

John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Strengthening Career Guidance for New Jersey High School Students

A Report Based on a Statewide Conference Sponsored by:
The Fund for New Jersey
New Jersey Department of Education
New Jersey Department of Labor
New Jersey Commission on Higher Education
New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

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I. Acknowledgements

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The principal authors of this report are Denise Pierson-Balik, Project Manager, and Stephanie Duckworth-Elliott, Project Director at the Heldrich Center. Carl Van Horn, Kathy Krepcio, Herb Schaffner, and Aaron Fichtner of the Heldrich Center also contributed to the completion of the report.

II. Executive Summary

The *Strengthening Career Guidance for New Jersey High School Students* Conference on October 3, 2003 brought together counselors, educators, business people, researchers, and policymakers to discuss career advice and information for New Jersey high school students. Through panel presentations and breakout discussions, conference participants addressed how to balance career education and academic curriculum, the tools and materials that are useful and how to implement their use, and strategies to foster partnerships and collaboration to improve career education programs.

Throughout the conference panelists and participants stressed that the lack of emphasis on career guidance and education not only leaves those who do not plan to attend college after high school with little information to make good career and education/training decisions, but also leaves those who are college bound with little idea how their education will prepare them for future careers. While panelists highlighted several innovative programs that currently exist in parts of New Jersey, the conference proceedings illustrated that more must be done to ensure that all New Jersey high school students have adequate information to make good career and education decisions that will ensure their success in the labor market. Drawing on this conclusion, the following key policy issues and recommendations emerged in three major areas:

Invest in new efforts to balance academic and work preparation while recognizing the need to maintain the academic mission of the K–12 education system.

- Develop programs to educate parents and students about the importance of career education

- Establish collaborative efforts to integrate career information and academic curricula
- Provide professional development opportunities to teachers and counselors

Catalyze and build local alliances and partnerships to prepare students for a dynamic workforce.

- Use the Internet to link schools and employers
- Research and expand effective programs
- Generate support of school leadership for career education efforts

Identify and invest in materials and tools to improve career education and information in New Jersey high schools.

- Evaluate and recommend best-in-class tools for easy access by counselors, teachers, students, and parents
- Foster collaboration in developing tools and materials
- Increase resources, staff, and time available for career guidance

III. Conference Description

On October 3, 2003, the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, hosted a conference to discuss career advice and information for high school students in the State of New Jersey. The conference, entitled **Strengthening Career Guidance for New Jersey High Schools Students**, focused on providing better career guidance in New Jersey's high schools, including information on how to best prepare for careers through postsecondary education and alternatives to attending college directly after high school. The conference also focused on how jobs held by students during high school, as well as how various college programs, can relate to career interests and opportunities. This conference was funded by a grant from the Fund for New Jersey and sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Education. Co-sponsors included the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, and the New Jersey Department of Labor.

The conference was convened to examine strategies for strengthening career guidance in New Jersey high schools. The morning session included a presentation of findings from a survey of New Jersey high school students and the *Ready for the Job* Project by Heldrich Center director, Carl Van Horn (see Appendix B) and comments from keynote panelists, the Commissioners of the New Jersey Departments of Education and Labor and the Chairman of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education (see Appendix C). The afternoon panel focused on effective high school career education strategies through presentations by individuals involved in current programs throughout New Jersey. Summaries of individual presentations can be found in Appendix D.

In addition, the conference emphasized three major topics through the use of breakout discussion groups (see Appendix E for a summary of the breakout discussions):

1. Establishing effective partnerships between business and education institutions
2. Career education tools/materials to assist educators/counselors
3. Integrating career awareness and academic curricula

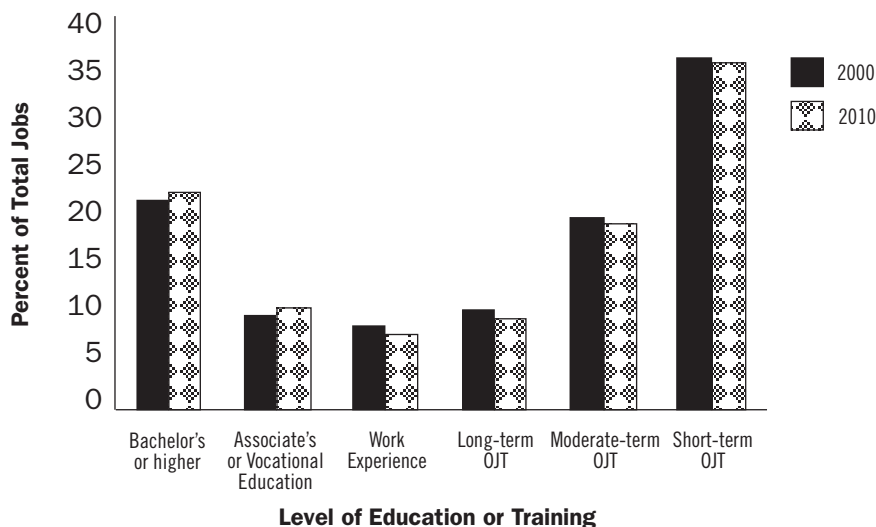
To promote informed discussion at the conference, invitations were sent by the New Jersey Department of Education to all public high school principals throughout the state of New Jersey. In addition, the Heldrich Center sent invitations to admissions and career advising staff in New Jersey public postsecondary institutions, youth council and Workforce Investment Board chairs, key state education and workforce development staff, interested business people, related nonprofit and research organizations, and foundations. A list of participants and their affiliations can be found in Appendix F.

IV. Overall Summary of Proceedings

The current “college for all” focus of American high school education and guidance counseling leaves many individuals who attend college and those who never attend college with little information and few tools to make important career decisions. While many professional careers require a college education, there are many well paying, stable careers for individuals who do not obtain

a postsecondary degree. Opportunities abound for individuals who pursue alternative training and education paths after high school. Recent releases by the U.S. Department of Labor estimate that almost 70% of current and future jobs do not require a college degree.¹ Occupational and on-the-job training (OJT) is important for many of today’s careers (see chart below).

