



Schools for a New Society

Leads the Way



Schools for a New Society: An Initiative of Carnegie Corporation of New York

Schools for a New Society

Leads the way

***"Schools for a New Society* cities are laboratories to demonstrate you don't have to accept the deterministic view that nothing can be done to improve high schools and to show that there's hope, that you can succeed. We have seven different communities to compare so we can say the ultimate success is based on proven results."**

VARTAN GREGORIAN, PRESIDENT, CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK

Schools for a New Society: Challenges and Opportunities

Take a look at the seven communities at the heart of Carnegie Corporation of New York's *Schools for a New Society* initiative, and you'll see how each is meeting some of the most significant challenges and opportunities facing large urban high schools today. With guidance from business and civic leaders and diverse grassroots organizations, each community is charting a course for high school reform that can be supported by everyone with a stake in educational success. The initiative's goals are to ensure that all students meet high standards for academic achievement, are prepared for postsecondary education, the 21st century workforce and their roles as citizens in a democratic society.

A top priority of the initiative is to make sure that all students can read and understand the complex written materials that make up the high school curriculum. The communities are also intently focusing on addressing learning gaps in writing and mathematics instruction that hinder academic progress. Many are redesigning large, comprehensive urban schools into small learning communities and all are adopting other measures to personalize learning and bring accountability to

the urban student's learning experience. In addition, all are steadily transforming the obsolete "factory model" schools of yesteryear into schools that meet the individual learning needs of each student.

Schools for a New Society is based on the assumption that the know-how already exists about how to create good high schools, but not about how to create entire systems of good high schools. Accomplishing that will require changing the way school districts manage and lead high schools, as well as how they mobilize the resources of the larger community to both demand excellent high schools where all students can reach high levels of achievement and contribute to their success. While all of these measures are important for the communities involved with the *Schools for a New Society* initiative, there also is a larger vision at work. "What we learn from this initiative we want to share with other district and high school reform advocates, so they can learn from our best practices and implement them based on local needs and desires. Our goal is to build on the momentum we are creating in this original set of seven communities," says Vartan Gregorian, President of Carnegie Corporation of New York.



The Schools for a New Society communities are:

Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts; Hamilton County (Chattanooga), Tennessee; Houston, Texas; Providence, Rhode Island; Sacramento and San Diego, California.

In these communities, supporters are working to create a road map to urban high school improvement. These are communities striving to ensure that students in large and often overcrowded urban schools interact one-on-one with caring adults every day. Communities that are committed to vastly improving teaching, with stepped-up reading and mathematics instruction across the curriculum. Communities where every public school will one day be equal to the community's "very best."



Supported by **CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK**, and with additional support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, *Schools for a New Society* is effecting sweeping, large-scale reform and reinvention of secondary schools in seven urban communities. *Schools for a New Society* began in 2001 with Carnegie Corporation and Gates Foundation funding, which will last for five years. Each community is receiving \$8 million, except for Houston, which is receiving \$12 million because of its larger size. The funds, to be used to carry out reforms, are locally matched. Additionally, the Corporation is investing in a national technical support strategy led by the Academy for Educational Development with assistance from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform and New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy. SRI International and the American Institutes for Research are conducting the national evaluation.

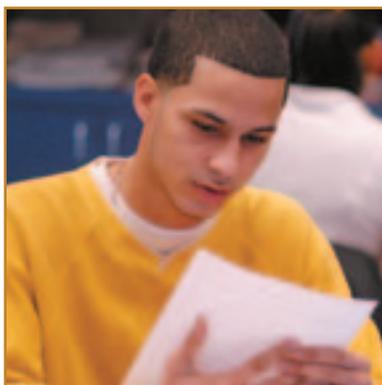
KEY TO THIS EFFORT IS PROMOTING REFORM OF SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICIES AND PRACTICES that help to shape teaching and learning in high schools. Through its grantmaking, the Corporation provides resources to community organizations with a substantial history of working to improve student achievement and workforce preparedness, enabling

these organizations to lead and manage a school and district renewal process. Critical components of the initiative include:

