

IDEAS *into* ACTION



advancing
academic
achievement



The Goldman Sachs Foundation

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

The Goldman Sachs Foundation is a global philanthropic organization funded by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. The Foundation's mission is to promote excellence and innovation in education and to improve the academic performance and lifelong productivity of young people worldwide. It achieves this mission through a combination of strategic partnerships, grants, loans, private sector investments, and the deployment of professional talent from Goldman Sachs. Funded in 1999, the Foundation has awarded grants in excess of \$40 million since its inception, providing opportunities for young people in more than 20 countries.

MANY FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO
making ninth grade a perilous year for
students, beginning with inadequate
middle school preparation.

GRADES OFTEN drop, and participation in extracurricular activities frequently wanes. During this period, communication between home and school becomes less frequent, resulting in decreased parent involvement. As a result, the proportion of ninth graders held back each year is four to six times larger than that of students in other grades.



Fortunately, an organization committed to the success of high schools and their students is addressing this problem, helping teachers, students, and parents better handle the transition and prepare more young people for academic success. With an investment from The Goldman Sachs Foundation, **High Schools That Work** is expanding its “Successful Transitions” program—beginning with six sets of partnering high schools and middle schools in four southern states—to reach ultimately more than 700 teachers and 12,000 students.

*THE GOLDMAN SACHS FOUNDATION SUPPORTS
PROGRAMS WORLDWIDE* to improve young
people's academic performance and lifelong
productivity. It assists organizations that work
at the secondary school level and share the
common goal of promoting high achievement
and future success for students.

THE FOUNDATION'S INITIATIVES to advance academic achievement take to scale exemplary academic enrichment programs; foster successful school, teacher, and student performance; and promulgate effective educational models. We support work in public and alternative school settings to enhance teacher training, improve school structure and operations, and advance school reform efforts.

Supporting the “Successful Transitions” program through a grant to High Schools That Work (HSTW) is one way The Goldman Sachs Foundation is advancing academic achievement. HSTW, an initiative of the Southern Regional Education Board, uses a proven framework for school-wide revitalization that focuses on raising achievement by improving student mastery of core academic subjects. It has grown into the nation’s largest and most successful high school reform program, with more than 1,100 schools in 26 states using the HSTW approach.

HSTW’s Successful Transitions program supports middle school students in making the often-challenging shift to high school and succeeding in rigorous college preparatory courses. The Foundation’s grant is initially expanding the program to schools in North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas. The grant will support, ultimately, 75 middle schools and 24 high schools throughout the southeastern United States.



SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS PROGRAM

The Successful Transitions program is making a difference. Bright students across the United States are gaining access to an excellent education and a greater chance of leading fulfilling, successful lives.

When a student is accepted at a partnering high school, so are his or her parents. New students and their parents participate in preparatory programs before the school year even begins. They receive an in-depth orientation on the school's academic standards as well as its emphasis on disciplined effort and parental involvement.

A summer program for incoming freshmen stresses good basic study habits, time management, and organizational skills to help prepare the students for the school year

ahead. In addition, students are assigned an advisor who monitors their progress and stays connected with parents should grades slip or troubles emerge. The freshman year emphasizes important core studies in reading and math. In addition, at the end of the first semester, teachers make home visits to discuss progress and set goals for the rest of the year.

This investment has resulted in dramatic dividends, raising student test scores and increasing parent involvement. Parents and teachers work together to keep students moving forward on the road to academic success.

Charter schools are doing a great deal to improve education. There are more than 2,700 charter schools throughout the United States, and that number is rapidly increasing. But often, the teachers and concerned parents who envision these schools lack the necessary skills to launch and manage them effectively. To address this challenge, the Foundation has partnered with the New Schools Services division of New American Schools (NAS), which creates programs and provides services to help charter schools successfully tackle management and operational challenges.



NAS was launched in 1991 with one goal in mind: to enhance student performance by comprehensively improving schools. It has subsequently carried out extensive fieldwork to determine which structures and strategies work best in schools. During the past decade, the organization has gained a strong reputation for helping charter school founders and administrators build and sustain successful programs.

The Foundation's grant to NAS enables charter schools to benefit from strategic planning support that integrates a school's vision, objectives, and performance measures and articulates in detail how objectives will be implemented. The schools also receive assistance in identifying funding for start-up and operational needs; establishing means to collect, manage, and use student performance data; and providing special education services.

CAPITAL CITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Washington, D.C.

