



Building a 21st Century U.S. Education System

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CHAPTER 8

Creating P-16 Urban Systemic Partnerships to Address Core Structural Problems in the Educational Pipeline

Ken Howey & Nancy Zimpher

The Current Context

The editors of this volume asked us to describe our vision of a public education system that would provide equal access to a high quality, world-class education for all students and, more importantly, to describe just how this vision might be realized and sustained over time. Before we address where we should be moving in the future, it is necessary to examine where we are now.

It is manifestly obvious that our public school system is as stratified as our society is in terms of socioeconomic status. In fact, many would argue that in its current structure, many of our public schools reinforce economic and class division rather than breaking down these barriers. The declining standing of United States' students on standardized measures of knowledge and problem-solving internationally is well documented. Within the United States, there is the further gap in measures of academic achievement between Caucasian students and African American and Hispanic students, many of whom attend school in urban settings, which is our focus in this chapter. Finally, there is a strong correlation between the racial achievement gaps and the gaps in school funding and the gaps in the number of experienced, qualified teachers in schools where many youngsters are failing and leaving school prematurely.

The achievement gap between white, African American and Hispanic students was underscored in a recent examination of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data using statistical tests of score differences. Lee (2002) revealed that the black-white gap increased significantly for age 13 youngsters in mathematics and reading from 1988 to 1999. Similarly the gap increased significantly for age 17 in both reading and mathematics. Achievement gaps have been documented beyond the NAEP achievement scores and include SAT scores, high school completion, college attendance and enrollment in and completion of advanced courses. Not finishing a postsecondary program, let alone high school, can have pernicious effects on an individual economically, socially, and in terms of one's general quality of life. Nonetheless, tens of thousands of youngsters, especially poor and minority youngsters, annually drop out of school and fail to obtain a high school graduation diploma. The following data underscore the magnitude of the problem. The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research (2004) reported that every nine seconds a student drops out of school in the United States. In 2004, over 6 million (6,277,000) of our 18- to 24-year-olds had not completed high school. *Time* magazine (2006), in a recent special report, indicated a 30 percent drop out rate, acknowledging the many youngsters who

leave prior to even entering high school. Drop out rates are even higher in many urban communities. Orfield and his associates (2004) found for example, that urban African American students had a graduation rate in 2004 of 50 percent, and Latinos, 53 percent, contrasted with 75 percent of Caucasians. High school students from low-income families (lowest quintile) drop out at six times the rate of their peers in the highest quintile. Loeb (1999) underscored that only one in 20 youngsters in the lowest income quintile earn a college degree. Data from the National Center for Educational statistics (2004) revealed that nearly half of these dropouts are unemployed and the great majority of the rest are in minimum wage positions; further, recent immigrants are displacing high school dropouts so that even entry level positions are often not available to them. U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings (2005) estimated that drop outs cost the United States more than \$260 billion in lost wages, taxes and productivity.

Schools with large numbers of youngsters failing academically and leaving school prematurely have fewer resources than schools attended by wealthier families. In a recent study conducted for the Education Trust by Orlofsky (2002) found that in 86 percent of the states (42 of 49 studied), districts with the greatest numbers of poor students had less money to spend per student than districts with the fewest poor students. Orlofsky (2002) calculated each districts' purchasing power per student by analyzing funds received from state and local taxes. The analyses did not include federal dollars as these are intended to supplement and not supplant revenues at the state and local level. The study found on average those districts with the greatest number of poor students (the lowest quartile) receive almost a thousand dollars (\$966.00) less per student than the quartile of districts with the fewest poor students. It should be noted that 40 percent of urban students attend high poverty schools (defined as schools where more than 40 percent of the students receive free or reduced price lunch).

High poverty schools enrolling high percentages of minority students also have fewer qualified teachers than schools not characterized by high poverty and numerous studies substantiate the common sense notion that qualified teachers make a difference. For example, a teacher quality gap study was undertaken by Lankford and colleagues (2002) who analyzed 15 years of state administrative records in New York and found major inequities in terms of where 'high-quality' teachers were employed. Teacher quality was defined through a composite index of teacher degree, experience, in- or out-of-field assignment, the ranking of universities which the teacher attended and state teacher certification examination scores. These scholars reported that substantially less qualified teachers teach poor minority students in urban areas. In all but one region of New York, teacher quality was characterized as much lower in urban than in suburban schools. Similarly, Jespen and Rivkin (2002) in their study of class size reduction in California reported that minority students in high poverty schools were six times more likely not to have a fully qualified teacher than white students in low poverty schools. In addition, minority students in high poverty schools were twice as likely to have a beginning teacher.