Current and Future Employment by Level of Education or Training Required 2000–2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

In American high schools, the current emphasis is on attending college, with much less focus on providing advice and guidance about the purpose of further education as well as alternative paths to a four year degree for economic success. Present high school guidance counseling emphasizes college enrollment to the exclusion of career preparation and training. The rates of

college attendance have risen dramatically over the past decades. In 1997, more than two-thirds (67%) of all U.S. high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary institutions.² However, many students are not obtaining the college degree they believe is necessary for success in today’s competitive labor market. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, nearly one-

¹U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Total Job Openings by Education or Training, 2000–2010*. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ecopro.t04.htm>.

²Samuel Halperin, ed. 1998. *The Forgotten Healf Revisited: American Youth and Young Families, 1988–2008*. Washington, DC American Youth Policy Forum.

third (32%) of students enrolled in a 2- or 4-year postsecondary educational institution leave within three academic years without a degree or credential.³

To illustrate the current imbalance of college preparation and career preparation in American high schools, Carl Van Horn presented the results of a recent survey of New Jersey high school students by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. While the majority of students (96%) reported that they planned to attend college after high school to prepare for a career, none of those who plan to enter the labor market directly after graduation reported that a teacher or guidance counselor was instrumental in helping them choose a career path or find employment. Furthermore, only 10% of all those surveyed said they are very familiar with the types of jobs in the fields for which they plan to prepare. It appears few students have a clear understanding of how they can make the most of their postsecondary education to prepare them for successful careers. The high percentage of attrition in college makes the lack of career counseling and knowledge about the connection between educational preparation and careers even more troubling. Strengthening career guidance in New Jersey high schools can provide students with the information necessary to understand the importance of their education to their future careers and make sound decisions that result in a clearer career and/or education path, thus resulting in lower dropout rates in both high school and college.

The Strengthening Career Guidance for New Jersey High School Students Conference addressed these issues by bringing together key policymakers, researchers,

business people, educators, and counselors to discuss strategies that individual high schools, districts, and the state can take to better prepare students to make career and education decisions. The commitment and leadership of the current administration and key state agencies were apparent in the participation of the Commissioners of the Departments of Education and Labor (William Librera and Albert Kroll) and the Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education (Laurence Downes) in the keynote panel of the conference. The three key leaders outlined the goals and efforts of their agencies in this area and called on the audience to support and participate in endeavors to improve career guidance.

Conference participants were asked to join in a dialogue regarding the following key questions:

1. How can we better balance academic and work preparation without compromising the academic mission?
2. What more can be done to bring local collaborative efforts to the standard of meeting dynamic labor market needs?
3. What kinds of data and communication tools support constructive dialogue between educators, employers, and other workforce development partners?

Overall, panelists called for more collaboration among educational institutions, private sector interests, and state agencies to improve and increase career education throughout the state (see appendix E for full proceedings). Panelists identified the need for programs to make students aware of viable alternatives to college as well as how high school and college could relate to their future careers. Several initiatives throughout the state were presented to conference participants. Morning panelists

³Education Statistics Quarterly, National Center for Educational Statistics. "Short-term Enrollment in Postsecondary Education: Student Background and Institutional Differences in Reasons for Early Departure, 1996-98."

mentioned programs supported by the New Jersey Department of Education, including the 12th Grade Option program that allows students who have fulfilled high school requirements to experience college level courses; programs sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Labor such as Minorities in the Trades and Jobs for American Graduates that provide skills training for target groups of high school students; and programs sponsored by the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, including a mentorship program called Project Venture. Afternoon panelists represented specific programs that currently exist in New Jersey to inform students and counselors about career information (see appendix D for details).

Conference participants identified the difficulties in establishing effective partnerships between businesses and the K–12 education system. These included limited time and resources available to counselors to make these connections and the effect of personnel turnover in the private sector that make it difficult to maintain these relationships. However, both participants representing businesses and those representing educational institutions identified the value of such partnerships. Internships, although logistically difficult to coordinate, provide students with valuable experience that can help them in whatever future career they enter. Another New Jersey-based program mentioned was the *SchoolCounts!* Program that emphasizes basic workplace skills: attendance, punctuality, and effort. Participating businesses reward these skills by agreeing to consider those who have earned a *SchoolCounts!* Certificate for job openings.

Participants in another breakout session identified several useful tools currently being used in high schools to deliver career education, including Bridges, O*Net, and Career Scope; however, participants

expressed an interest in state coordination of these efforts. Career education materials and tools can be expensive, and, until now, the decision to use a specific tool has been left to individual schools or districts, resulting in uneven delivery of career education across New Jersey. Participants asked that the state take a role in identifying and evaluating the available tools and making the useful ones available from a single source, such as a web site. On January 4, 2004, a new web site called NJ Next Stop (www.NJNextStop.org) will be available to students, teachers, counselors, and parents. The web site contains information on required skills and education in New Jersey's top industries. The web site is the result of a project, called *Ready for the Job*, conducted by the Heldrich Center and sponsored by the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, New Jersey Department of Labor, and the New Jersey Department of Education. Students, teachers, counselors, and parents can access the findings of the ten reports in the *Ready for the Job* project in an interactive, friendly, and information-rich web site, www.NJNextStop.org.

Participants agreed that true collaboration is necessary among counselors, teachers, and school administration to integrate academic and career awareness curricula. Currently there is not enough support from school administrators for individual teachers and counselors to attempt an integration of the curricula. In addition, participants identified that the increasing number of standards being implemented at the state level does not leave them enough time to teach career education. Furthermore, counselors and teachers often lack the knowledge to implement such curriculum. Professional development opportunities are necessary to keep them up-to-date on career information. Finally, and most importantly, the stigma against career education in the minds of parents, students, and administrators makes

integration difficult. The overwhelming emphasis by administrators and parents on going to college preempts the reality of comprehensive career information and education. Integrating curricula would not only take strong leadership but also a major campaign to educate students and parents about the good careers that do not require a college degree and the value of career education for those attending college as well.

Overall, the conference generated a discussion of several significant policy issues and key strategies needed to improve career guidance for New Jersey high school students.

