

Creating a 21st Century Framework for Student Learning: Project Summary and Draft Recommendations

Based on the Following Two Reports:

***Creating a 21st Century Framework for Student Learning:
Integrated Design Options for Learner Performance and
Teacher Pay for Performance
(Draft Report and Recommendations)***

and

***Creating a 21st Century Framework for Student Learning:
A Bold Plan to Support Innovative Changes to Iowa's Educational
Delivery Systems (Draft Report and Recommendations)***

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It is easy to predict that at least half of all occupations in Iowa will soon require postsecondary education or training. Nationally, about two thirds of new jobs already require some form of postsecondary education. These are the jobs most likely to provide wages that will sustain a family. It would seem that as much as Iowa may be in competition with China or India as many suggest, it is equally in competition with itself to better educate youth while it works to attract more people to the state.

By 2012, Iowa will have more than 150,000—some project 200,000—more jobs than it has workers to fill them. This is a predictable result of Baby Boom retirements converging with the state's stagnant population growth. (In the last five years, Iowa saw 1.4 percent growth versus 5.3 percent nationally.)

The percentage of 25-year-olds in Iowa who hold a bachelor's degree is disappointingly low, well below the national average. By one account, only 28 percent of the state's ninth graders who enter local high schools will earn an associate's degree within three years or a bachelor's degree within six years of high school graduation.¹

The Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce calculates that these results will neither meet the demands of our economic system nor realize the hopes and expectations that Iowa's parents have for their children.

Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce Goal

The Institute recommends that by the year 2010, Iowa should double the number of its youth earning a postsecondary degree or certificate of employability; triple the number by 2015; and complete the vision of "a postsecondary credential for all" by 2020.

Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce Approach

To achieve this vision, the Institute has embraced one primary strategy: "Education in Iowa must be performance based." In the long term, the Institute intends that the strategy be fully implemented on three intersecting fronts as follows:

- Learner performance. All learners prekindergarten through postsecondary will demonstrate proficiency in 21st century skills and knowledge.
- Educator performance. Educator excellence and compensation will be based on performance.
- System performance. The state's entire education system will support learners based on 21st century measures of organizational and/or operational competency.

Draft Recommendations

The Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce engaged Learning Point Associates to study and develop recommendations for student, educator, and systemwide educational improvements focused on helping Iowa prepare all learners for the 21st century. In response, Learning Point

Associates wrote two reports with a series of *draft* recommendations to implement systemwide improvement in Iowa.

The two reports with draft recommendations are intended to provide a framework that will allow the Institute and all other Iowans an additional opportunity for input and feedback between November 9 and December 8, 2006. The two reports, along with a link to the feedback form, are available on the Institute website at <http://www.tomorrowworkforce.org>.

Relevant research and public input—all reflecting the best thinking and thoughtful feedback from education stakeholders and the Iowa public—were used to create the draft recommendations. Public input included focus groups with students, educators, administrators, area education agency staff, higher education faculty, business members, labor union members, government employees, and other individuals from the community; a phone survey with a random sample of 600 recent Iowa voters; and interactive meetings with Advisory Workgroups composed of various education stakeholders from across the state.

The full reports provide a more detailed description of how each draft recommendation contributes to a 21st century framework for student learning. The following list serves as an introduction to the information in the two reports:

Learner Performance Recommendations

1. Develop and adopt clear standards.
2. Commit to firm, fair, and full measurement of student and teacher performance.
3. Motivate students to want more and demand better from their education.

Teacher Performance Recommendations

1. Design financial inducements for local district career ladders.
2. Design pilots to elevate teacher pay through performance.
3. Design mechanisms for evaluating the effects of career ladder and pay-for-performance initiatives.

System Performance Recommendations

1. Maintain local control with increased accountability and incentives for performance.
2. Commit to providing high-quality preschool programming to all Iowa 3- and 4-year-olds.
3. Give the Iowa Department of Education an increased leadership role in coordinating the services offered throughout the state to students ages birth to 3.
4. Institute an Education and Economic Development System that brings together K–12 educators, the business community, and higher education to ensure a smooth transition from high school to the workforce, further training, and postsecondary education for all students.
5. Work to make higher education more affordable for all Iowa students through greater state investment and increased efficiency.

6. Empower Iowa’s higher education institutions and the business community to more aggressively build on their recent efforts to pursue an expansive range of economic development initiatives.
7. Create an Education Steering Commission charged with overseeing and guiding the state’s various education agencies to improve alignment, articulation, and performance.
8. Redesign the role of the Iowa Department of Education to ensure a performance-based delivery system that is efficient and effective.
9. Implement a statewide system that tracks students and teachers; specify principles for data analysis to inform local decisions.

These draft reports attempt to provide research-based evidence and an important historical context about Iowa’s past and present. We hope that they will be a baseline for thinking about the future of education and adopting a course for change. These draft reports also may provide a conceptual starting place for the rich conversations necessary to move toward improving student outcomes.

Learning Point Associates welcomes feedback and input from all Iowans on the draft reports and recommendations until December 8, 2006. Feedback can be submitted online at <http://www.learningpt.org/itw/feedback/>.

In addition, Learning Point Associates will present the draft reports and recommendations to the Institute for Tomorrow’s Workforce Board of Directors on November 15, 2006, and to the Advisory Workgroups on December 1, 2006. The Institute for Tomorrow’s Workforce and Learning Point Associates will facilitate additional public input activities from mid-November through early December 2006. These include presentations to the Urban Education Network, the Iowa School Boards Association, area education agencies, and Iowa principals and teachers (through the Iowa Communications Network).

All feedback and comments gathered during the public input process will be incorporated into the final reports, which will be submitted to the Institute on December 12, 2006.

¹ From *Conceptualizing and Researching the Educational Pipeline* by Peter T. Ewell, Dennis P. Jones, and Patrick J. Kelly (n.d.), published by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, available online (higheredinfo.org/analyses/Pipeline%20Article.pdf). Data are from a 2000 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) graduation rate survey. IPEDS is the core postsecondary education data collection program for the National Center for Education Statistics.