The Need for P-16 Urban Systemic Partnerships

Our goal in this chapter is to recommend what can be done in urban communities to redress the above problems. In doing this, we draw upon our experiences in developing P-16 community wide partnerships wherein urban universities and urban university presidents and chancellors have assumed leadership roles in helping to renew urban schools. The mission is to get more urban students not only through high school, but into college to successfully complete a post-secondary degree. Several of these endeavors are described in a recent volume we edited and contributed to titled: *University Leadership in Urban School Renewal* (2004).

We begin with the premise that the lack of positive integration and positive interdependence between universities as a whole and P-12 school districts and other key community agencies represents a deep structural flaw in our educational enterprise. Not only do the P-12 school sector and higher education sector rarely work closely together in a sustained manner on needed simultaneous renewal, but they are often protagonists; at odds with one another competing for scarce financial support at the state and federal level.

In the initial NCTAF report (1996), *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, the commission which wrote the report concluded:

After a decade of reform, we have finally learned in hindsight what should have been clear from the start: Most schools and teachers cannot produce the kind of learning demanded by the new reforms – not because they do not want to, but because they do not know how, and the systems in which they work do not support them in doing so (p.5).

We believe this statement still holds. As it stands now the resources needed to address the problems identified at the outset are lacking. The problems we face cannot and will not be overcome by schools of education negotiating partnerships with a few selected K-12 schools. Rather, what is needed are bold new partnerships. University leaders need to bring resources from across the university to address the problems of urban schools and urban school districts. University presidents, by the stature of their position in the community, can also help coalesce key agencies, organizations, and individuals from across their urban communities so that the support necessary to address major shortcomings in schooling and how teachers are prepared for those schools is more forthcoming. In turn, the K-12 school sector has to play a leadership role in helping make the initial education of teachers a more rigorous and responsive endeavor than it is currently. The partnership is two-way; simultaneous renewal is needed.

An Example of Urban P-16 Partnership

To illustrate what a systemic urban partnership looks like, the Milwaukee Partnership Academy (MPA) is briefly described here. The individuals involved with MPA meet on a regular basis to address both issues of teacher education from preservice teacher education through continuing professional development and also how urban schools can be renewed and organized for success. The members of the MPA Executive Board include the superintendent of the Milwaukee Public Schools, the chief executive officer of the teachers'

union, the president of the school board, the president of the Greater Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce, the chief executive officer of the Private Industry Council, the president of the Milwaukee Area Technical College, and the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (UWM), as well as the deans of the School of Education and Arts and Science at UWM. Parents and members of the school community obviously are also represented. The lieutenant governor and the state superintendent of public instruction regularly attend these meetings and serve in ex-officio roles. The Mayor of the City is now also directly involved as are representatives of the City's libraries, museums, YWCA, United Way and other key community agencies.

Their mission is to work together to improve the quality of learning by improving the quality of teaching. Quality teacher education is viewed as the central means for achieving quality teaching and learning. Major changes are being instituted in all schools with teacher-led learning teams assuming shared leadership and specialized coaches assisting the faculty in areas such as math, science and literacy. What is distinctive about this urban P-16 council is that the leaders of the major stakeholder groups are working collaboratively and on a sustained basis to address long-standing problems that have not been effectively addressed previously. This council is concerned with going to scale, that is, putting in place policies and practices that are helpful to all teachers and all youngsters in all schools. It is leveraging resources beyond those currently available to the district and the university.

Addressing Structural Flaws through Simultaneous Renewal

Our belief and the central point we wish to make is that systemic P-16 partnerships such as the MPA are in the best position to address the deep structural flaws in how schools are organized and teachers are prepared. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) (1996) called for schools organized for success. What do such schools look like? Studies of effective schools have yielded a growing corpus of knowledge that demonstrates that youngsters, in their early formative years especially, succeed academically when schools are organized so that youngsters remain together for multiple years with the same teachers working closely together in teams. Teachers on these teams have differentiated but complementary responsibilities for providing high quality instruction and support to their students. The curriculum in these schools is organized so that fewer subjects than typical are taught at any given time and correspondingly fewer, albeit major, ideas and concepts are pursued in greater depth and for sustained periods of time.