- Encouraging and supporting partnerships between businesses, universities, parent and student groups and community organizations committed to high school reinvention.
- Holding all schools accountable for helping every student to meet high standards and to be prepared for participation in higher education, in the workforce, and in confronting the challenges and opportunities of 21st century society.
- Raising graduation requirements to ensure that all students take rigorous courses and succeed in them so they are prepared to accomplish their goals in college, the workforce and life.
- Transforming large, impersonal high schools into small learning communities or small schools to personalize the student learning experience.
- Improving teaching by providing intensive professional development and giving teachers time to work as teams to help all students succeed.

“At the heart of *Schools for a New Society* is the concept of district reform, reflecting the understanding that in order to improve education for all students, entire school districts must change the way they deploy their resources—fiscal, organizational and political—to support high schools. Each community uses approaches tailored specifically to its students’ individual and collective needs to achieve these goals.”

CONSTANCIA WARREN, DIRECTOR, URBAN HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVES, CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK



A Common Approach for Enduring Challenges

Creating schools that prepare graduates for the demands and opportunities of a new society is an exciting challenge for the hundreds of teachers, administrators, parents, students and community leaders who are guiding this initiative. To succeed, however, many must change attitudes and perceptions created by school systems of the present and past. Most daunting, according to many school and community leaders, is the fear of *change* itself.

That fear can be manifested in strikingly personal ways. At Feinstein High School in Providence, for example, some parents were initially resistant to the proposed reforms simply because they worried Feinstein would become too different from its public school counterparts. Yet many of those striving for improvements understand why they often seem to come at a glacial pace. For example, one Houston educator noted, “you can’t expect these schools, which were created more than a century ago, to change overnight.”

That belief is common among veteran educators who have come to view school *reform* as a never-ending journey riddled with detours spurred by, as one *Schools for a New Society* observer noted, “all sorts of new ideas that only seem viable because they haven’t been tried before.” Although many dedicated school leaders have successfully

**SCHOOLS FOR A NEW SOCIETY
DESIGN PRINCIPLES:**

- **Building a working partnership between the urban school district and a leading community nonprofit.**
- **Redesigning the district to change how organizational and fiscal resources are mobilized and deployed to support schools.**
- **Leveraging community support and demand for excellent education for all students.**
- **Creating a citywide portfolio of excellent high schools, not just isolated islands of high achievement.**

prevailed in battles to raise achievement at some individual schools, few have succeeded in scaling the Himalayan-sized challenge of improving entire urban districts where the topography of needs may differ greatly from school to school and even from class to class.



While each of the *Schools for a New Society* communities do have unique characteristics, all face one or more of the challenges that are common to urban schools across the nation: the rapid turnover of superintendents, school leaders and teachers. The large number of students who cannot read, write or understand English. The need to make large, antiquated and often impractically designed school buildings safe and nurturing places for learning. And the endless struggle to raise enough resources amid limited budgets.

The school districts and core partners in this effort also recognize that changes in district practices will be needed if the successful practices of one school are to be replicated with significant results community-wide. They acknowledge improvements can only be sustained across entire school districts when education and community leaders are committed to working in

partnership with political leaders to address financial inequities that have stunted progress in the past.

At Feinstein High, earlier worries about reform have given way to optimism as more college acceptance letters are delivered to area homes. In many schools serving a large number



