, Kratos Learning Solutions, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education. Additional information about adult career pathways can be found at the *Adult Career Pathways Training and Support Center* at [www.acp-sc.org](http://www.acp-sc.org).

*Accelerating Opportunity: A Breaking Through Initiative* is responding to the nation's growing need for improved pathways from adult education to obtaining skills of value in the labor market. This Jobs for the Future initiative aims to drive economic recovery for individuals and communities by substantially increasing the number of adults who earn the credentials they need to be hired and succeed in family-sustaining jobs.

It is more important than ever for adults to access college, quickly advance their skills, and earn credentials that lead to meaningful jobs where they live. A postsecondary credential is essential for securing jobs that pay family-supporting wages. According to recent estimates from the National Center on Education and the Workforce, by 2018 over 60 percent of available jobs will require postsecondary education. Job opportunities for people without a high school or postsecondary credential rarely offer wages that lead to economic security. However, many of the postsecondary programs that might lead to family-sustaining careers are out of reach for the 26 million adults without a high school credential or the 93 million adults with low literacy levels. They are unprepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training programs.

For these low-skilled adults who need to build their skills, the Adult Basic Education (ABE) system is the primary option, but it is a system that lacks the capacity to serve more than a fraction of its target population. Of those who do enroll, only a few advance their skills and transition to postsecondary credentialing programs in high-demand fields. To break the intergenerational transmission of poverty in America, *Accelerating Opportunity* seeks to fundamentally change the way ABE is delivered.

In August, *Accelerating Opportunity* awarded planning grants to 11 states — Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, and Wisconsin. These funds will support planning for the redesign of ABE and postsecondary programs to integrate basic skills with practical, occupational training. The goal of such changes would be to change the way ABE is structured and delivered at state and institutional levels, while ensuring that state and institutional policies encourage improved student outcomes in postsecondary credentialing programs. These outcomes can create successful pathways for lower-skilled adults that lead to economic security.

Later this year, four to six of these states will receive implementation grants of \$1.6 million each over three years to implement and scale up integrated college and career pathway designs that result in more ABE students completing credentials valued in the labor market. By 2014, the initiative will engage nearly 40 community colleges across the country as states and colleges scale up and sustain programs that give adults access to marketable credentials. By addressing policy, systemic, and programmatic barriers, *Accelerating Opportunity* will ensure that at least 18,000 students attain valuable credentials. They will earn 12 or more college-level credits, prepare to succeed in earning college credentials, and gain skills they need to succeed in family-sustaining employment.

*Accelerating Opportunity* represents an unprecedented philanthropic investment in Adult Basic Education. The initiative receives support from a strategic collaboration of diverse foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, and the Open Society Foundation.

For program and implementation expertise, JFF has engaged three strategic partners: the National Council on Workforce Education (NCWE); the National College Transition Network; and the Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges. The initiative builds on and takes to statewide scale a set of proven practices from Washington State's I-BEST program and from *Breaking Through*, JFF's innovative adult education collaboration with NCWE. ♦

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For more information on *Accelerating Opportunity*, visit <http://www.acceleratingopportunity.org>.

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# Developing and Leveraging Partnerships and Collaboration to Transition Adult Students into Postsecondary Education and Employment

by Jason Taylor

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The Accelerating Opportunity initiative seeks to fundamentally reform adult education by integrating Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) to develop and implement pathways to postsecondary education and employment for adults. Accelerating Opportunity is based on previous efforts associated with Breaking Through and Washington State's I BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training). Core to the Accelerating Opportunity change strategy is the engagement of multiple stakeholders at the state and local levels, including community and technical colleges, ABE programs, higher education agencies, state policymakers, federal agencies, community and business organizations, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), employers, students, technical assistance (TA) providers, and philanthropic partners (Pleasant, 2011).

This article highlights local collaborative practices based on data collected by OCCRL researchers Debra Bragg and Jason Taylor (2011) from policy audits involving eight community colleges in Illinois that have been designated Accelerating Opportunity sites. Illinois was one of 11 states awarded an Accelerating Opportunity design-phase grant and invited to apply for an implementation grant, with the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) leading the initiative for the state. Through collaborative efforts of the ICCB and the eight community colleges that began in spring 2011, Illinois has determined that its model will be called the Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS).