Despite increasing evidence as to how teachers and the curriculum should be organized and time structured in school, elementary teachers commonly continue to be prepared to work alone in lock-step, graded organizations wherein they attempt to teach a wide range of subjects to a different group of youngsters every year. An outdated school structure and a competitive rather than cooperative school culture remains pervasive. A major reason for this is the manner in which most teachers are prepared.

In order to move to a new and improved model of schooling, both how schools are organized and how teachers are prepared will have to change in a simultaneous model of renewal and reform. If teachers are prepared to work in collaborative cultures, jointly

prepare instructional materials, and mutually evaluate student work, and then can only find positions in self-contained classrooms, little will have been accomplished. Similarly, attempting to change schools without fundamentally changing the nature of teacher preparation won't work either. Teachers will have great difficulty working in teams if they have been prepared as an independent operator.

A Call for New Boundary Spanning Roles

By boundary spanners we refer to individuals in the P-12 sector who assume major responsibilities working with higher education and conversely university faculty who work for specified periods of time on specific tasks in elementary and secondary schools. The limited, often ineffectual, role and responsibility of outstanding veteran teachers in the education of prospective teachers is at present an embarrassment. They volunteer to assist in the 'supervision' of prospective teachers in their capstone experience but are neither prepared for this responsibility nor reimbursed to do so. They are largely ignorant of what transpires in the larger preparation program. In contrast, we argue that outstanding veteran teachers should be involved in every aspect of teacher preparation, working hand-in-glove with university faculty in program design, curriculum development, co-teaching and the assessment of the program's effects and the preservice teachers enrolled in it. There are a few examples of 'teachers-in-residence' who are assigned to urban universities for varying periods of time to do just this with memoranda of agreements and exchange of services negotiated because of a strong local P-16 partnership. Similarly, university professors have much to offer the P-12 sector working in partnership on specific tasks for specified periods of time especially at the district level where quality research, development, and continuing teacher education are often badly needed.

Confronting a Major Misconception

We need to underscore the need to aggressively confront the naïve and wrong-minded views of the nature of teaching and, correspondingly, teacher preparation. Far too many view teaching as essentially a 'stand and deliver' enterprise, something anyone with a good general education can do. This view unfortunately is held by many who influence educational policy. For example, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation's (1999) manifesto "The Teachers We Need and How to Get More of Them," proposed to eliminate all requirements for the licensure of teachers except for criminal background checks, examinations of content knowledge, and a required major in the subject to be taught. The report also promoted access to teaching through means other than professional schools of education. The current federal administration, despite its rhetoric about a qualified teacher in every classroom, supports a variety of alternative and typically abbreviated routes to teacher certification outside of professional schools of education.

In contrast, the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) has for a quarter of a century studied teaching that is effective in showing gains in achievement, especially with minority students academically at-risk. Their studies underscore that effective instruction is complex. Dalton and her associates at CREDE concluded:

Pedagogy also means that teachers learn about their students' homes and communities to understand how to draw on local funds of knowledge for academic learning. Today's pedagogy applies the concepts and findings of research that show promise for all students' achievement, such as communities of learners, language development, guided participation, emergent literacy, funds of knowledge, cultural compatibility and instructional conversation (p.5, 1998).

Similarly, teacher preparation needs to be grounded in and guided by a complex and contemporary conception of teaching that acknowledges the economic and political realities of urban settings and the many forms of diversity therein. Narrow views of the mission of our public schools, and of sterile and routine views of teaching fostered by 'fast track' preparation simply cannot be condoned. Preparation for teaching can be reasonably viewed as a three-legged stool with knowledge of subject matter, ability to effectively engage learners with that subject matter in multiple ways (pedagogy), and knowledge of the youngsters and the contexts in which they live representing the three legs. The latter, or third leg, is given short shrift. We recommend that understanding of urban communities and cultures should be a core aspect of preparing teachers for urban schools. Such understandings are critically important given that the pipeline of prospective teachers is still comprised primarily of individuals who have the following profile developed by Zimpher almost 15 years ago:

The typical graduate of the American education school is female, is of Anglo descent, is about 21 years of age, speaks only English, travels less than 100 miles to attend college, was raised in a small town or suburban or rural setting, and expects to teach in a school whose demographics are similar to her own. In fact, this typical prospective teacher does not seek to teach students out of the mainstream, or to serve in a school of innovative architecture or one organized around anything other than traditional curriculum or facility (1989, p. 51).