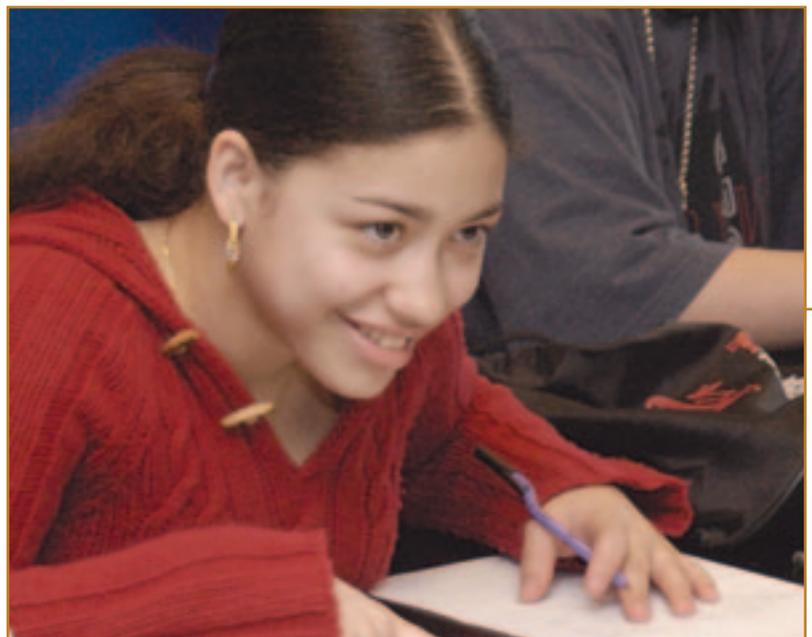
Reading for success in **Boston, Massachusetts.**

In Boston, school and community leaders were concerned that so many of the city's high school students felt disconnected from their schools. And with so many struggling to read, write, or speak the English language, teachers were likewise struggling to engage them with effective instruction or dialogue about the connections between educational achievement and success in higher education and careers.

But today that dialogue rings loud and clear as teachers work collaboratively to boost student achievement across the curriculum. They're guided by literacy coaches who have established a corps of high school literacy "anchors" who share their knowledge and expertise with teachers. As literacy grows, so do meaningful connections between teachers and students and the challenging content they are working together to master. This ambitious, system-wide literacy effort is just one component of the strategy crafted through a partnership between Boston Public Schools and its core

of students for whom English is a second language, specially trained coaches are leading teachers through small group workshops on how to incorporate literacy instruction into subjects across the curriculum. In many cities, overcrowded secondary schools are being reorganized into small learning communities, many of which have a clear focus on a career, academic or thematic topic that enables students to build on interests and aptitudes to create a clear path to postgraduate success.

Will district-wide renewal be achieved quickly? Of course not. But with the indomitable spirit and will of educators, parents, students and core partners working together to create *Schools for a New Society*, thousands of students are finding that the universe of possibilities is growing wider, and brighter, day by day.





BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- 18,000 High School Students
 - 9 Comprehensive High Schools
 - 17 Small Schools
 - 3 Exam Schools
 - 1 Alternative School

Student Demographics (Grades 9–12):

■ Asian	9.9%
African-American	48.3%
Caucasian	15.6%
Hispanic	25.8%
Other	.4%

Schools for a New Society Core Partners:

- Boston Plan For Excellence in the Public Schools
- Jobs for the Future
- Boston Private Industry Council
- Center for Collaborative Education

partners, the Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools, Jobs for the Future, the Center for Collaborative Education and the Boston Private Industry Council. Working together, these partners are also reorganizing the district’s comprehensive secondary schools into small learning communities and small schools with distinct identities that offer intensive instruction in English and mathematics. These smaller settings allow for close attention to every student’s needs.

In addition, school-business partnerships connect students with job and training opportunities with employers. Representing the financial services industry, the healthcare community, the field of telecommunications and many other career paths, these business partnerships ensure that more students understand the connection between their school experiences and the workplace—and gain valuable experience on the path to graduation, higher education and careers. Contributing to all of this success is the work of the Boston Student Advisory Council, a citywide body of student leaders who convene monthly, and meet with the superintendent and members of the school board to offer their perspectives on school renewal efforts and inform their respective schools about progress on district-wide school improvement.

One steady track to achievement for all students in
Hamilton County (Chattanooga), Tennessee.

Small learning communities are also a part of the strategy in Hamilton County (Chattanooga), Tennessee, where the community brought an end to the policy of having three tracks for high school students: one for students headed to college, another for students going immediately into the workforce, and a third that offered students both possibilities. Hamilton County's single path to graduation is being implemented in academies that offer career-based lessons tied to state standards.

