



## Talking Points

### Envisioning *New Day for Learning* for All Students, Everywhere.

- If we truly want our young people to excel in and out of the classroom, schools can't do it alone and academics are not enough. **We need to start thinking and talking about education differently** to ensure our future workforce is prepared to thrive in today's global economy.
- **Our young people are becoming less — instead of more — competitive.** We know that in our community and across the country, the achievement levels of students lag behind those of students in the most competitive economies, in both basic skills and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, leaving our young people ill-prepared for school, work and life.
- Students won't learn if they are not engaged — and **far too many of our young people are disconnected and disengaged from learning.** We simply cannot afford for this to be the case.
- *New Day for Learning* recognizes that students need more than just reading and math and that **critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork are critical building blocks for student success and student engagement.**
- No one person or group can improve educational outcomes for young people alone. **Real and lasting improvements require collaboration across sectors.** It will take all of us — students, parents, elected officials, educators, leaders in business, community-based organizations, faith-based providers and others — working together to improve outcomes for all young people everywhere.
- So how do we better engage and prepare students? We need to **embed student interests into their education and connect core academics to real world experiences.** Simulating crime scene labs to make biology lessons come to life and let students actively work to solve problems. Using music, theater and arts to teach reading, math and teamwork. Researching political candidates and engaging them on specific topics of interest to spark interest in the civic process. The possibilities are unlimited. To engage students in this way, we need to work together to ensure that our teachers and school leaders are continually provided with the training and support for implementing the best strategies to reach all young people.
- The best part is that we already know this works — because it's already happening in many places across the country. In our community and across the nation, afterschool programs have served as **labs of innovation** for engaging and preparing students for the future.
- We need a **21<sup>st</sup> century vision for American education that re-envision how, when and where young people learn.** This vision builds on the collective wisdom and experience of educators and uses research to drive the structure of the learning environments we create. These environments will be dynamic and will leverage strategies such as hands-on learning opportunities, will take place in and outside of school buildings, year-round and will actively engage the community.
- While unacceptably high dropout rates and untold economic losses confront America today, **we must all play a role** in making sure that's not our future. Through the talent of our young people and the commitment of all of us, we can create a *New Day for Learning* in our community. Together we can realize the 21<sup>st</sup> century education vision that will fully prepare our young people for school, work and life.

# Talking Points and Supporting Data

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**If we truly want our young people to excel in and out of the classroom, schools can't do it alone and academics are not enough. We need to start thinking and talking about education differently to ensure our future workforce is prepared to thrive in today's global economy.**

In a survey by Public Agenda, 68 percent of students feel that updating high school classes to better match the skills employers want will improve their high school education.

- Reality Check 2006<sup>i</sup>

According to an Associated Press poll from June of this year, 86 percent of the general public — not just parents — feel that the quality of the country's education system has a large or very large impact on the overall economic prosperity.

- Associated Press poll (June 2008)<sup>ii</sup>

**Our young people are becoming less — instead of more — competitive. We know that in our community and across the country, the achievement levels of students lag behind those of students in the most competitive economies, in both basic skills and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, leaving our young people ill-prepared for school, work and life.**

In science, the U.S. ranks 21<sup>st</sup> out of the 30 in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, down from 19<sup>th</sup> in 2003, and 14<sup>th</sup> in 2000. In math, the U.S. scores remained basically unchanged from 2003, though its ranking dropped to 25<sup>th</sup> (from 23<sup>rd</sup> in 2003, and 18<sup>th</sup> in 2000), indicating that other nations improved their performance.

- Highlights from PISA 2006<sup>iii</sup>

In a survey about work readiness, significant percentages of employers said that high school graduate skills were “deficient” in critical basic and applied skills including: writing (72 percent), mathematics (53.5 percent), professionalism/work ethic (70.3 percent) and problem-solving/critical thinking (69.6 percent).

- *Are They Really Ready to Work?: Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce* (2007)<sup>iv</sup>

Forty to 45 percent of recent high school graduates report significant gaps in their skills, both in college and the workplace.

- *Closing the Expectations Gap* 2008<sup>v</sup>

**Students won't learn if they are not engaged — and far too many of our young people are disconnected and disengaged from learning. We simply cannot afford for this to be the case.**

According to *The Silent Epidemic*, dropouts identified the following as the top reasons for leaving school: classes were not interesting, missed too many days and could not catch up, spent time with people not interested in school, had too much freedom and not enough rules and were failing school.