The general and liberal education of prospective teachers can be designed to help prospective teachers more fully understand the nature of urban communities and the multiple cultures typically found within those communities. Community contexts for example can be explored and better understood through multiple lenses such as those provided by the urban historian, the urban sociologist, the urban cultural anthropologist, the urban political scientist and the urban geographer. Literature, the fine arts, architecture, business, engineering and religion can all contribute to prospective teachers acquiring multiple interpretations and richer understandings of urban communities and cultures.

Teacher education needs to be expanded not abbreviated, especially in preparing teachers for high poverty, urban classrooms. It should begin with a rethinking of how general and liberal studies can help prepare prospective teachers, especially those largely unfamiliar with urban contexts. The cultures and communities' general studies, referred to above, seem especially appropriate in urban universities working in close partnership with their counterparts in the P-12 sector and the larger community. A 'cultures and community' core curriculum will succeed only if key community leaders, community agencies and outstanding veteran teachers are engaged in tying the rich and diverse disciplinary and trans-disciplinary corpus of

knowledge offered in the university with multiple firsthand learning activities in a variety of cultural contexts and in a range of urban neighborhood communities.

Finally, this urban general studies option can be designed to ensure that students involved in this sequence of courses are positively socialized in a planned manner through sustained interaction with a student cohort or persistent learning group, which is purposefully structured to reflect differences in race, culture, gender, age and experience. These cohorts can also serve as a source of support as well as a collaborative study group.

This approach to general studies for prospective teachers should be combined with a program of professional study that is specifically designed to focus on the specific context in which the teachers will teach, in this situation, high poverty, urban schools.

For several years, the two of us assumed a leadership role in a national network whose mission it was to develop improved programs of teacher preparation designed specifically to recruit, prepare, and retain high quality teachers for challenging urban schools. Space prohibits any detailed description of these programs, but the mission statement for one of these preparation programs illustrates their distinctive properties as follows:

Our purpose in this program is to prepare educators who are knowledgeable about and affirm diversity in all its forms: social class, gender, race and ethnicity, sexual preference, and differing abilities. The notion of critical multicultural education (anti-racist education) is infused throughout the program as preservice teachers examine the sociocultural contexts of schools and communities, child development, curriculum, and pedagogy. The Urban/Multicultural Teacher Education Program is designed for elementary education students who see themselves teaching in urban schools or with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The purpose of the program is to prepare highly qualified teachers to work in schools in urban/multicultural settings with children who come primarily from impoverished families (Howey, 1996).

Many urban/multicultural teacher education programs are framed in the disciplines of social foundations, particularly sociology and anthropology of education. The politics of schooling are examined through a sociological analysis of school structures. They examine the ways in which political and social structures impact teachers' work lives in urban school bureaucracies. The disciplines teachers are prepared to teach are grounded in the sociocultural context of children's lives. These programs stress the need for change in school practices based on the premise that traditional schooling has often not been successful in urban/multicultural communities and that teachers must have a wide repertoire of pedagogical and curricular practices that engage students from diverse communities.

An urban teacher preparation program, for example, would thematically institute a sequence of educative activities to engage prospective teachers both through scholarly analyses and in-depth experience with another culture and language to better understand their own cultural norms. It would also help them inventory resources and assets in urban communities and determine how these can be brought to bear to enable learning in- and out-of-school for the youngsters they teach. These are just a few of the examples of core understandings and abilities that allow urban teachers to be successful. These have to be acquired above and beyond acquiring a deep understanding of the content they teach and

a rich repertoire of teaching strategies to engage diverse youngsters in a variety of ways with that content.

In tandem, the general studies and professional preparation should considerably counteract the 'culture shock' and early exit experienced by so many young, middle-class teachers who begin their teaching in urban, high poverty schools. A recent report (2003) by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) viewed teacher retention as a 'national crisis' and concluded teaching is increasingly "a revolving door profession" (p.11). The turnover rate in high poverty schools with which we are concerned approaches 50 percent and higher over the first three years for novice teachers.

To counteract this tragic loss of novice teachers, a robust foundation in general and pre-professional studies and a more rigorous and distinctive professional program should extend as well into a program of induction. By induction we mean a series of learning and supportive activities for novice teachers that extends and enriches those core understandings and abilities begun in preservice preparation. These educative activities need to continue for two or three years when the learning needs of novice teachers are the greatest. At the present time there are very few rigorous programs of induction. The typical arrangement rather is to assign the beginning teacher "a buddy" or in some instances "a mentor." Because there is no connection to what has transpired previously in the novice's preservice preparation. It is not uncommon that advice and counsel provided by the school district is oppositional in nature to that provided by the university. This lack of integration and positive interdependence here between higher education and the K-12 sector once again is evidence of a deep structural flaw in the educational enterprise.