V. Summary of Significant Policy Issues and Key Challenges

Presenters and participants at the conference maintained that the overwhelming focus on college preparation and college admission in American and New Jersey high schools is pervasive and biased against students who may not need, nor succeed, in a four-year college setting right after high school. Many recognized that students and parents are unaware of current employment options and non-four-year educational opportunities to support possible career choices. Participants also acknowledged that career information and education is important to the success of students attending college as well to establish a clearer path in college and reduce college dropout rates.

They recognized that timely and accurate career information and curriculum is woefully lacking in New Jersey high schools. Furthermore, participants asserted that, in order for New Jersey students to be competitive in and prepared for today's labor market, dedicated efforts must begin now to create more realistic and balanced information and choices for students attending high school. Building on this consensus, conference participants identified several significant policy issues and challenges:

Invest in new efforts to balance academic and work preparation while recognizing the need to maintain the academic mission of the K–12 education system.

Develop programs to educate parents and students about the importance of career education: Parents, students, and school administrators often resist implementing career education in high school because they view it as a diversion from the college preparatory track. In this mindset, career education is only for those who do not attend college. But current statistics show that the majority of current

and future jobs do not require a four-year degree, and many of these jobs are good paying with great opportunities for advancement. Programs must be developed to educate parents and students about these opportunities and the importance of career education to assist those planning to attend college.

Establish collaborative efforts to integrate career information and academic curricula: School and state leadership must provide teachers and counselors with the financial and system support to integrate career information into academic curricula. Teachers, counselors, and administrators should collaborate to ensure that all students are receiving the information that will help them achieve their education and career goals. Educators need the support of the school administration in order to implement career education. Schools and districts need to share information about effective practices and materials to best use limited time and resources. Leadership at the district, regional, and state level is necessary to foster this collaboration and provide the resources to develop effective systems.

Provide professional development opportunities to teachers and counselors: Many teachers and counselors need to learn more about current trends and research about the role of career knowledge and awareness in education. Labor market information and resources are constantly changing and teachers and counselors need continual professional development opportunities to stay abreast and understand how to use this information in their daily plans.

Catalyze and build local alliances and partnerships to prepare students for a dynamic workforce.

Use the Internet to link schools and employers: Maintaining relationships between business and educational institutions is difficult given limited time and resources on both sides. The Internet could act as a supplemental tool, along with dedicated staff, to link businesses interested in getting involved with schools who have students looking for internships, mentorships, or job shadowing opportunities.

Research and expand effective programs: Participants identified several current programs that they believe are effective. The NJDOE should review current programs for effectiveness and take steps to publicize and/or expand those deemed effective.

Generate support of school leadership for career education efforts: In all cases, participants identified the need for the support of school leadership to establish and maintain good programs and partnerships. School boards must see the importance of providing these opportunities for students for them to take hold in a school or district. The leadership of local administrators can make or break a career education program. State policymakers can assist this cause by making career education improvement a priority statewide.

Identify and invest in materials and tools to improve career education and information in New Jersey high schools.

Evaluate and recommend best-in-class tools for easy access by counselors, teachers, students, and parents: While various

tools are currently being used in high schools throughout New Jersey, many of the best ones are too expensive for schools to acquire. In addition, the proliferation of sleek online tools in the past decade has become confusing. The state should take a leadership role in developing a guide to these tools, suggesting a single web site where counselors, teachers, students, and parents can access good career information and access tools deemed credible. New Jersey is already taking steps that will address this recommendation. On January 4, 2004, a new web site called NJ Next Stop (www.NJNextStop.org) will be available to students, teachers, counselors, and parents. The web site contains information on required skills and education in New Jersey's top industries. The web site is the result of a project, called *Ready for the Job*, conducted by the Heldrich Center and sponsored by the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, New Jersey Department of Labor, and the New Jersey Department of Education. Students, teachers, counselors, and parents can access the findings of the ten reports in the *Ready for the Job* project in an interactive, friendly, and information-rich web site, www.NJNextStop.org.

Foster collaboration in developing tools and materials: There should be more collaborative efforts when developing and implementing career education materials. Guidance counselors, teachers, and administrators should be involved to ensure that the materials are effective and that all "buy-in" to the use of the new materials. Employers and workforce development professionals should also be included to ensure that the materials are timely and accurately reflect the demands of the current labor market.

Increase resources, staff, and time available for career guidance: Administrative duties and large caseloads often prevent guidance counselors from focusing their energies on career guidance. Teachers are overwhelmed by increasing academic curriculum standards that do not leave enough time to address career education. While the Internet is a useful tool for students to access career

information, participants agreed that nothing can replace one-on-one instruction and guidance. If career education in our high schools is going to be implemented on a wide scale, new staff are needed for this vital mission.

Appendix A. Conference Agenda

Strengthening Career Guidance for New Jersey High School Students
John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
October 3, 2003

Agenda:

- 9:00–9:30am** **Registration & Refreshments**
- 9:30–10:00am** **Welcome & Presentation of Findings from the NJ High School Survey & Preliminary Findings from the *Ready for the Job* Project**
Carl Van Horn, Director
John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development
- 10:00–11:00am** **Keynote Panel**
Facilitator: *Carl Van Horn, Heldrich Center*
Commissioner William Librera, NJ Department of Education
Commissioner Albert Kroll, NJ Department of Labor
Chairman Laurence Downes, NJ Commission on Higher Education
- 11:00am–12:00noon** **Breakout Discussion Groups:**
Establishing Effective Partnerships Between Business and Education Institutions
Career Education Tools/Materials to Assist Educators/ Counselors
Integrating Career Awareness and Academic Curricula
- 12:00–1:00pm** **Lunch**
- 1:00–2:30pm** **Panel on Effective High School Career Education Strategies**
Facilitator: *Denise Pierson-Balik, Heldrich Center*
Wendy Lazarus, Director of Community Relations, Pfizer Inc.
Mary Nelson, Director of Guidance, Williamston High School
Catherine Reeves, Director, Business Partnerships and the Senior Practicum, Allentown High School
Dante Rieti, Cumberland/Salem WIB and Dr. Robert Hancox, Cumberland County College, “Cumberland Pathways: Discovering 21st Century Careers”
- 2:30–3:00pm** **Presentation of Findings and Recommendations from Breakout sessions**

Appendix B.