- *The Silent Epidemic* (2006)<sup>vi</sup>

Both academic and social engagement are integral components of successfully navigating the education pipeline. Research shows that a lack of student engagement is predictive of dropping out even after controlling for academic achievement and student background.

- *Why students drop out of school. In Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis* (2004)<sup>vii</sup>

***New Day for Learning* recognizes that students need more than just reading and math and that critical thinking, problem-solving and teamwork are critical building blocks for student success and student engagement.**

In a 2007 parent poll, 91 percent of respondents believed that the education system should make problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking as high a priority as reading, writing, math and science. However, 54 percent of parents said that programs that build these skills (problem-solving, critical thinking and teamwork) are either not available or available but difficult to afford.

- *Key Findings On Attitudes Toward Education and Learning* (May 2008)<sup>viii</sup>

According to a 2007 poll of voters, “[a]n overwhelming 88 percent of voters say they believe that schools can and should incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into their curriculum.”

- *Beyond the Three Rs: Voter Attitudes Toward 21st Century Skills* (2007)<sup>ix</sup>

“The best employers the world over will be looking for the most competent, most creative, and most innovative people on the face of the earth and will be willing to pay them top dollar for their services. This will be true not just for top professionals and managers, but up and down the length and breadth of the workforce. Those countries that produce the most important new products and services can capture a premium in world markets that will enable them to pay high wages to their citizens.”

- *Tough Choices or Tough Times, The New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, National Center on Education and the Economy (2007)<sup>x</sup>

# Talking Points and Supporting Data

Creativity/Innovation is projected to “increase in importance” for future workforce entrants, according to more than 70 percent (73.6 percent) of employer respondents. Currently, however, more than half of employer respondents (54.2 percent) report new workforce entrants with a high school diploma to be “deficient” in this skill set, and relatively few consider two-year and four-year college-educated entrants to be “excellent” (4.1 percent and 21.5 percent, respectively).

- *Are They Really Ready to Work?: Employers' Perspectives on the Basic Knowledge and Applied Skills of New Entrants to the 21st Century U.S. Workforce (2007)*<sup>vi</sup>

**No one person or group can improve educational outcomes for young people alone. Real and lasting improvements require collaboration across sectors. It will take all of us — students, parents, elected officials, educators, leaders in business, community-based organizations, faith-based providers and others — working together to improve outcomes for all young people everywhere.**

“...efforts to eliminate black-white inequality in American society should be mounted across all domains, including schools, but not in schools alone. There is no single policy focus likely, by itself, to make the nation equitable.”

- *The Social Costs of an Inadequate Education (2005)*<sup>xiii</sup>

According to a 2008 survey, Fortune 1000 science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) executives overwhelmingly acknowledge that they have a role to play in building a diverse STEM pipeline. Almost all (98 percent) consider it important for STEM companies to support pre-college science education programs that help create the next generation of inventors, innovators and discoverers; two-thirds (66 percent) say it is very important.

- *Bayer Facts Of Science Education Survey*<sup>xiii</sup>

**So how do we better engage and prepare students? We need to embed student interests into their education and connect core academics to real world experiences. Simulating crime scene labs to make biology lessons come to life and let students actively work to solve problems. Using music, theater and arts to teach reading, math and teamwork. Researching political candidates and engaging them on specific topics of interest to spark interest in the civic process. The possibilities are unlimited. To engage students in this way, we need to work together to ensure that our teachers and school leaders are continually provided with the training and support for implementing the best strategies to reach all young people.**

According to a 2008 survey of Fortune 1000 science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) executives, about nine-in-10 (87 percent) say the most effective way for students to learn science is by conducting experiments, forming opinions, and discussing and defending their conclusions with others, rather than by reading textbooks, listening to lectures and memorizing scientific information.

- *Bayer Facts Of Science Education Survey*<sup>xiv</sup>

“Finland has been a poster child for school improvement since it rapidly climbed to the top of the international rankings after it emerged from the Soviet Union’s shadow. Leaders in Finland attribute these gains to their intensive investments in teacher education. Over 10 years the country overhauled preparation to focus more on teaching for higher-order skills like problem solving and critical thinking. Teachers learn how to create challenging curriculum and how to develop and evaluate local performance assessments that engage students in research and inquiry on a regular basis. Teacher training emphasizes learning how to teach students who learn in different ways – including those with special needs. The egalitarian Finns reasoned that if teachers learn to help students who struggle, they will be able to teach all students more effectively and would indeed leave no child behind.”