Fideler and Haselkorn (1999) reviewed diverse efforts to provide for beginning teachers in urban areas and could not find comprehensive entry-year programs. They found parts of good practice at different sites and recommended that we should view induction as a multi-year, developmental process and an extension of preservice preparation.

We recommend that induction programs be enriched through a program of distributed mentoring. This form of mentoring is a good example of an integrative change strategy. Integrative strategies are powerful enough to accomplish multiple purposes simultaneously. In a distributed mentoring scheme, the common single 'mentor' teacher would be replaced by a team of veteran teachers who collectively educate and support new teachers. For example, one veteran teacher might be prepared to provide coaching; a second might provide assistance with technology; a third, with gaining understanding of the local school curriculum; and a fourth might serve as a confidant providing the novice with needed local knowledge about the school and school community.

This mentoring strategy becomes integrative in that the novice teacher gets both the time and types of assistance that no one mentor can provide, while at the same time a collaborative school culture is also being reinforced through the shared responsibilities and increased expertise gained by different veteran teachers. A collaborative culture stands in stark contrast to the more common competitive culture where teachers often find themselves working both in isolation from and in competition with their peers – especially with regard to improving student standardized test scores.

Higher Teacher Turnover

This approach to (education) contrasts sharply with that of other professions. American society prides itself on its technical skills in medicine; how far would those skills have advanced if the medical profession had decided that there should be no obstetricians, cardiologists, or cancer specialists – that a “doctor is a doctor”? How quickly would the aircraft industry have advanced if design engineers weren’t distinguished from repair mechanics – if the industry had decided that a technician is a technician, all equally capable of doing every job, each worker interchangeable with all others? Few of us would put our children on a jumbo jet flying cross-country if we knew that the airplane’s lone pilot was also its only design engineer, mechanic, navigator, chef and cabin attendant. Yet we regularly entrust our children’s future to teachers expected to discharge flawlessly a similar array of burdens in their classrooms, with far less rehearsal, preparation, and support than even the smallest airlines give pilots (Wilson and Daviss, 1996)

Beyond One Teacher and One Classroom

NCTAF’s (1996) vision was a competent and caring teacher in every classroom. We prefer NCTAF’s more recent variation on that. Individual classrooms represent too rigid and lock-step of an approach to schooling. What is rather needed, we believe, are creative and more fluid and flexible staffing patterns in schools. Career lattices are needed wherein schools have qualified lead teachers. They might have national certification for accomplished teaching and/or leadership preparation provided by the local P-16 urban partnership. In terms of the latter at one urban university where outstanding experienced teachers were recruited to assist in every facet of a major redesign of teacher education over a two-year period, they were at the same time engaged in a sustained program of leadership preparation.

High teacher turnover is hardly limited to novice teachers. If we are to retain many outstanding veteran teachers, especially in challenging urban schools, we need to create instructional leadership opportunities for them where they can be paid at a salary commensurate with that of their administrative counterparts. With a reduced teaching load, they can coordinate a team of other veteran career teachers (not interested in assuming leadership), novice, pretenured teachers, prospective teachers interning at that school, as well as a range of aides and paraprofessionals. Well-conceived staffing patterns allowing teams of individuals with differentiated roles to work with the same group of students over multiple years need cost no more than the undifferentiated, egalitarian, single-salary staffing model so pervasive today. Just as the P-16 partnership can bring more highly qualified veteran teachers into the university setting to contribute to greater renewal and change there, it can also bring higher education and community personnel into K-12 schools to rethink the ways in which these schools can be better organized for success.

The final phase of what should be a relatively seamless approach to teacher development is, of course, continuing professional development. Schools organized for success foster teacher learning as a natural, on going facet of teaching. Continuing professional development occurs at the school site and is embedded in the daily instructional activities that take place there. If teaching is more public and transparent as part of a team teaching arrangement, then continuing teacher development will also be greatly facilitated. Action research, joint lesson development, and structured observation of different aspects of actual teaching and learning (often involving students themselves in such inquiry) are common examples of this embedded approach to teacher development. Surely workshops and graduate classes outside of the school context have an important role to play. However, if the ultimate goal is to improve teaching that results in improved student learning, then schools have to be organized for teacher learning or development to occur as a matter of course on a continuing basis at the school site. Joyce and Showers (2003) found that if the professional development of teachers is to be potent enough to affect

student achievement, it requires much more than exposition – that is, providing knowledge. Their research suggests that such professional development also requires 1) demonstration, 2) guided practice in the teacher’s classroom, 3) repeated trials, and 4) continuing examination of and feedback about the impact of teaching on student performance. One could reasonably argue that these activities are also key elements of clinical preparation for prospective teachers and that the veteran teachers who work with prospective and novice teachers should be fully prepared to effectively engage them in all of the above activities.