Opening Presentation: Summary of Findings from the NJ High School Survey and Preliminary Findings from the *Ready for the Job* Project

(Carl Van Horn)

The morning plenary opened with a welcome from the director of the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Carl Van Horn. The vision for the conference, he said, was to understand that all in attendance share the commitment to helping young people to be successful in the increasingly complex labor market. He expressed the need to do a better job of helping young people prepare for the increasing skill needs of today's jobs. He asked the participants to join in learning and dialogue about finding solutions to some key questions:

1. How can we better balance academic and work preparation without compromising the academic mission?
2. What more can be done to bring local collaborative efforts to the standard of meeting dynamic labor market needs?
3. What kinds of data and communication tools support constructive dialogue between educators, employers, and other workforce development partners?

In addition to the questions asked, Van Horn introduced two of the Heldrich Center's projects: the *Ready for the Job* Project conducted for the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, New Jersey Department of Labor, and New Jersey Department of Education that identifies current and future skill demands of New Jersey employers and strategies for meeting those demands; and a statewide survey funded by the Fund for New Jersey about what New Jersey high school students think about school and their plans for work and college. The survey report, *Taking the Next Step: High School Students, College, and Careers*, was included in the conference packets for all participants.

Over the past year, the center has researched the issues of developing timely and better information about where jobs are and what you need to know to be successful. Several key themes emerged from conversations with New Jersey employers about labor market demand: there is a shortage of entry-level workers with necessary skills, there are major technological shifts underway that affect the skills needed to perform job functions, young people have negative images of several industries that are in need of more and new workers, and consolidation of jobs and job titles have altered the skill requirements in several industries and positions. According to employers, there are several skills that will be needed in the future in New Jersey: strong math, science, and technology base, as well as specialized science skills; teamwork and communication skills; entrepreneurship/business skills; and interdisciplinary knowledge.

Next, Van Horn asked if students were ready to meet the challenges of current and future skills requirements in the New Jersey labor market. *Taking the Next Step* found that 96% of NJ high school students surveyed plan to enter college, but few have taken the advanced courses that will prepare them for success in that atmosphere and less than half reported

feeling adequately prepared for college academically. High school education and guidance counseling focuses on college prep but the majority of current and future jobs do not require a four-year college degree.

The solutions to these problems lie in closing the gaps that exist between employers and educators. Van Horn offered several strategies: creating ongoing dialogue between employers and educators; combining traditional labor market data with information directly from employers; and generating industry specific strategies and priorities based on successful models. The Heldrich Center is taking this and other new information uncovered by the project to provide more complete career information to students, parents, teachers, and counselors. Industry reports will be submitted to the SETC and NJDOL and findings will be disseminated to the public through a web site aimed at students making career and education decisions.

Appendix C.

Summary of Keynote Panel Presentations

1. Albert Kroll, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Labor

The first of the panel speakers was Commissioner Albert Kroll of the New Jersey Department of Labor. Commissioner Kroll focused on the misperception that is prevalent about available jobs and the skills and training they require. Having a college degree does not necessarily provide you with the necessary skills demanded by available jobs. An overwhelming majority of high school students say they are going to attend college, however, many of these individuals will not complete a four-year degree. Sixty-seven percent of those entering the workforce today do not have a college degree and the majority of today's jobs do not require a four-year degree. Commissioner Kroll expressed concern that there is too much emphasis put on going to college when there are other options for success. Commissioner Kroll stated that his number one priority is to have a better educated, better skilled workforce so that New Jersey can compete in a global economy.

Commissioner Kroll outlined recent efforts of the New Jersey Department of Labor to address this misperception and provide NJ students with career information and training opportunities:

- **Demand-Side Skills Assessment Project (*Ready for the Job*).** The project will outline skill requirements of demand jobs in New Jersey.
- **Hot Jobs.** This lists top fifty jobs in the state at the time of publication. The effort has won a national award and is being mimicked in other states.
- **Construction Kit.** The Construction Kit breaks down the skills that workers need to be successful in the trades. Through such efforts, the NJDOL is trying to show students that there are viable options for economic success other than going to college.
- **Minorities in the Trades.** The NJDOL recognized that the trades industries have had a problem recruiting minorities and females, and has provided \$10-12 million in funding for a pre-apprenticeship program.
- **JAG – Jobs for American Graduates.** JAG is a new program in Trenton in which students at high risk of dropping out receive daily instruction in life skills/working skills.

2. Laurence Downes, Chairman, New Jersey Commission on Higher Education

The second of the panel speakers was Larry Downes of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education. He began his presentation with a story about his mentorship of an Asbury Park 7th grader. The New Jersey Commission on Higher Education's responsibilities include planning and research. Currently, the Commission is engaged in long range planning that includes the involvement of 500 stakeholders. The guiding principles of the recently approved Strategic Plan include quality, capacity, resources, and collaboration. Using these principles, the Commission is working to create a variety of public/private partnerships to

improve the effectiveness of higher education to individuals and the State of New Jersey. Another goal of the Commission is to ensure that college admission standards are aligned with K-12 curriculum.

Mr. Downes pointed out a number of excellent examples of public/private partnerships that currently exist:

- Verizon Reads Program
- PSE&G Associates Degree Program with Mercer County College and Trenton High School
- Commission partnered with Princeton Review to bring a SAT prep course to Asbury Park students
- Job Shadowing Program with Ocean County Technical Schools
- Project Venture Program through which employees offer one-on-one mentoring to 7th and 8th graders in Asbury Park and Lakewood

3. William Librera, Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Education

The final panelist was Commissioner William Librera from the New Jersey Department of Education. He expressed that Governor McGreevy understands that education includes all development, not just what goes on in the public schools. Teachers, counselors, administrators, business representatives, and workforce development representatives share a common interest and all want students to be prepared well to succeed in the workplace.

Commissioner Librera called for better engagement of students to help them understand career options and to understand the connection between what they are learning and how they may use it in their future careers.

Commissioner Librera next turned to the issue of literacy and the workforce. Forty percent of the workforce now has poor reading capacity and there is a growing body of graduates who are not going to be able to read at the level they need to be successful. Governor McGreevy emphasizes the importance of literacy and has demonstrated his commitment by increasing the number of reading coaches.

