

Systems-Building Elements
 ~ Local Evidence of Sustainability ~

LEADERSHIP		
<u>Denver</u>	<u>Arapahoe/Douglas</u>	<u>Salida</u>
<p>In Denver, School-to-Career has greatly benefited from the strong support of the Superintendent who has made School-to-Career a District goal. This leadership has elevated School-to-Career’s status in Denver, especially among building principals and other key personnel, to that of a comprehensive reform strategy to increase student achievement and engage all students in learning. This strong, visible leadership has also been a key factor in engaging stakeholder support.</p>	<p>Leadership is identified as an entity or coalition which can garner leadership from key constituencies. The One-Stop was presented as an example of such an entity which can engender the leadership of the employer community to rally for sustainability of School-to-Career. By requiring certain educational outcomes from prospective hires, employers can encourage school districts to develop internal leadership to ensure that such demands can be met. Such a symbiotic leadership model will focus School-to-Career on producing broad outcomes which speak loudly to potential leaders/supporters, including businesses, parents, and the school district.</p>	<p>Salida’s successes are also rooted in strong, committed leadership. In Salida, support from the Board of Education and administration allowed a quick start-up for School-to-Career, mobilizing external forces, building coalitions, and promoting action. Such leadership garnered a wide array of stakeholder support – including accountability committees, school administrators, faculty, parents, and community and civic leaders – in the early stages of the initiative to champion School-to-Career concepts and press for deeper reform.</p>

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE		
<u>Denver</u>	<u>Arapahoe/Douglas</u>	<u>Salida</u>
School-to-Career is part of the division of secondary education in the Denver Public Schools. This organizational model heightens the visibility of School-to-Career and aligns the initiative with general education reform initiatives, including standards and assessments. Additionally, schools throughout the district have been directed not to create separate School-to-Career committees, but to combine efforts with existing committees focusing on curriculum, literacy, standards and assessments, etc.	As a cutting-edge One-Stop Career Center, Arapahoe/Douglas Works! provides integrated employment, education, and training services for adults, youth, and students. It has developed a unique organizational model whereby a county/One-Stop employee is outstationed at Englewood High School – essentially acting as a satellite One-Stop office – to provide transition and other career and education services to out-of-school youth. However, because of its direct presence in the school, any student or interested individual may access the One-Stop and its available services.	In Salida, School-to-Career was fully integrated into district operations early in the grant period. In this organizational model, preschool through higher education missions were reviewed and realigned into a comprehensive learning system; School-to-Career was implemented as one component of the “Salida Learning System,” a creation of extensive, district-wide K-12 curriculum planning, documentation, and analyses to integrate academic standards into a seamless K-12 system across the four core areas. Moreover, in Salida, School-to-Career is driven by consensus, not mandate.

INTEGRATION

<u>Denver</u>	<u>Arapahoe/Douglas</u>	<u>Salida</u>
<p>In Denver, School-to-Career’s position in the division of secondary education has been important to foster integration of School-to-Career principles throughout the curriculum because the initiative is perceived as a general education reform strategy. This model presents the potential to integrate School-to-Career principles throughout all instructional strategies, at all education levels. Currently, faculty participate in business externships and other professional development activities focused on integrating School-to-Career into the curriculum.</p>	<p>Arapahoe/Douglas’ project aptly noted, “...sustainability can only be achieved through integration of School-to-Career ideals into the curriculum and reinforced with special projects that allow the concepts to be presented in a variety of ever-changing applications.” Weaving of School-to-Career’s principles throughout programs whose goals are aligned with School-to-Career’s goals will have a great impact on institutionalizing the initiative, helping to sustain School-to-Career locally.</p>	<p>Integration has been the modus operandi in Salida since initial receipt of the School-to-Career grant. In the first year of the grant, the district’s vision, mission, goals, and action plan were all reviewed and re-written to reflect School-to-Career components. Following this review, a five-year plan was developed to integrate School-to-Career, standards and assessments, Tech Prep, and other key education initiatives. Additionally, funding streams and goals of every education and workforce development initiative were reviewed and have been integrated into the overall School-to-Career system.</p>

COLLABORATION/PARTNERSHIPS

<u>Denver</u>	<u>Arapahoe/Douglas</u>	<u>Salida</u>
<p>Charles Schwab, an extremely active employer in the Denver partnership, has created flexible work schedules for parents to work hours which coincide with their children’s school schedules. The School-to-Career Partnership has also developed strong connections with the Denver Chamber of Commerce, and has supported its “Youth at Work” program.</p>	<p>“The local business community can be utilized as financial partners as well as potential employers. Many employers are investing heavily in their own workforce to cultivate the skills they require of employees, and this willingness to invest should be explored and developed.” For example, Norwest Bank has implemented an organization-wide policy including participation in School-to-Career activities as an evaluation criteria for all levels of bank employees.</p>	<p>Many of Salida’s marketing efforts are geared to increasing employer and community involvement in School-to-Career activities.</p>