Each school has developed ambitious benchmarks for improvement including 95 percent of all entering 9th grade students proceeding to 10th grade in one year; attendance rates exceeding 95 percent; 90 percent of all students passing the state's mandatory exams on the first try; 90 percent of students graduating from high school; more students applying to and being accepted to college. The schools based their plans on ideas generated in focus groups and community forums, information from national experts, visits to high-performing high schools, and extensive local research to develop effective educational practices and improve schools' learning cultures.

**HAMILTON COUNTY
(CHATTANOOGA) SCHOOLS**

- **12,300 High School Students**
- **8 Comprehensive High Schools**
- **3 Small Schools**
- **4 Magnet Schools**
- **2 Vocational Schools**
- **1 Alternative School**

Student Demographics (Grades 9–12):

■ Asian	1.6%
■ African-American	35.1%
■ Caucasian	61.9%
■ Hispanic	1.3%
■ Other	.1%

Schools for a New Society Core Partner:

- **Public Education Foundation of Hamilton County**
www.pefchattanooga.org/www/docs/3/new_society/

"The drive to do away with these tracks occurred after attending a *Schools for a New Society* learning exchange with other communities participating in the program. The interaction with these colleagues created the right chemistry for us to resolve to create a single path diploma for all of our

"We've already seen great progress from the Carnegie Corporation initiative, and the funds will help us broaden the impact of these efforts through providing much-needed resources to help more students apply and gain access to college."

DANIEL CHALLENGER, PRESIDENT, PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF HAMILTON COUNTY

students,” says Bill Kennedy, the director of the *Schools for a New Society* grant for the Public Education Foundation of Hamilton County. The single academic path also increased the number of math and science courses and added two years of foreign language. With these adjustments, all graduates will accrue 22 credits (versus the 20 that the state requires). The community is pursuing these goals through four key activities: fostering more personalized learning experiences, building more engaging curricula, creating a professional learning community, and ensuring flexibility in courses.

In Houston, Texas, personal attention guides learning and achievement district-wide.

In Houston, educators and community leaders are transforming the city’s large secondary schools into small, personalized learning communities with a clear focus on careers, academic disciplines or thematic topics. This move from a “factory model” to a “custom-built” education for each student drives improvements district-wide as literacy coaches work in partnership with dedicated teachers to ensure students strengthen basic skills and



HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

- **48,200 High School Students**
- **23 Comprehensive High Schools**
- **4 Charter Schools**
- **4 Magnet Schools**
- **1 Vocational School**
- **10 Alternative Schools and Programs**

Student Demographics (Grades 9–12):

■ Asian	3.7%
■ African-American	31.5%
■ Caucasian	12.2%
■ Hispanic	52.5%
■ Other	.1%

***Schools for a New Society* Core Partner:**

- **Houston A+ Challenge**
www.houstonaplus.org/hsns.htm and
com.houstonisd.org/sns/

tailor special aptitudes and interests to higher education and career opportunities. Students are also gaining personalized support through one-on-one meetings with adult advocates (usually teachers). The adult advocate gets to know each student on a personal, social and academic level and stays with the same group of students for all four years of high school. The advocate also makes the students aware of academic scholarship opportunities. “This is a new take on the old ‘home room’ concept. This modern version makes it more viable and more interactive,” says Armando Alaniz, assistant superintendent for high school improvement and accountability.



All of this work is guided by support from the Houston A+ Challenge, which conducts professional development and community engagement activities to strengthen support for the district-wide renewal effort.

Alaniz says, “My advice for other districts going through this is to ensure you have everyone at the table, including those representing special populations and the business community. You can’t work in isolation. Most importantly, we need to continue improving teaching and learning because that’s at the heart of all this work—the relationship between the teacher and the student. The teachers must be rigorous and relevant as they are building relationships.”



In Providence, Rhode Island, small schools and schools within schools yield multiple paths to success.