## Developing and Building Partnerships

All eight participating community colleges implementing ICAPS have experience developing curriculum and instructional materials that link adult education to postsecondary education having already received a grant from the ICCB to do so. Seven of the colleges have also implemented bridge programs, and these efforts have led to the development of new internal and external partnerships that have played an important role in ensuring the programs were meeting students' needs.

Internally, adult education programs have developed partnerships with academic and student support divisions of the community colleges. For example, adult education units have collaborated with CTE and developmental education divisions to design (and deliver, in some cases) contextualized bridge curriculum. Participation in Accelerating Opportunity strengthened existing partnerships and cultivated additional partnerships to

support ICAPS curriculum design and development efforts, particularly between non-credit adult education and credit CTE. An illustrative case is Lake Land College whose the ICAPS leadership team includes the Adult Education and Transitions Coordinator and the Dean of CTE. Previous collaboration between leadership in these two units resulted in the integration of welding and reading content that was co-taught by a basic skills instructor and a CTE instructor. This program received strong support from basic skills and CTE faculty, which strengthened Lake Land's planning efforts for ICAPS. Collaboration of adult education and CTE personnel is fundamental to the success of the ICAPS model because the Accelerating Opportunity initiative is expected to lead to meaningful credentials that are aligned with career pathways.

Internal partnerships have also developed between academic units and student services units. In many cases, bridge programs are fundamental to implementing reforms to student services, with adult education students being better integrated into the college campus. At four sites involved in ICAPS implementation, adult education students recently acquired access to the full range of support services accessible to college-level students, an action that was facilitated by earlier bridge programming efforts. Prior to the bridge programs, adult students were unable to access student services, including access to college advisors who could share information about financial aid, academic supports, and other services.

Further, as part of ICAPS or earlier bridge programs, many of the eight colleges hired individuals who are responsible for providing transition and support services to adult students, or they designated existing college personnel to provide these services. For example, two years ago Lewis & Clark Community College hired a coordinator to provide support services to low-skilled adults participating in the local Shifting Gears initiative. Additionally, a new committee at Lewis & Clark was recently created within student services to align support services between adult education and student services units. Lewis & Clark's experience with bridge programs through Shifting Gears provided valuable insights into the nature of internal partnerships necessary to make the new ICAPS model work.

External partnerships with local employers, community and business organizations, Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs), and other private entities are evident in Illinois community colleges that are designing ICAPS programs. These organizations were perceived by many ICAPS design teams as

vital partners in the delivery and support of various elements of the model. For example, at Elgin Community College, local employers in the Welding and Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) Operations occupations advised on the nature of increased job growth and attrition. Further, faculty affiliated with CTE and workforce development at Elgin had developed strong relationships with local employers that were useful to recruitment, support, and placement services for the ICAPS program.

The involvement of community and business organizations is also evident in the ICAPS program at Richard J. Daley College. To deliver existing bridge programs, Daley developed strong partnerships with Instituto del Progreso Latino (see: <http://www.idpl.org/>) and Central States SER (see: <http://www.centralstateser.org/SER/>), two community organizations that are integrated in both instructional and service dimensions of bridge programming. These partnerships were perceived by design team members as strong assets to ICAPS implementation efforts.

### Leveraging Existing Partnerships to Implement ICAPS

Data gathered by the institutional policy audit (Bragg & Taylor, 2011) confirmed that past experience with partnerships were critical to nearly all new ICAPS program planning and implementation efforts. These data showed that design team members intended to leverage existing partnerships that were key to developing contextualized bridge programs involving faculty partnerships between adult education and CTE, and sometimes also workforce providers. Experience with basic skills faculty and CTE faculty collaboration was perceived as an asset to new ICAPS activities. For example, Daley College's extensive experience with bridge programs in health sciences created strong partnerships between faculty teaching basic skills and health sciences. As a result, the local design team had already developed contextualized curriculum by engaging in joint planning time and team teaching, both key features of the ICAPS model.

Another point of leverage for ICAPS colleges was drawing on lessons learned about financing programs for adult students. Most of the colleges were pursuing financial assistance from existing partners, and some colleges were reaching out to new partners. For example, the design team at the College of Lake County was considering using federal Perkins funds to pay for textbooks and certification exams. At Danville Area Community College, a large private capital campaign is underway with dedicated money for student scholarships, and the design team is exploring using these funds to support ICAPS students.