POLICY		
<u>Denver</u>	<u>Arapahoe/Douglas</u>	<u>Salida</u>
<p>In Denver, policies have been adopted by the School Board to ensure that the superintendent’s commitment to School-to-Career is translated to school buildings. These supportive policies include: 1) secondary administrators’ performance evaluations include criteria of their leadership in implementing School-to-Career goals; 2) all schools must identify School-to-Career strategies in annual accountability/school improvement plans; 3) all high schools must submit a staff development plan that addresses the integration of School-to-Career concepts across the curriculum; and 4) all middle schools must include School-to-Career concepts, focusing on workplace standards, in staff development plans.</p>	<p>Arapahoe/Douglas discussed policy more broadly, in terms of general policies which could benefit a number of districts in an area. For example, Arapahoe/Douglas discussed strategies for securing School Finance Act funds for programs to serve out-of-school youth, using the One-Stop as the broker for the necessary policy commitments. The project described such a relationship between Arapahoe/Douglas Works! and Englewood and Sheridan school districts, where out-of-school youth are retrieved into a combination work and school program at the One-Stop, funded via the School Finance Act. This model both supports School-to-Career principles and leverages state funds that would not otherwise be available.</p>	<p>K-12 education policy in Salida has been thoroughly aligned with the goals and principles of School-to-Career. Specifically, School-to-Career principles have been integrated in district policies throughout the Salida Learning System, including policies affecting budgets, funding, operations, and staff development. Since 1995, district goals and curriculum policies have been modified to reflect School-to-Career concepts and a commitment to high academic standards. Annual building-level action plans include School-to-Career as a component of district-wide education planning.</p>

EVALUATION		
<u>Denver</u>	<u>Arapahoe/Douglas</u>	<u>Salida</u>
<p>Denver and Arapahoe/Douglas described some of the School-to-Career evaluations that had been conducted locally, stressing the importance of strong evaluations and other measures of success. Both demonstration sites agreed that evaluation is equally important to demonstrate compliance with grant requirements, as to demonstrate local success, garnering the necessary support to sustain the initiative over time.</p>		<p>Salida described an extensive array of data-gathering activities to measure and document the changes resulting from School-to-Career implementation. For example, student and faculty surveys determined the institutional and curricular changes which could be attributed to School-to-Career implementation; community surveys assessed the level of community support for and understanding of School-to-Career; and a variety of more specific surveys – including sixth-grade career fair surveys, job fair surveys of students and employers, an implementation team survey, and steering committee reports – measured increases in satisfaction with School-to-Career activities.</p>

Analysis of the local element of resource mapping

Upon analysis of the demonstration sites' processes, action plans, and lessons learned, it is interesting to observe the similarities and differences between the state-level recommendations and those of the demonstration sites. For example, both the state and local projects stress policy change as a key element for sustaining School-to-Career principles – however, the difference between the state and local policy recommendations is notable. Whereas the state-level recommendations focus on policy change in a global sense, stressing legislation, resource realignment, waivers, and inter-agency collaboration as tactics for sustaining School-to-Career, the local recommendations largely focus on developing the appropriate leadership, collaboration, organizational structure, etc. to support such state-level policy change.

*The difference
between the state
and local policy
recommendations
is notable.*

This dichotomy – whereby the demonstration projects focus on the system-building elements (e.g. leadership, evaluation, collaboration, partnerships) necessary to support policy change, while the state-level project focuses on the actual policy changes necessary to create an infrastructure of programs and practice to support and sustain School-to-Career – is striking. However, this dual-role scheme between the state and local partnerships is also very rational. Resource Mapping suggests that the state's responsibility is to develop the broad policy changes and encourage inter-agency collaboration to support and sustain the global goals and principles of School-to-Career. The local partnerships' responsibility, then, is to align the system-building elements to create an appropriate infrastructure to ensure that the state policies can be utilized to their fullest extent to support local School-to-Career goals.

Considering our travel analogy, these roles make sense. In essence, the state's role is to define the parameters for travel, ensuring that appropriate roads, rest areas, clear signage, and marked detours exist. The state-level Resource Mapping project used these parameters to plot an efficient route to sustain the principles of School-to-Career, mapping out junctions, detours, and points-of-interest along the way. The locals' role, then, is to use this map to navigate their own path. They have a useful tool to aid their trip – however, the locals are responsible for securing a reliable vehicle, understanding how to read a map, planning overnight accommodations, and making the actual journey.

Therefore, Resource Mapping suggests that the state can be the most useful to local partnerships by building as much flexibility as possible into the route that is plotted. It is important for the state to give the local partnerships, who will make the actual trip, a useful tool to navigate the route – however, to be of the most use, that map must suggest a variety of alternate routes, accommodations, and rest areas so that travelers have as much flexibility as possible to design a trip to meet their unique needs and make the journey in their own time and their own way. Similarly, the local partnerships must communicate with the state, indicating where the map is not clear, describing new road blocks that emerge, and articulating other impediments to a smooth journey to sustaining School-to-Career.

Resource mapping will be an ongoing process – involving state agencies, school districts, local agencies, and communities – to develop a statewide infrastructure to support and sustain the goals and principles of School-to-Career, improving educational achievement and postsecondary and career opportunities for all Colorado youth.