Enhancing students' potential to set goals and evaluate options is a goal of the current administration. The NJDOE is supporting several efforts to achieve this goal. One strategy for doing this is through education models such as the career academy. To combat perceptions that career academies force students to make career decisions at an early age, Commissioner Librera emphasized the rich opportunity career academies provide to students to be exposed to various career options and learn valuable skills needed in the workplace. Currently, there are at least twelve career academies throughout the state. Other NJDOE efforts include the 12th Grade Option Program which opens college level experiences to interested and ready students. In addition, the NJDOE is looking to expand internship and mentoring opportunities throughout the State of New Jersey.

Appendix D.

Panel on Effective High School Career Education Strategies

1. Mary Nelson, Director of Guidance, Williamston High School

The Monroe Township School Counseling Initiative is a K-12 guidance program with specific goals and career activities at each grade level. Elementary school students receive career information through workbook activities, middle school students complete the Real Game, and high school students complete three activities per year with a career counselor. In addition, the township has reallocated physical resources and now uses a former conference room as a career center with career books, college books, vocational books, financial aid books, SAT practice software, and computers. The township also invested in technology for career education, including Bridges.com, COIN, and their own guidance web site, which are accessible by students from school or home.

The high school career program begins in 9th grade when students work with a counselor to complete a four-year education plan, learn about realistic careers, receive lessons on study skills, and are introduced to Bridges.com. In 10th grade, students complete various interest inventories and hear from career speakers based upon their interests. 11th grade students perform college and vocational searches on the Internet, practice resume writing, and receive lessons regarding “on the job work habits.” At this time students also work with a counselor to relate their transcripts to post high school goals. Finally, 12th graders visit the Career Center individually to meet with their counselors and those planning to attend four-year schools watch a video and participate in a discussion on the First Semester experience.

Monroe Township has experienced some notable improvements since the implementation of the program. 93% of graduates enroll in postsecondary education, which is 10% more than the year before establishing the Career Center, and more students are attending four-year schools. Students no longer graduate “undecided” about their future. Students also seem to be pleased, which is evidenced by a student survey that was more than 90% positive.

For more information, contact:

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2. Catherine Reeves, Director, Business Partnerships and the Senior Practicum, Allentown High School

The Senior Practicum program is an elective course that has three options—career internship, community service project, or an independent project such as composing music, choreographing a dance, or rebuilding a car. Allentown High School is currently developing a fourth option that would allow the student to take courses at the college level. The program is fairly aggressive, with strict requirements for student performance. Students are expected

to maintain a journal regarding their experience that is submitted, reviewed, and commented on weekly. Students are observed on the job through site visits by the program staff and students are evaluated extensively by themselves and their sponsors in an effort to expose students to the demands of the workplace. In addition to scheduled seminars throughout the semester on workplace issues/skills, students must also do a formal presentation about their experience in front of an audience of their peers at the end of the year.

To prepare students for the Practicum option, career seminars are conducted annually for 9–11th graders. These students also take interest inventories, practice writing resumes, and learn important workplace skills such as interviewing techniques, punctuality, and networking. The program is advertised aggressively to students and parents through Back to School night, letters to parents, the school newsletter, and press releases.

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3. Wendy Lazarus, Director of Community Relations, Pfizer Inc.

Pfizer, Inc. designed a collaborative program with Morristown High School called the Health and Medical Science Career Academy. The involvement of Pfizer was taken very seriously by senior management and the development of the program was a long process. Pfizer staff was integrally involved during every phase of the development. The first step was to introduce the idea to parents and potential students. Pfizer employees presented a series of panels at the school called *Lunch and Learn* to students to foster student interest and exposure to careers in science. These panels showed students the wide range of projects/activities in which people employed at Pfizer have been involved. In addition to the establishment of new school-based learning opportunities, this program encourages mentorships. Pfizer has made its commitment to the program clear to its employees. Scientists must understand that the company will stand behind the time commitment needed to make the program and mentorships work.

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4. Dante Rieti, Cumberland/Salem WIB and Dr. Robert Hancox,
Cumberland County College, “Cumberland Pathways: Discovering 21st
Century Careers”

The presenters explained the background for activities in Cumberland county. While 75–80% of current jobs do not require a bachelor’s degree, a study by Ferris State University found that 68% of students surveyed believed that the best jobs require a bachelor’s degree. The study also found that only 10% said that they received career guidance from school personnel and 41% claimed they would be embarrassed if their postsecondary education was vocational or job-specific training. This is problematic because, according to the National Center for Education statistics, 42% of all high school graduates receive no postsecondary education and only 28% complete a bachelors degree. Cumberland County faces the highest unemployment rate in the state, the lowest median family income, high teen pregnancy rates, and high illiteracy rates. At the same time, there is a demand for skilled workers in Cumberland County. To address this mismatch, business and education leaders joined together in several projects. First, they participated in the NJ SETC *Ready for the Job* Project to determine what skills are in demand in the county. A Business-Education Alliance was formed in Cumberland County to bring business leaders and educators together. Current Alliance project include a Job Exchange where superintendents and business leaders spend work days together to understand each other’s roles and responsibilities. They also initiated the *SchoolCounts!* Certificate program in the county.

“Discovering 21st Century Careers” is a partnership between the NJ Department of Labor, State Employment and Training Commission, the NJ Department of Education, the Cumberland/Salem Workforce Investment Board, and Cumberland County College. Under this program, school counselors will spend time learning about the skill requirements of demand industries in the area by visiting businesses and hearing from business leaders themselves. The program goal is to expand educators’ knowledge of career opportunities, emphasize the importance of various types of postsecondary education and training, provide counselors with additional tools for guidance, and strengthen the relationship between business and education in the county.

For more information, contact:

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Appendix E. Breakout Sessions

1. Breakout Questions

After the morning plenary the conference then dispersed into small breakout sessions that covered various issues pertaining to career awareness. Each session had a set of discussion questions to address (see below). The proceedings of each session are summarized in section 2 of this appendix.

