

Denver

1. Analyze implementation: The status of School-to-Career implementation in the Denver Public Schools was analyzed. Particular attention was paid to identifying the School-to-Career Partnership's successes and challenges, and discovering areas for greater investments.

Arapahoe/Douglas

1. Select partners: School-to-Career Partnerships in Aurora, Douglas County, and Englewood partnerships were invited to collaborate on the project.

Salida

1. Review information: Scores of information detailing the creation of Salida's School-to-Career system, from 1996-1998, was gathered and reviewed. This step included reviews of a) minutes of meetings, policy statements, historical information, evaluation materials, and data collected throughout the implementation phase of School-to-Career; b) Partnership organization; c) details of the implementation process; d) utilization of resources; and e) the evaluation process.

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2. Collect data: School-to-Career staff interviewed district and local agency personnel to complete the Resource Scan and to identify areas for additional linkages and new partnerships to support School-to-Career.

Arapahoe/Douglas

2. Research programs: School-to-Career coordinators from these partnerships teamed with One-Stop staff to complete the Resource Scan, resulting in four different iterations of the program and funding information. This information was used later in the resource mapping process to identify potential funding streams to help to sustain School-to-Career.

Salida

2. Analyze information: Key components of Salida's School-to-Career model were analyzed. This step entailed a) analyses of the achievements and challenges in Salida around the four themes outlined in the resource mapping project; b) identification of the general barriers which impede implementation of School-to-Career; c) identification of potential strategies to improve implementation and work toward sustainability; and d) review of the impact of financial and human resources on the School-to-Career system.

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3. Examine successes and challenges: Using the four themes for analysis, Denver’s School-to-Career achievements and opportunities for greater linkages were explored in more detail.
- Education reform: School-to-Career connections in the areas of leadership, district policies, organization, K-12 district-wide focus, instruction, professional development, coordination with other reform efforts, and evaluations were examined.
 - Meeting the needs of at-risk students: School-to-Career connections among drop-out retrieval programs and alternative schools were analyzed. Linkages with Title I, Title II, Title VI, Gifted and Talented, English language acquisition, and the District’s Math/Science Initiative were also investigated.
 - Workforce development connections: Partnerships with the Denver Chamber of Commerce and with specific employers were explored.
 - Community involvement: Marketing and other efforts to build community understanding of and support for School-to-Career were examined.

Arapahoe/Douglas

3. Complete a fiscal analysis: A team of Arapahoe/Douglas Works! staff, local School-to-Career coordinators, and the regional coordinator participated in a “dream system” brainstorming session to devise a wishlist of core and enhanced services, funding priorities in a sustained School-to-Career system. These wishlists were then used to complete a fiscal analysis of a sustainable system: this analysis identified the minimum cost (i.e. only the core services) and the maximum cost (i.e. core services plus enhanced services) of sustaining School-to-Career in the three participating partnerships.

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3. Develop a model for sustainability: Following the review and analysis of all the data and materials, the process to create Salida’s School-to-Career model was documented and modifications to the process to ensure sustainability were recommended.

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- 4. Develop an action plan for sustainability: Action priorities, which cut across many of the ideas discussed throughout the four areas for analysis, were identified. In addition to these broad priorities, critical priorities for School-to-Career integration were outlined for each of the four themes.

Arapahoe/Douglas

- 4. Collect data: Following the team sessions, Arapahoe/Douglas Works! staff met individually with each of the three local School-to-Career coordinator to discuss sustainability and gather pertinent project data, including information about school district and community political environments, community support for School-to-Career, local School-to-Career leadership, obstacles and successes, local sustainability plans, and fiscal and funding cycle data.

Salida

- 4. Prepare outreach materials: Documents and materials for professional development and community presentations regarding sustainability were developed and piloted. Presentations describe Salida’s School-to-Career model, focusing on School-to-Career components, systems change, and integration of curriculum and technology throughout the system.

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Salida

5. Analyze information: This information was synthesized into a framework for a strategic plan. The four themes for analysis were used as lenses for analyzing the information to devise recommendations and develop a plan for sustaining School-to-Career in the region.

6. Develop a plan for sustainability: Creation of a sustainability plan – including a financial plan and a summary of how the goals and principles of School-to-Career could be institutionalized within existing programs and systems once the federal funds sunset – concluded the project.

Identifying common junctions along the routes

Recommendations to achieve systemic change locally

Despite the different directions pursued by each demonstration site, some common elements are evident in all the projects. The most salient feature of this similarity is the general framework of systemic change which permeates all the analyses and recommendations. Each demonstration site has recognized that sustainability must be rooted in change which cuts across all systems: change must occur within the K-16 education system, among the community, and between the school district and key stakeholders. Elements common to a systems change focus include leadership, policy, evaluation, organizational structure, partnerships, and integration – these elements span the four themes for analysis, and were discussed throughout the local projects. Essentially, these are the key elements which supply evidence of local capacity for sustainability and must support the curricula and other changes necessary to sustain the principles of School-to-Career, a quintessential systemic change initiative.