Other colleges such as McHenry County College and Lincoln Land Community College are also considering supporting students with private scholarship funding. Finally, a few colleges are engaging their LWIBs in discussions about funding ICAPS students. For example, Elgin Community College reached out to its LWIBs, and one agreed to issue Individual Training Accounts and share the cost of an ICAPS case manager.

The examples of partnerships presented in this article brush the surface of what has happened in Illinois' ICAPS initiative and prior bridge programming. More collaborative efforts are bound to emerge as Illinois community colleges align efforts and resources to better serve adult students through ICAPS and other initiatives that attempt to address the needs of adults who seek the opportunity to attend college and obtain postsecondary credentials. ♦

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### Related Resources

For additional information on Accelerating Opportunity: A Breaking Through Initiative, see: <http://acceleratingopportunity.org/>

For additional information on Breaking Through, see: <http://breakingthroughcc.org/>

For additional information on Washington State's I-Best model, see: [http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e\\_integratedbasiceducationandskillstraining.asp](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e_integratedbasiceducationandskillstraining.asp)

For additional information on Shifting Gears, see: <http://www.shifting-gears.org/>

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# Partnership Research for Advanced Technological Education (ATE)

by Louise Yarnall

Workforce educators have a range of approaches for developing and updating instructional programs that meet the needs of employers and industry, but there has never been a study that documents these relationships and identifies various approaches that work. In a project conducted by SRI International, a non-profit research institute in Menlo Park, CA, researchers are conducting case studies of how such partnerships are established and sustained.

“This project focuses on an area of workforce preparation with particular interest to policy audiences—those programs that upgrade the skills of the American worker for the middle class jobs of the future,” said Louise Yarnall, a senior researcher and the study’s principal investigator.

The study centers on four case studies in a range of fields—network technology, engineering technology, biotechnology, and wind energy—and encompasses a range of partnerships, from those with a narrowly local scope to those with regional and national outreach. The research, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), focuses on community college educators affiliated with the agency’s Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program. Like the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Improvement program, ATE provides federal support for workforce education, but ATE specializes in high technology, high-skill fields that often require knowledge related to mathematics and science.

The research team, which includes Raymond McGhee, Robert Murphy, Carolyn Dornsife, and Geneva Haertel of SRI, and Joseph Ames of Ames & Associates, is drawing on past research and their own findings. To characterize the complexity of instructional collaboration between industry and educators, the researchers have developed a model. It traces the many processes of such collaborations, from establishing complementary roles and setting mutual goals to translating those goals into classroom practice and measureable outcomes (see graphic).

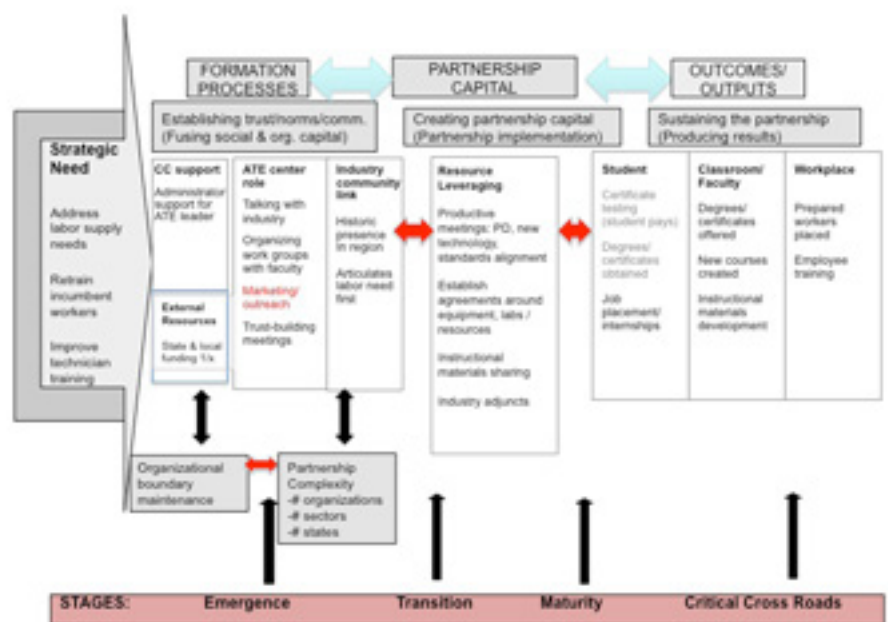
The model involves four key cycles: (1) The identification of strategic needs; (2) the formation and redefinition of the partnership; (3) the development and evolution of mutual benefits (which Amey, Eddy, and Campbell [2010] have called *partnership capital*); and, (4) iterative review and response to partnership outputs and outcomes.