BREAKOUT #1:

Establishing Effective Partnerships Between Business and Education Institutions

Facilitator: *Paget Berger*, Heldrich Center

NJDOE Representatives: *Michael Klavon, Sandra Streeter, Maria Constantin*

1. What kinds of models have you seen that you would consider to be successful partnerships? What are their key goals and components? What indicators of success were used?
2. How do partnerships get established? What roles or expectations are there for the following groups: State Department of Education; county personnel; district leaders; teachers; business and industry leaders; higher education, professional associations; parents; students? What resources were provided by each of these groups? What funding options exist? Can you generalize about what types of businesses make the best partners?
3. How do you “institutionalize” or sustain the partnership? What are some examples?
4. What are some examples of design elements for a successful partnership besides shadowing, cooperative education, mentoring, or internships that could work? Have you seen any innovative designs that make use of web sites? If so, give examples.
5. What impact do you think these types of partnerships have on helping young people explore or pursue career goals? What more can be done to improve the effectiveness of partnering options?
6. What would you consider to be your number one need in regards to establishing effective partnerships?

BREAKOUT #2:

Career Education Tools/Materials to Assist Educators/Counselors

Facilitator: *Laurie Harrington*, Heldrich Center

NJ DOE Representatives: *Marie Barry, Phyllis Garmant*

1. Whose responsibility is it to provide information regarding career options to students? Is this the right person/people? If not, in your opinion, whose responsibility should it be?
2. What “tools” and methods are currently used to distribute career information to students? (e.g.: handouts, posters, web sites, guest speakers, assembly, etc.)?

3. What has been your experience with the most effective ways to get information about careers into the hands of students, parents, and education professionals?
4. Do teachers, as well as guidance counselors, know how to use the tools? If not, why? What would make counselors (and/or teachers) use the tools more effectively?
5. (NJNextStop.org web site presentation) How is this web site useful? How is it not useful, what is missing? How could it be improved to make you use it?
6. In your experience, how effective are career fairs in providing information to students about possible careers?
7. What would you consider to be your number one need in regards to career education tools and materials?

BREAKOUT #3:

Integrating career awareness and academic curricula

Facilitator: *Stephanie Duckworth-Elliott*, Heldrich Center

NJ DOE Representatives: *Roger McGloughan, Connie Walde*

1. Where is the disconnect in integrating career awareness/exploration in the academic curriculum?
2. What can be done to enhance the integration of career-technical content and academic curricula more effectively?
3. Is “team teaching” a viable way for teachers to develop curriculum and deliver instruction? Pros & Con’s? What other ways are there? And what works?
4. When should students begin to learn about careers?
5. Who should be responsible for developing the curriculum to address career awareness and exploration (curriculum coordinator, DOE, district, principal etc.)?
6. Who is responsible for creating awareness (Parents, teachers, business leaders)?. What kinds of activities can be developed that will include these three groups?
7. What would you consider to be your number one need in regards to integrating curricula?

2. Summary of Breakout Session Discussions

Establishing Effective Partnerships between Business and Educational Institutions

- Current partnerships include: site visits to businesses by educators to understand employer skills needs; talks given by employers about job opportunities and skills to school students; internship programs; job shadowing

- Participants stressed that such business-education interactions were critical for both sides, but especially for educators to build a network of contacts to whom they could refer students looking for employment and from whom they could learn about specific job openings.

- Some participants thought that technology could play a role in facilitating business-education coordination. The Internet could be useful as a means for schools and businesses to supply contact information. For students unable to go out to visit firms and directly observe jobs in action, videos could still allow students to see the workplaces at which they might be interested in working.

- Attendees identified several barriers to business-educational partnerships:
 - Educators at schools have limited contacts in business. In addition, the increasing rate of job turnover over the past decade and, more recently, of downsizing at firms has meant that many of the contacts that schools had built in the human resources and other departments at firms are no longer useful.

 - Business participants likewise noted that their contacts at the school level were limited. This problem was thought to be especially pronounced for small businesses, which lack the resources to spend significant amounts of time tracking down contacts at schools.

 - A lack of resources at the school and school district levels were also found to be obstacles to improved business-school interaction. School counselors have been charged with many functions and have little time to devote to building partnerships with business.

 - Participants pointed out that schools and school counselors alike are graded on how well they do in sending students to college and not on how well they get students placed into technical jobs after high school. Given these incentives, school counselors devote more of their time to college placement than to building relationships with businesses.

 - Attendees also cited the difficulty of getting students interested in moving into a career and engaging in career planning. Many high school graduates are focused on just getting any job that will put some cash in their hands and not on finding a job that builds skills they will need in their careers.

Career Education Tools/Materials to Assist Educators/Counselors

- Participants cited various tools currently being used for Career Awareness: COIN3, CareerScope, O*Net, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Bridges, and Discover by ACT. While Bridges is very useful, it is very expensive and is not available in most schools. Some noted that community and local colleges may offer a bit of guidance to high school students.
- All agreed there should be a more collaborative effort when developing and implementing career education materials. This includes guidance counselors, teachers, and administration.
- When asked what was the most effective way to get information to students, participants replied that the Internet is a fine tool, but it cannot replace a really good curriculum. Schools need to develop a career guidance curriculum and find ways to have multiple people in the high schools implement it. Guidance counselors cannot be expected to run programs on every type of career and college path. Guidance counselors are often kept busy with other aspects of the job such as resolving scheduling conflicts. This type of administrative work prevents them from focusing more heavily on the provision of career guidance. There needs to be resources/staff/time available for career guidance.
- Some of the best tools/programs are expensive and many schools cannot afford them. If the state really wants to help students, there needs to be one site linking to all these different sites. One tool will also help guidance counselors to work together across districts.
- The remainder of this session was used to garner feedback on the new web site (www.NJNextStop.org) developed by the Heldrich Center as an extension of the *Ready for the Job* Project for the NJDOL, NJSETC, and NJDOE. Participants offered valuable feedback to Heldrich Center staff regarding the content and presentation of material regarding career information for New Jersey high school students, their parents, teachers, and counselors. Comments were taken into consideration when developing the final web site content and specifications.