Each demonstration site has recognized that sustainability must be rooted in change which cuts across all systems

The following sub-section describes the demonstration projects' recommendations within these systems change themes. Just as the themes for analysis in the state-level project were redefined into broader themes, more conducive to engendering policy recommendation, the same tactic applies in the local projects. This section redefines the demonstration projects' analyses, presenting the recommendations across the projects within a framework of these broader themes. Each systems change element will be described, followed by a recommended action plan for achieving sustainability around the element, using evidence presented in the demonstration projects. Following these action plans, a chart will present all the elements, describing how each has shaped School-to-Career implementation in the demonstration sites.

Leadership is a key element for success in implementing School-to-Career and building stakeholder support for change. Leaders with a vision of the outcomes and a process for achieving goals are key to implementing successful systemic change: strong leaders facilitate stakeholders' participation and communication, mobilize the community, build coalitions, and promote action. Leaders are also important for preparing stakeholders for future leadership roles in implementing and promoting the initiative.

The following critical priorities will help to ensure appropriate local leadership to support and sustain School-to-Career:

- ◆ Leaders throughout the School-to-Career system must be involved in efforts to support and sustain the goals and principles of School-to-Career; school boards, district superintendents, building principals and assistant principals, department directors, community and civic leaders, parent groups, business leaders, and others must all contribute leadership.
- ◆ Systemic change is dynamic – therefore, it is important to maintain the support of strong leaders who will continue to push for change. Yet, the system must be rooted in such broad support and public demand that it will continue regardless of changes or hiatus in leadership.



Organizational structure is an important element for engendering positive systems change. Institutions with an organizational culture rooted in collegial and interpersonal support are more likely to implement successful systemic change initiatives. Hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations, on the other hand, are much less successful in implementing systemic change.

The following critical priorities will support an action agenda to create an appropriate organizational structure to support and sustain School-to-Career:

- ◆ Network with district reform initiatives in more systematic and comprehensive ways. Provide coordinators and staff to various reform initiatives with opportunities to integrate School-to-Career principles into the curriculum; share resources across education initiatives.
- ◆ Work to position School-to-Career as a general education reform initiative.
- ◆ Continue to intertwine School-to-Career philosophy throughout the entire education system. Network with all system stakeholders to share ideas and staff development efforts.
- ◆ Determine funding strategies to maintain dedicated staff or a coordinator for School-to-Career so that the principles of the initiative remain very visible. Despite a supportive organizational structure, a local School-to-Career champion is key.

... sustainability can be achieved through integration of School-to-Career ideals into the curriculum.

Integration is a strong component of successful School-to-Career systems. Identifying common goals across disciplines and integrating curricula and other activities to support such common principles is a key step towards sustainability. As Arapahoe/Douglas' project 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."

The following critical priorities comprise an action agenda to align goals and integrate systems to support and sustain School-to-Career principles locally:

- ◆ Develop and emphasize School-to-Career principles at the elementary school level.
- ◆ Expand efforts to integrate School-to-Career with literacy, standards-based education, technology, and district goals.
- ◆ Identify more work-based learning experiences that connect to classroom learning on a district-wide basis. The challenge is to integrate and utilize business resources in the curriculum in both a manageable manner for teachers and schools and at an acceptable pace for businesses.
- ◆ Increase implementation of School-to-Career with "non-obvious" populations – e.g. gifted and talented and college-bound students as well as at-risk, drop-out, and offender populations – to avoid stereotyping School-to-Career as a vocational education or "tracking" program.



- ◆ Connect School-to-Career principles in counseling activities for all students. Ensure that career and academic counseling staff are included in the School-to-Career system.
- ◆ Utilize School-to-Career staff and other recognized district leaders to educate and support teachers, counselors, and administrators about the importance of integrating School-to-Career principles throughout the curriculum in each classroom, every day.
- ◆ Connect with local, state, and federal agencies that support and fund services for at-risk populations to ensure that such services are integrated into the curriculum and coordinated with School-to-Career activities.
- ◆ Build stronger relationships across education initiatives; highlight common goals and develop joint action plans to eliminate potential competition for support.

Collaboration/Partnerships are important elements for building successful systemic change initiatives. A strong, diverse partnership broadens School-to-Career's reach by supplying capacity for an array of important functions, including mentoring, job shadowing, student internships and teacher externships, field trips, student projects, co-op programs, career fairs, alternative schools, classroom speakers, and more. Frequent communication among partners is vital for cultivating and maintaining support for School-to-Career.

Employers and the community were both stressed, throughout the demonstration projects, as key partners to be involved in School-to-Career partnerships. Without the support and involvement of such stakeholders outside the realm of education, School-to-Career cannot maintain the momentum to sustain itself.