Since instructional programs are a primary output of such partnerships, the study will also take a close look at the features of technician education curricula, programs, and instruction. In particular, researchers will employ classroom observations, surveys, and expert panel reviews of classroom assignments, assessments, and student work to characterize the level of rigor and workplace relevance in courses. These courses will be selected from across the continuum of a certificate or associate’s program.

Ultimately the study will result in a set of rich cases and other tools. The goal is to produce research products that workforce practitioners—both administrators and instructors—can use to deepen understanding of their own partnership efforts. ♦

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## ATE-CC Partnership Conceptual Model



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# Strategies for Involving Partners in Pathways to Results

by Kristy Morelock and Amanda Corso, Illinois Community College Board

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In its third year, the Pathways to Results (PTR) process is being applied to implementation of Programs of Study throughout the state. Illinois' PTR initiative involves community colleges, high schools, Education for Employment (EFE) regions, employers, and other partners who work together to engage in continuous improvement projects in a wide range of career cluster areas. For more information about PTR, see <http://occr.illinois.edu/projects/pathways>.

Drawing on experiences of facilitators who have been working with PTR teams, we offer 10 lessons useful to engaging partners in improving Programs of Study.

1. When writing your annual Postsecondary Perkins Career and Technical Education Plan, it is important to identify partners to be part of your Programs of Study (POS) initiative. Reaching out to partners early helps local teams to ramp up their Pathways to Results (PTR) project quickly. As part of Phase One of PTR, consider hosting a Charter signing event to solidify partner commitment to the process.
2. Think about all of the different groups that can be involved in your partnership: school districts, EFE regions, area career centers, colleges and universities, employers, community-based organizations (CBOs), local workforce investment boards (LWIBs), and professionals who work with underserved and non-traditional populations. Including a wide variety of partners enhances opportunities to integrate diverse perspectives that are needed to meet students' needs.
3. Reach out to as many business and industry partners as possible. These partners are important to understanding knowledge and skills that are valued in the workplace, including information about how work environments are integrating technology, teams, and other changes to enhance quality and productivity.
4. Use partners' time wisely. Engage them in meaningful dialogues that help the team reach consensus on important aspects of Programs of Study implementation. Facilitate involvement in face-to-face meetings as well as other formats, such as phone, email, and Internet, to facilitate access and participation.
5. An important, yet often neglected, group to include as a partner is students. Current and former students are eager to contribute ideas to improve Programs of Study. They are an outstanding source of information about what is working and what is not, and about what worked well for them and what did not.
6. Understand that all your partners are busy. Ask them what times work best to schedule meetings, whether face-to-face or electronic. Hold meetings at times that are convenient for as many partners as possible. A regular scheduled meeting is often helpful to partners because they can anticipate the time commitment and calendar the events well in advance.
7. Make good use of all partners' time, including conducting pre-planning for major meetings, providing team members with a consent agenda prior to the meeting, and staying on task during the meeting. Taking the pulse of the group during meetings is very important to sustaining the interest of partners in Programs of Study work.
8. Remember that some partners may not be familiar with terminology and acronyms that are used regularly by educators. Talking about a "POS" or "PTR project" may sound like a foreign language to partners who are unfamiliar with curriculum projects such as these, especially partners who are inexperienced in working with education. To address this concern, consider preparing a list of frequently used acronyms, posting these acronyms on the project website, and taking time to explain the acronyms to all partners.
9. Realize partners are not static, and you can always add new partners. As teams progress through the PTR process, it is often advantageous to add new partners who bring expertise as the POS improvement project unfolds. When considering new partners, be sure to poll existing partners. They may know exactly the right groups and representatives to invite.
10. Recognize that some organizations have contributions to make to the PTR process, but they may not be able to commit to being a formal partner. By building relationships, organizational contributors may evolve into partners, and these efforts need to be nurtured and strategic over time.



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