Integrating Career Awareness and Academic Curricula

- Participants addressed the disconnect between academic curriculum and career awareness education and what can be done to close this gap. An overwhelming majority of participants agreed that teachers and counselors had no time; teachers must meet testing standards and cannot use teaching time to raise career awareness. Participants stated that teachers also often see career awareness as “extra work.” Counselors have growing roles and often work with large numbers of kids, which leaves less time available to focus on career education.
- There is not enough support for career education from administrators and policy makers and currently there are no incentives to integrate curriculum. Furthermore, it is difficult to establish agreements among various parties needed to approve integrated curriculum. Strong leadership is needed to make curriculum change a reality.

- Students and parents view college as the only path for high school students and are not concerned with career education. Some advocated showing parents and students how the career-related information can apply to school/work/life in an holistic way. School administrators and policy makers also need to be educated that college placement rates should not be the only criteria by which to judge schools. There is a need to show parents, students and others that nonacademic career paths can be rewarding.
- Educators often feel ill-equipped to educate students on the multitude of career opportunities and their ever-changing skill requirements. Teachers and counselors need better professional development opportunities, including: training on career clusters, competencies, knowledge levels, career ladders, how to integrate information into curricula, and opportunities/incentives to work in private sector to build career-based knowledge.

Appendix F. Registered Participants

Name	Title	Organization Name
Diana Acosta	Guidance Counselor	Fort Lee High School
Judy Alu	Regional Ed. Specialist	NJDOE - Central Region
Bernadette Amato	Coordinator Career Center	Ocean County College Community
Frank Appleton	Secondary Planner	Bergen County Special Services
Greg Arakelian	Career Counselor	Somerville High School
Michael Armstrong	Director of Guidance	Southern Regional High School
Marie Barry		OVTCA, NJ DOE
Jennifer Beaumont	Education Program Specialist	NJ DOE, Southern Regional Office
Mary Beth Berry	Transition	North Hunterdon High School
Bill Betar	Director of Pupil Personnel	Passaic County Technical Institute
Amineh Bey	WIA Youth Program Manager	Essex County Office of Workforce Development
Donna Beyer	Director of Career Development	Stevens Institute of Technology
David Bills	Assistant Director	Career Services, Rutgers University
Kathy Blackstone	Senior Director	Corporate/Foundations Relations
Catherine Bonica	School to Careers Coordinator	River Dell Regional High School
Valerie Boseman	Director, Pre-College Programs	New Jersey City University
Diane Bossert	School Counselor	Salem County Career and Technical High School
Carolyn Bradley	Consumer Relations Consultant	New Jersey Natural Gas Company
Jacqui Brown	Counselor	Brick Township Memorial High School
Barbara Bruschi	Senior Policy Analyst	NJ SETC
Monica Bryant	Assistant Director	Career Services - Rutgers University
Kamilla Buffalino	Director of Student Services	South River High School
Mary Burks	Coordinator, Workforce Relations	Trenton Central High School
Carol Caruso	Head Guidance Counselor	Henry Hudson Regional
Judith Caruso	Guidance Counselor	Lakeland Regional High School
Tony Chiappetta	Asst. Director	Career Services, Rutgers University
David Clauser	Principal	Bound Brook High School
Richard Cohen	School to Careers Coordinator	Academy Charter High School
Kelly Collison	Guidance Department Intern	Holmdel High School
Maria Constantin	Education Planner	NJ DOE
Stacey Cooke	Guidance Counseling Intern	Princeton High School
Letitia Cooper	Director	The Stuart School
Hollis Cooper	Human Resources Generalist	New Jersey Natural Gas Company
Teri Corso	Director of Career Services	Bloomfield College
John Cossolini	Job Placement Officer	Snyder High School
Lucia Crossley	Director, Community Development	Seton Hall University
Warren J. Curd	Director of Guidance	Livingston Public Schools
Suzanne D'Anna	Program Director	UMDNJ-SHRP Health Sciences Careers
Lansing Davis	Senior Policy Analyst	NJ SETC
Lucille E. Davy	Special Counsel to the Governor for Education	Office of the Governor
William E. DeFeo	Superintendent of Schools	Manchester Township School District
Johanne DeFilippo	Guidance Counselor	Boonton High School
Andrea K. DeJohn	Career Counselor	Lakewood High School
Dana DeYoung	Director, Utility HR	PSE&G
Ann DiGiacomo	Director	EPD Associates
Laurence Downes	Chairman	NJ Commission on Higher Education
Luz Espinosa	Academic Advisor	Aspira of New Jersey, Inc.
Glenn Fessler	Career Facilitator	Southern Regional High School
Rhonda Figueroa	Manager-Corporate Communications & Development	New Jersey Natural Gas Company
Shelley Fox	Education Specialist for Gifted and Talented	New Jersey Department of Education
Robert Friday	Counselor, Pre-College Programs	New Jersey City University
James Gallina	CIE Coordinator	Essex County Vocational Schools
Phyllis Garnant	Coordinator	Career Educ, Consumer, Family & Life Skills, NJDOE