- *Building a 21st Century U.S. Education System (2008) (Building a System for Powerful Teaching and Learning, by Linda Darling-Hammond, © 2007 Linda Darling-Hammond)*<sup>xv</sup>

**The best part is that we already know this works — because it’s already happening in many places across the country. In our community and across the nation, afterschool programs have served as labs of innovation for engaging and preparing students for the future.**

A national study on elementary school and middle school afterschool programs released in 2007 showed that regular participation in high-quality programs resulted in gains in standardized math test scores for elementary and middle school students; gains in social skills with peers and prosocial behavior and reductions in aggression for elementary school students. Reductions in misconduct were reported by both elementary and middle school program participants, as well as reported reductions in the use of drugs and alcohol among middle school students.

- *Outcomes Linked to High-Quality Afterschool Programs (2007)*<sup>xvi</sup>

# Talking Points and Supporting Data

**We need a 21<sup>st</sup> century vision for American education that re-envisioning how, when and where young people learn. This a vision that builds on the collective wisdom and experience of educators and uses research to drive the structure of the learning environments we create. These environments will be dynamic and will leverage strategies such as hands-on learning opportunities, will take place in and outside of school buildings, year-round and will actively engage the community.**

According to research released in 2007, disadvantaged students lose tremendous academic ground during the summer months compared to their more advantaged peers. Approximately “...two-thirds of the academic achievement gap between disadvantaged youngsters and their more advantaged peers can be explained by what happens over the summer.”

- Karl Alexander (Quoted in 2008 Center for Summer Learning Research in Brief)<sup>xvii</sup>

“The expansion of learning time can serve as one effective vehicle to modernize our schools because it allows teachers, principals, community organizations and leaders, and parents to build multiple curriculums to best educate our children to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Expanded learning time turns dissatisfaction with the limitations of the current six-hour, 180-day school year into a proactive strategy that will create a new school structure for children.”

- *Choosing More Time for Students: The What, Why, and How of Expanded Learning (2007)*<sup>xviii</sup>

Parents identified three reform measures as holding the most potential to improve kids’ educational and enrichment opportunities: (1) expanding project-based and hands-on learning; (2) giving students more real-world learning opportunities, such as internships and out-of-classroom learning; and (3) increasing access to afterschool and summer learning programs.

- *Key Findings On Attitudes Toward Education and Learning (May 2008)*<sup>xix</sup>

**While unacceptably high dropout rates and untold economic losses confront America today, we must all play a role in making sure that’s not our future. Through the talent of our young people and the commitment of all of us, we can create *New Day for Learning* in our community. Together we can realize the 21<sup>st</sup> century education vision that will fully prepare our young people for school, work and life.**

Research released in 2007 showed that among 20-year-olds in the U.S. today, more than 700,000 of them dropped out of high school. If we had engaged and retained just half of those students and guided them to graduation, the government would collect “\$45 billion via extra tax revenues and reduced costs of public health, of crime and justice and in welfare payments.”

- *The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America’s Children (2007)*<sup>xx</sup>

Increasing the nation’s graduation rates from an estimated 71 to 81 percent would yield 400,000 more graduates annually and prevent more than 3,000 murders and nearly 175,000 aggravated assaults each year.

- *School or the Streets (2008)*<sup>xxi</sup>

“High school graduates...live about six to nine years longer than high school dropouts...Relative to people with high school diplomas, adults who do not graduate from high school are more likely to die prematurely from cardiovascular disease (35 percent of all deaths among high school dropouts), cancer (27 percent), infection (9 percent), injury (5 percent), lung disease (5 percent), and diabetes (4 percent)...”

- *The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education (2007)*<sup>xxii</sup>

“Approximately 8 percent of high school graduates are enrolled in Medicaid, in comparison with 25 percent of high school dropouts and one percent of college graduates...the average high school dropout consumes \$2,700 in public health insurance costs per year, the average high school graduate, \$1,000 and the average college graduate, just \$170.”

- *The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education (2007)*<sup>xxiii</sup>

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