Diversity is also an important issue in Providence, Rhode Island, where 52 percent of the students come from homes of Hispanic origin, and many parents know little or no English. With support from the Rhode Island Children’s Crusade, community forums are being held on an ongoing basis to build stronger connections between the families of these children and those in the school community. The forums also enable school and community leaders to share information about the district’s ambitious efforts to create smaller schools and smaller learning communities, where students can receive personalized instruction tailored to their aptitudes and needs.



PROVIDENCE SCHOOLS

- 7,000 High School Students
 - 4 Comprehensive High Schools
 - 6 Small Schools
 - 2 Charter Schools
 - 1 Vocational School

Student Demographics (Grades 9–12):

■ Asian	8.5%
African-American	24.9%
Caucasian	16.3%
Hispanic	49.6%
Other	.7%

Schools for a New Society Core Partner:

- Rhode Island Children's Crusade
www.providenceschools.org/rkd_redesign.cfm

At Hope High School, one of the first to be divided into smaller learning communities, students have the opportunity for personalized studies in information technology, the arts or leadership development. While there have been some challenges to having three separate school sites located in one physical facility, the rigorous and focused curricula are yielding benefits. Prior to the reorganization, only 60 percent of Hope students took the mandatory state exams. Now, more than 95 percent take them, and scores are starting to rise.

This is good news for Melody Johnson, superintendent of Providence Public Schools. It's also an incentive to keep pushing for reforms that will lead to improvements at schools across the district. "Carnegie Corporation learned from its middle school efforts that you can't tinker around the edges," she says. "We have to make substantial changes, and you must stay the course."

That's a message that rings loud and true at Feinstein High School, where the staff makes every effort to ensure that all students and their families understand that hard work and perseverance will continue launching more and more students to success in higher education and beyond. Feinstein's principal finds that it often helps to compare the offerings and the outcomes of Feinstein to those at Providence's "best" public school, where admittance is determined by test scores, and where academic achievement is the highest in the district. She also focuses on efforts to recognize achievement and raise aspirations school-wide. Just outside her office is a "Higher Education Destinations" board—every time a student is admitted to a college, he or she gets to affix a star to the board, indicating which college or university the student will attend after graduation. The board is covered with these stars—ample evidence that students, teachers, administrators and the community as a whole are indeed looking beyond "limits."



In Sacramento, California, students gain from a portfolio of small schools.

Some community members in the Sacramento City Unified School District saw that as the 20th century was coming to an end, there was a major crisis in the high schools. Less than one-third of the district’s students were able to attend college. The typical 9th grader received at least three “Ds” or “Fs” by the end of the school year.

Parents, students, teachers, elected officials and others came together and decided major changes were needed. Realizing they lacked a vision to match their energy, they studied why and how some high schools across the nation succeeded and others failed. They quickly saw a strong link between high-performing schools and personalized learning. Research by Michael Klonsky at the University of Illinois showed that students in such communities attend classes more often, exhibit fewer discipline problems, earn higher grade-point averages and are more likely to stay in school.

Once the community was mobilized, traditional, comprehensive schools gave way to small learning communities (consisting of only 300–500 students) that are housed in existing large high schools and literal “small schools” (enrolling no more than 500 students). While students are quick to give a “thumbs-up” to the improvement of the learning experience, they’re also gaining confidence in their ability to achieve, as indicated by the marked increases in high school exit exam scores and literacy and mathematical competence. The community’s common vision for its high school students calls for “graduates...who are prepared to meet the highest academic standards in California, the nation and the world and successfully compete in the workforce.”

SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

- **13,000 High School Students**
 - 5 Comprehensive High Schools
 - 5 Charter Small Schools
 - 1 Charter consisting of six schools
 - 1 Magnet School
 - 3 Alternative Schools and Programs

Student Demographics (Grades 9–12):

■ Asian	30.4%
African-American	20.1%
Caucasian	21.9%
Hispanic	24.8%
Other	2.8%

Schools for a New Society Core Partner:

- **LEED Sacramento (Linking Education and Economic Development)**
www.studentsfirst.info



“Now there is an environment for every student and every need. Each school, no matter how it’s structured, ensures that teachers know their students and stay in contact with their families. This is a big contrast to the way it used to be done, when each teacher saw an average of 185 students each semester.”