Three years ago, a group of Washington, D.C., parents sought to create a charter school that would stress character and civility while offering its students project-based learning. Through the NAS Charter School Initiative, they found what Principal Karen Dresden calls “a perfect match”: the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound (ELOB) comprehensive school design. Capital City Public Charter School was born of that effort in 1999, and has enjoyed a string of early successes, including a “Charter Principal of the Year” award for Dresden in her first year on the job.

As Capital City Charter grows, NAS is helping it achieve even more. Funding from The Goldman Sachs Foundation has enabled NAS to create a broad partnership with ELOB, implementing programs at Capital

City Charter and four other schools in the D.C.-Baltimore area. This pilot will generate strategies that can be applied nationwide to the schools NAS supports.

The NAS/ELOB partnership program addresses curriculum, assessment, and professional development needs; helps principals and teachers analyze student learning patterns and problems through new, Web-enabled student data systems; involves parents and community stakeholders to develop accessible reports about school and student performance; and provides best-in-class help with financial and other complex issues that can confound start-up schools.



WITH A PRESSING need for qualified teachers, teacher shortages remain a critical issue for United States public schools.

Furthermore, since experience and quality often correlate—and because up to half of novice teachers quit the profession quickly—developing and retaining good teachers is a unique challenge. Research has demonstrated that the most effective means of raising students' achievement is to invest in teacher quality.

The Goldman Sachs Foundation believes intensive teacher induction programs that pair novice teachers with accomplished mentors can make a meaningful difference in staff retention, teacher effectiveness, and student learning. It has awarded a substantial grant to expand a highly promising program, the **New Teacher Center (NTC)** at the **University of California at Santa Cruz**.

The mentors are exemplary teachers, extensively trained in effective adult-coaching methods. Mentors are released from teaching duties to work with NTC, and join new teachers in their classrooms to help them work with diverse students, individualize instruction, and interpret data to improve student achievement.

NTC uses the wisdom gleaned from each new district to strengthen its model and further develop its program. Most of NTC's beginning teachers describe their mentors not only as key to their survival, but as significant contributors to their classroom effectiveness.



BERNADETTE KERRIGAN

NTC Participant

Early in her career, California high school English teacher Bernadette Kerrigan was determined to more effectively reach her students whose first language was not English. The NTC program paired Kerrigan with veteran teacher Mary Beth Boyle, who suggested tested strategies the young educator might apply to help these students participate fully and achieve more.

When Kerrigan's students later simulated a Middle East Peace Conference, she was delighted that the English-language learners actively contributed to the discussion. She was impressed that the concrete approaches suggested by Boyle had enhanced learning for the entire class. Now a graduate of the NTC program, Kerrigan continues to teach in a high-needs California district and work with Boyle on an informal basis to seek creative and effective means to enhance learning for all of her students.

School restructuring has emerged as a significant education reform strategy. Unfortunately, many restructuring efforts fail to extend the benefits of their organizational changes into the area that matters most: enhancing academic instruction.

The Goldman Sachs Institutes for School Redesign, Teaching, and Leadership have been developed by **Teachers College at Columbia University** to leverage the resources and skills of experienced educators and administrators from high-performing schools to support the restructuring efforts of 15 small high schools in New York City. Using an apprenticeship model that provides intensive peer-to-peer professional development and technical assistance, the Goldman Sachs Institutes are demonstrating the power of this mentoring approach to strengthen instruction in small redesigned schools and to improve teaching quality in the city as a whole.

Led by the research and policy experts at Teachers College, the Institutes serve as laboratories for implementing new models for educational leadership, improved instructional practices in academic subjects, assessments of students' work, and school-wide accountability structures or processes. Seventeen schools have participated in the Institutes, and each network has developed customized plans and implemented activities responsive to individual school and student needs.

Research has shown that the less-experienced schools have made constructive changes in school structure and instruction, and have expanded academic and social learning opportunities for students. Furthermore, student achievement data reported to the New York City Board of Education indicate that at the end of the second year of the project, the schools associated with the Goldman Sachs Institutes show higher averages than non-participating New York City schools in attendance, graduation, and college acceptance, despite having a more economically and academically underserved student population.

The Goldman Sachs Institutes provide a platform from which new paradigms for educational leadership, professional development, and student achievement are explored and constructed. A task force of influential individuals from higher education, K-12 education, and the business community has been assembled and charged with ensuring that lessons learned from the Institutes inform public debate on teaching and school quality in New York City, and that they lead to the adaptation of effective program models in the city's schools.

This publication describes selected grants within the Foundation's portfolio of philanthropic investments that seek to advance academic achievement. For more information on the Foundation's programs and projects, please visit us at www.gs.com/foundation.

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