Robert Giberna	High School Counselor	Piscataway High
Elissa Ginsburg	Guidance Director	Haddon Township High School
Manuela Gonnella	Guidance Counselor	Bloomfield High School
Cheryl Green	School Counselor/Workplace Readiness Coordinator	Allentown High School
Millie Grey	Career Counselor Learning Ctr	New Brunswick Public Schools, Adult
Gamaliel Guardia	Coordinator & Advisor	Aspira Inc. of New Jersey
JoAnn Hammill	Assistant Commissioner	Workforce New Jersey - NJDOL
Robert E. Hancox	Executive Director	Cumberland County College
Thomas Hayes	Director-Consumer & Community Relations	New Jersey Natural Gas Company
Nancy Hazelgrove	Director	NJ Statewide Transfer Initiative, BCC
John Heldrich	Chairman	NJ SETC
Stephen Heller	Director of Education	Verizon
Lina Hollman	Program Manager, Energy Utility Degree Program	PSE&G
J. Anthony Howard	School Counselor	Middletown North High School
Beth M. Hyre	Community Relations Manager	DeVry University
Sidney Ivey	Guidance Chair	Franklin High School
Calvin Izard		Verizon NJ
Thomas R. Jensen	Admin. Super/Student Services	Freehold Regional High School District
Johanna Johnson	Coordinator of Curriculum/Special Projects	Atlantic County Institute of Technology
Brenda Kay-Kucin	Counselor	Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School
Linda Kellner	Director & Chief of Staff	New Jersey Natural Gas Company
Vincent J. Kelly	Career Counselor	Central Regional High School
Maureen Kerne	Supervisor of Instruction	Bergen County Special Services
Michael K. Klavon	Acting Director OV-TCAP/Director OIPS	NJ Department of Education
June Knopf	Guidance Counselor	Randolph High School
Bud Kohler	School-to-Career Coordinator	Phillipsburg High School
Ron Kollman	Apprenticeship/Internship Coordinator	Atlantic County Institute of Technology
Thomas J. Kononowitz	Senior Vice President- Marketing Services	New Jersey Natural Gas Company
Peter L. Koza		
Inez Kraus	Director	Student Personnel Svcs, Jefferson Twsp District
Albert Kroll	Commissioner	NJ Department of Labor
Wendy Lazarus	Director	Community Relations, Pfizer, Inc.
William Librera	Commissioner	NJ Department of Education
Jeffrey Lifante	Director of Admissions	UMDNJ - New Jersey Dental School
Marc Lo Bianco	Guidance Counselor	Highland Park High School
Jim Lowda	Special Populations Admissions	Ocean County Vocational Technical Schools
Alicia Mahon	Guidance Counselor	University High School
Elizabeth Marhold	Guidance Counselor	Spotswood High School
Marianne Mazzoni	Guidance Director	Cumberland Regional High School
Roger McCloughan	Education Program Development Specialist	NJ Department of Education
Barbara McHale	School to School Coordinator	Southern Regional School
Chuck Miller	Youth Development Counselor	Pinelands High School
Ray S. Moose	Guidance Counselor	Piscataway Tech & Voc High School
Linda Morrell	Career Guidance Counselor	Randocas Valley Regional High School
Mark Murphy	Executive Director	Fund for New Jersey
Bob Murphy	Admissions and Career Development	Mercer County Technical Schools
Jacqueline Nadler	LOT-C	Rutherford Schools
Mary Nelson	Director of Guidance	Williamstown High School
Dave Novak	Senior Policy Analyst	NJ SETC
Lynn Orlowski	SPS Coordinator	Mercer County Technical Schools
Jeanne Oswald	Deputy Executive Director	Commission on Higher Education
William Panella	Director	Pupil Personnel Services, S. Hunterdon Reg HS
Adrienne Panico	Guidance Counselor	Ramapo-Indian Hills Bd of Education

Norah Peck	Professional Development Coordinator	NJ DOE
Katie Peten	Guidance Counselor	East Orange Campus High
Mark Petito	Guidance Counselor	Deptford High School
Patrick Piegari	Acting Middlesex County Superintendent of Schools	NJ DOE
Debra Pinto	Guidance Counselor	Ridgefield Park High School
Andrea Plaza	Manager-Business Transformation	New Jersey Natural Gas Company
Henry Plotkin	Executive Director	NJ SETC
Susan Rechel	Counselor	Red Bank Regional
Catherine Reeves	Director, Business Partnerships & Senior Practicum	Allentown High School
Lois Reinhardt	Counselor	Vernon Township High School
Dan Rendine	Guidance	Hanover Park High School
Conrad Rieder	Guidance Counselor	Freehold Twp HS
Dante Rieti	Chair	Cumberland/Salem WIB
Glorianne Robbi	Executive Assistant	Fund for New Jersey
Raquel Roman	Program Coordinator	ABH - Buena Work Readiness
Andrea Romano	Transition Coordinator	HCESC
Joseph Rooney	C.I.E./Job Placement Coordinator	Morris County School of Technology
Elizabeth Rosado	Hudson Coordinator	ASPIRA Inc. of NJ
Tony Rosato	Coordinator	Essex County Vocational School
Octavia Salerno	Guidance	Middlesex High School
Ciro A. Scalaria	Director of Public Affairs	Verizon NJ
Diane Seavers	WIB Liaison	Middlesex County WIB
Dena Seiss	Guidance Counselor	Rahway High School
Lisa Serenelli	Planner	Mercer WIB
Kimberly Shaffer	Guidance Counselor	Morristown High School
Vincenzina Shane	School Counselor	West Orange HS
Jack Sheidell	Counselor	Cherry Hill West High School
Karen D. Simmons	School/Career Counselor	New Brunswick High School
Kitty Stanton	Coordinator of Vocational Service	Arc of Hunterdon
Karen Rae Steele	Guidance Program Manager	Bergen County Technical High School
Gail Stoughton	Transition Coordinator, Guidance Counselor	Ridgewood Schools
Brian Strauss	Guidance Counselor	Voorhees High School
Sandra Streeter	Acting Manager, Bureau of Career Preparation	New Jersey Department of Education
James E. Sulton	Executive Director	N.J. Commission on Higher Education
Margaret Sumbry	Voc Rehab Counselor 2 Services	NJDOL, Division of Vocational Rehab
Gwen Szyarto	Guidance Counselor	Keyport High School
Thomas J. Talbot	Broker Builder	Talbot Agency
Keisha N. Terry	School Social Worker	University Academy Charter High School
Liliam Thompson	Youth Counselor	Bergen Co. Youth Opportunity Program
Alice M. Tice	Counselor	High Technology High School
Jennifer Torgersen	Guidance Counselor	Bernards Board of Education - Ridge HS
Neil Torino	Director of Student Personnel Services	Morris County School of Technology
Cathy Tramontana	Executive Director	Mercer WIB
Brenda Valentine	Guidance Counselor	University Academy Charter High School
Libby Vinson	Vice President	NJBIA
Constance Walde	Program Development Specialist	NJ DOE—OVTAP
Doreen Welsh	School Counselor	Lawrence High School
Dick White	Director	Career Development & Placement Services, Rutgers
Darlene White	Youth Counselor	Bergen Co. Youth Opportunity Program
Linda Zamer	Director of Career Services	Jewish Vocational Services
Lillian Zavattieri	UMDNJ-SHRP Health Sciences Careers	
Donnamarie Zolli	HR Director	Hexacon Electric Co.
Diane Zompa	Senior Policy Analyst	NJ SETC
Ken Zurich	Director	Career Development Center, William Paterson University