The following critical priorities will build broad, collaborative local partnerships to help sustain the goals and principles of School-to-Career:

- ◆ Connect with the major players in the workforce development arena – jointly identify opportunities and strategies for coordinating activities among education and employment and training initiatives.
- ◆ Develop strategies to expand the number and level of commitment of employers involved in business-education partnerships.
- ◆ Form stronger partnerships with higher education to ensure a truly seamless K-16 educational system.
- ◆ Increase communication among all stakeholders; use influential community members to rally support for School-to-Career.
- ◆ Improve and develop credibility with the employer community, increasing both financial and philosophical support for School-to-Career.
- ◆ Engage union leadership in the partnership.



*Long-term
sustainability is
rooted in policy.*

- ◆ Provide more and better information to parents to help them understand School-to-Career, its purpose, and how it will help their children to achieve their highest potentials. Build alliances with parents, using parent groups to advocate for the permanent status of School-to-Career.
- ◆ Renew and expand connections with community allies; leverage their expertise, networks, and leadership to support School-to-Career.
- ◆ Engage local philanthropic organizations in School-to-Career activities; encourage their support to help maintain funding.

Policy to support systemic change is a key element for sustaining School-to-Career. A combination of internal and external political support must accompany change initiatives. Outside of such political support, it is equally important for policies to be in place and/or developed to support the initiative. Each demonstration project emphasized that long-term sustainability is rooted in local policy, and suggested that a lack of effective policy could be a significant barrier to sustainability.

The following critical priorities are important for developing policies to support and sustain School-to-Career locally:

- ◆ Develop and expand district-wide policies, integrating School-to-Career principles into policies supporting standards and assessments, literacy, programs for at-risk and out-of-school youth, and others.
- ◆ Press for changes in teacher education policies. For example, certification which requires knowledge and demonstration of School-to-Career principles would ensure basic knowledge standards for all professional educators regarding School-to-Career competencies.
- ◆ Encourage political activism, especially among local educators, to support the need to update basic minimum qualifications for educators.
- ◆ Develop plans/policies to leverage flexible funding streams – e.g. Goals 2000, Youth-at-Risk, and Carl Perkins – to form a financial base to support School-to-Career principles.
- ◆ Explore employers' willingness to invest in training of a skilled workforce as a potential source of funds to support School-to-Career activities.
- ◆ Develop plans to secure budget line-items – in the budgets of school districts, One-Stops, non-profits, employers, and other partners – to support the goals and principles of School-to-Career.



Evaluation was a strong theme stressed in the local Resource Mapping projects, manifested in a variety of ways. Ongoing evaluation of goals and outcomes is key for sustaining systemic change initiatives. Curriculum enhancement, achievement, and other key outcomes must be identified and measured to increase support for School-to-Career.

The following critical priorities will ensure a system that uses evaluation as a strong tool for demonstrating School-to-Career's success and ensuring its longevity:

- ◆ Establish tangible outcomes from which the success of the initiative can be measured.
- ◆ Include School-to-Career principles in evaluations of all levels of district personnel.
- ◆ Maintain networks for collecting research and data to evaluate the effectiveness of School-to-Career on student achievement.
- ◆ Collect data to demonstrate positive, local results. Focus on specific results supporting curriculum changes/enhancements from School-to-Career connections, involvement of all students in School-to-Career activities, demonstrated student achievement from participating in School-to-Career activities, and applied learning which spans the K-16 curriculum.

Identifying common points-of-interest along the routes

Lessons Learned

The demonstration sites agreed that Resource Mapping was an extremely helpful process, especially to indicate opportunities to support and sustain the goals and principles of School-to-Career. Throughout the three demonstration projects some common key lessons were referenced. For example:

- ◆ Completing the resource scan provided an excellent opportunity for the demonstration sites to develop linkages with many of the programs with which they had not yet connected. This exercise provided opportunities both for local School-to-Career staff to learn about programs related to School-to-Career and for staff of these programs to learn about School-to-Career and understand how their goals are congruent. For example, following the meeting between the Denver School-to-Career staff and Gifted and Talented program staff, prompted by the Resource Mapping project, the School-to-Career staff were invited to attend the district's next Gifted and Talented meeting to discuss linkages.
- ◆ This project allowed the demonstration sites to understand weak links in the system and develop action plans to ensure stronger connections across all facets of systems which prepare students to achieve academically and excel in future careers.

*Resource Mapping
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- ◆ All the demonstration sites agreed that the resource mapping process was extremely useful in planning for sustaining School-to-Career locally, especially in identifying broad, system-building priorities and action priorities to embed School-to-Career into the curriculum and program operations.
- ◆ Determining strategies to blend initiatives, especially around newly identified common goals, was an important outcome of Resource Mapping – this strategy will help to make the “whole” of the School-to-Career system more than the “sum of its parts.”
- ◆ Resource Mapping clearly articulated action plans, for the partnerships represented by the three demonstration sites, to pursue. Ideas for using the system-building elements to form a stronger system comprised the core of these action plans.
- ◆ Institutional collaboration is a key to using existing policies in new ways to support and sustain School-to-Career locally.