DEANNA HANSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, LEED SACRAMENTO

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

- 36,900 High School Students
 - 13 Comprehensive High Schools
 - 14 Small Schools
 - 6 K–12, 6–12, or 7–12 Schools
 - 4 Charter Schools
 - 1 Alternative School

Student Demographics (Grades 9–12):

■ Asian	19.8%
African-American	14.5%
Caucasian	28.7%
Hispanic	36.5%
Other	.5%

Schools for a New Society Core Partners:

- New American Schools
- University of California, San Diego

In San Diego, California, aspirations and achievement are an enduring mix.

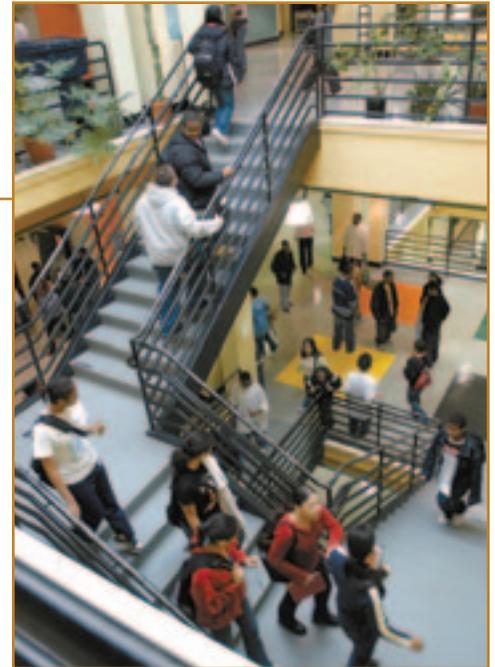
In San Diego, where many students come from households where the primary language is Spanish, Cambodian, Laotian, Somali or Vietnamese, diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity for a school district striving to increase academic rigor and personalize the student learning experience. Many approaches—including the use of mentors and “impact teachers” who develop and share special expertise in each core academic subject—are being employed.

The movement toward rigor also includes having 9th graders study applied physics. “I find it exciting to be part of this big effort. I think of it as a challenge; it’s important for us as a society,” says Danine Ezell, a science resource teacher in the San Diego City Schools. “This is the one part of society I think I can change because it’s important to



“I’ve been in AVID since 7th grade and have been thinking about college ever since then. I cried when I got the letter saying I got into college. Without AVID I would have just been an average student.”

**JULIA MONTES, CLAIREMONT HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR,
SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS**



have citizens who understand science. And, best of all, we’re not just one small part of the equation that is trying to improve education. We’re an integral element of a larger renewal effort at the high school level.”

Another approach involves a push to empower students with intense college preparation skills. At schools with this focus, all students attend courses tied to the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program. AVID has a long history of boosting achievement, participation in Advanced Placement® courses and college admission especially among African American and Latino students.

AVID succeeds by offering students intensive tutoring help, activities that build their study and note-taking habits, motivational sessions that encourage students to pursue leadership activities and access to college scholarship and admission information. The high school students also benefit from tutoring provided by recent high school graduates who want to give something back to their former learning communities.

WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- **6,800 High School Students**
- **4 Comprehensive High Schools**
- **1 Vocational School**
- **2 Small Schools**
- **1 Community Learning Program**

Student Demographics (Grades 9–12):

■ Asian	7.6%
African-American	12.9%
Caucasian	49.5%
Hispanic	29.5%
Other	.5%

Schools for a New Society Core Partner:

- **Clark University, Hiatt Center for Urban Education**

***In Worcester, Massachusetts,
diversity drives success.***

In Worcester, observers of school renewal strategies will see some of the best examples of the benefits of transforming sprawling urban schools into small learning communities. They will also see a remarkable effort to recognize and build on the strengths of diversity across the community.