The absence of such rigorous continuing teacher development can be attributed to many things, including the costs of the embedded sequence of activities outlined by Joyce and Showers. We argue however that it is the constraining structure of schools that is the primary culprit. Again, our outmoded structure of schools is not only directly related to the outmoded manner in how teachers are prepared, that is to work in an isolated, lock-step approach to schooling, but to less than rigorous models of continuing professional development as well. Again that the key to increased learning for students is improved teaching. In turn the key to improved teaching is much improved teacher education. The final proposition in this set of propositions is that teacher education or learning to teach best occurs in schools organized for success and at the present time, many schools and school districts are not organized for success but rather constrain high-performance teaching and learning. In summary, we cannot see anyway that the simultaneous renewal needed to move forward can occur without the emergence of strong and systemic P-16 partnerships.

What we envision is a highly interactive approach to transformational change between institutions and agencies working in close partnership. Key to the success of these needed changes will be the evolution and viability of new boundary-spanning roles. We have no illusions that this can happen either easily or quickly. However we have been involved in the early successful stages of the type of P-16 partnerships we have called for in this chapter and we believe that with strong leadership and continuing collective will, they can mature and become the major catalysts for needed change.

We were also asked to address the costs of our proposed reforms and given the limited work to date in this area, we are not sure what costs these partnerships will entail. However, it could be that the changes we have advocated here both for how teachers are prepared and how schools are organized to function more effectively might result in some efficiencies and hence some cost saving. Whatever the potential costs, we know that in the stratified system of public education that currently exists there are major inequities in terms of funding and resources. Hopefully higher education and P-12 educators working in partnership with other influential community leaders, including mayors of major urban communities, can exert more influence to change current policy and practices in regard to funding. The education enterprise has not worked well together to influence such policy changes. These P-16 partnerships are in position to leverage resources. Partnerships with a mutual vision and common priorities can often better access philanthropic support because they are working together on a common mission.

In closing, we acknowledge again that there are very considerable challenges in developing the systemic P-16 partnerships which we envision. We have however discovered a

few essential conditions that can be the cornerstone for their success over time. First, success for all students has to be at the core of the mission. Herein we mean not only success in elementary and secondary school but in postsecondary programs as well. Agreement on a common mission and a unified theory of action to reach the mission is essential. Second, the partners have to agree that this mission is a matter of shared responsibility and shared accountability. The tens of thousands of youngsters failing in K-12 schools are also higher education's and the broader community's responsibility; not just that of the K-12 schools. Third, this accountability has to be made public and shared at reasonable intervals; likely on an annual basis. If fifty percent of youngsters are currently not completing high school, what would be the effect of setting a five percent target of improvement for the next several years and examining progress against that goal on an annual basis? Where would we be in five years? Fourth, a long-term commitment has to be made by the partners with a willingness by leaders in the community to continue to meet on a regular basis, to stay the course. Fifth, the partnership needs leaders of organizations and agencies who can commit resources as well as vested parental and community stakeholders to be engaged throughout. A 'grass roof' rather than a 'grass roots' approach will be required. An organizational structure has to be put in place so that various leaders such as university presidents, school superintendents, mayors, teacher union leaders, or the head of the chamber turnover, their replacements are expected to move right into a seat at the partnership table, to attend regularly, and be fully cognizant of what their specific role and responsibility is to the partnership. While the individuals in the leadership roles will change, the roles and the partnership structure will not. Sixth, and finally, the arduous work has to get done and done in a continuous improvement mode. The partnership has to have a tiered or layered structure wherein individuals from a variety of institutions and agencies will now work more closely together and often in boundary-spanning roles.

In closing, we are acutely aware that our vision of urban P-16 partnerships is bold, even audacious. However, if we don't aggressively pursue such a vision, we believe we aren't likely to achieve the changes needed to make success for all students a reality. Our hope is that the vision will be warmly and aggressively embraced and that the suggestions we have put forward here will be helpful in that regard.

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