The effort started in 2001, when the Worcester Working Coalition for Latino Students (WWCLS) joined the Worcester Education Partnership at Clark University to begin reconstituting the city's comprehensive high schools into 17 small learning communities. The transition to a more personalized learning environment has enabled Worcester faculty and staff to place a greater emphasis on literacy and individual attention for students. The move has also enabled faculty to form closer relationships with students' families.

Throughout the community, efforts to improve students' reading and writing abilities are driven by a cadre of literacy coaches, each assigned to an individual school. According to Secondary School Restructuring Coordinator Jane Grady, the efforts are yielding results. "Breaking up comprehensive schools is a good idea in Worcester," says

Brady, "because it's vital and important that educators understand their students; it's important that someone knows and cares about the students. That is lost in a school that has 1,200 students."

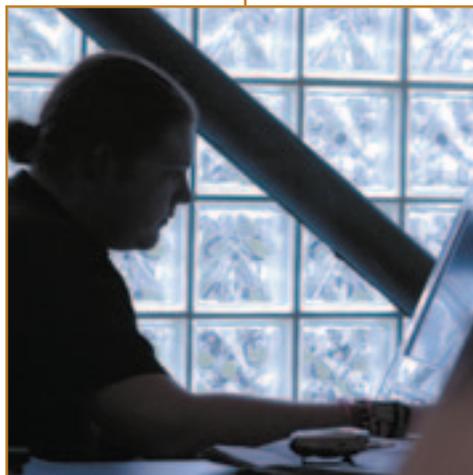
Tom Del Prete, the director of the Hiatt Center for Urban Education at Clark University, also credits improvements to the ongoing effort to unite this diverse community around the common goal of greater family involvement. "One of our main goals is building community connections through the Latino, African American, Asian American and Caucasian communities," he says. "We are trying to engage as wide a spectrum of parents as possible."

"My advice to other community core partners is to understand who can assert leadership in each minority community; identify the good education communicators," he adds. "We have devoted a full-time person to organizing this group and the activities—it's important to have someone focused on that task."

"We have results from our state tests that show the percentage of students passing them has increased since we started this literacy focus. The focus means we're seeing science teachers use science magazines and professional journals in their classes. We're seeing math teachers use novels and literature about math in their classes. We're all seeing teachers watch other teachers in front of the classroom—that was not happening too long ago. The teachers are also working together to plan and execute their lessons."

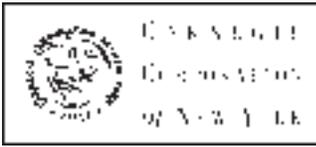
JANE GRADY, SECONDARY SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING COORDINATOR, WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Staying focused while reaching new heights is long tradition for Carnegie Corporation. It has its roots in Andrew Carnegie's belief that, "Only in popular education can man erect the structure of an enduring civilization." This belief has guided the Corporation as it has moved from helping to establish public libraries, to laying the groundwork for what we know as Head Start, to its groundbreaking efforts to improve middle schools. And, now, the challenge is improving high schools and the districts that serve them through *Schools for a New Society*. This is perhaps the hardest challenge of all—along the lines of "building the Panama Canal," in the words of Vartan Gregorian. The Corporation is realistic that there may be setbacks along the way that may ultimately lead to greater understanding of the obstacles. But the results to date—higher test scores, increasing attendance rates, and a stronger sense that students are engaging in true, meaningful learning—show that, just as the Canal broke new ground at the beginning of the 20th century, *Schools for a New Society* can do the same in this new era.



NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

In New York City, Carnegie Corporation partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Open Society Institute in 2000 to create a specific high school reform initiative called *New Century High Schools*. The \$30 million initiative has received additional funding from the Gates Foundation and is focused on transforming high schools in America's largest urban area by building new theme-centered small high schools, reconfiguring large comprehensive high schools into schools within schools, and by promulgating principles that are part of *Schools for a New Society*.



437 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022
P (212) 371-3200
F (212) 754-4073
www.carnegie.org