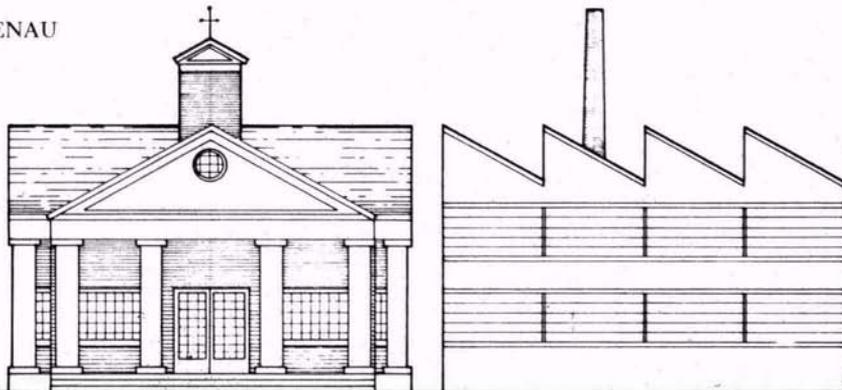


# Beyond Philanthropy

Business and industry are joining with school systems to forge new alliances that serve a public purpose—and their own self-interest.

FRED S. ROSENAU



## Community Teamwork

- BankAmerica Corporation's Educational Initiatives Program encourages creative local programs to improve public support for schools. The Irvine, California, school district received \$14,480 to encourage intermediate school students to explore career options in science, including science and technical careers for women.
- Raytheon Data Systems of Northwood, Massachusetts, has developed a novel method for helping prepare motivated high school students for careers in computer science. The firm employs four to six students during the school year and eight or more in the summer, and also helps train instructors.
- Private Initiatives in Public Education, sponsored by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the Seattle Teachers' Association, and several community organizations, pairs schools with major local businesses. Jointly they assess school needs and community resources available to help meet those needs.
- The Switching Yard, a community service internship program in Marin County, California, serves as a liaison between local high schools and agencies, fitting student interests to community needs.

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Many industrial leaders feel that public education is not performing as well as it might in preparing youth for the world of work. In a recent General Accounting Office report entitled "Labor Market Problems of Teenagers Result Largely from Doing Poorly in School," Robert Taggart, former Administrator in the Office of Youth Programs in the U.S. Department of Labor, refers to student "deficiencies in coping skills, world of work awareness, and the ability to locate and hold a job." In their own long-term self-interest, businesses are joining with school systems in new forms of collaboration.

At a 1981 San Francisco symposium on "Youth Training and Employment in the Private Sector," participants from business and industry acknowledged that their support of youth began as "social responsibility" (remember the acute unrest of the 1960s), but pointed out that the companies' needs can be well served by such programs when secondary education no longer produces enough young people ready to step productively into today's job openings. At relatively low cost, companies can assess individual students as potential longer-

term employees. It costs less to train and evaluate such future employees during high school than to pay for recruitment through personnel agencies, invest in traditional on-the-job training, and suffer turnover among unqualified workers.

Lee Hamilton, vice president of the National Association of Manufacturers, sees three key reasons businesses should be involved in education:

- Corporate citizenship—"Business firms consider their work with schools as one means of discharging a community, public service responsibility"

- Financial investment—"Local taxes tend to be a significant cost of doing business, and people in business are interested in getting the best possible return on their education tax dollars as far as efficiency, productivity, and achievement of goals"

- Employee supply—"Industry needs to have a reliable source and continuing supply of well-educated potential employees."<sup>2</sup>

The Career Education movement has been a major impetus for private sector involvement in school programs. An American Institutes for Research study lists five ways business and industry contribute to career education:<sup>3</sup>

- Materials (brochures on organizations and employment opportunities, films on careers or on the role of private enterprise, mobile vans offering short courses, instructional aids, special curricula)

- Resource Persons (classroom speakers, representatives at career fairs, employees to teach special units, sponsors for Junior Achievement)

- Equipment (computer terminals, typewriters, calculators)

- Work Experience Exploration (summer jobs, work study, plant tours, summer workshops for teachers and counselors, visits to shareholder meetings)

- Funds (grants through foundations to schools, awards, underwriting costs for student and teacher participation in enrichment programs, adopt-a-school).

These examples are by no means exhaustive. Other activities include taking students on field trips, offering paid and unpaid work experience, organizing campaigns to increase public understanding of education, stimulating parent involvement, serving on advisory and policy groups, providing placement programs, and so on.

## **"Industry needs to have a reliable source and continuing supply of well-educated potential employees."**

### **Collaboration on Computers**

In Oxford, Massachusetts, a partnership between the Oxford Public Schools and the high tech Digital Equipment Corporation of nearby Maynard has resulted in a computer technology program that attracts tuition-paying students from seven neighboring school districts.

Educators dubious about such motives should perhaps join District of Columbia Superintendent Floretta McKenzie in recognizing that "productive working relationships seldom endure without a quid pro quo." McKenzie says, "It's time for the managers of public resources to stop trying to pick corporate pockets, and to start helping our private sector companies find cost-justified approaches to coupling business interests of their shareholders with the educational interests of young people."<sup>4</sup>

Digital trains school staff and provides equipment as well as software. The development effort was carried out by a task force of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and representatives from industry, social service agencies, civic organizations, the Massachusetts State Department of Education, the French River Teacher Center, and the Worcester Area Career Education Consortium.

The Consortium, a local, independent, nonprofit "collaborative council," helped initiate the project by introducing Oxford educators to Digital. Perhaps most indicative of the significance of the carefully nurtured relationship is that Digital is now working with the Consortium and Oxford to develop a model corporate-school policy to be applied nationwide in communities where Digital has facilities.

As for the substance of what is called Project COFFEE, that is what persuades Digital and the schools that they are on the right track. Its high technology occupational component features a

hands-on educational experience in an adult-like work environment. The curricular design focuses on job entry skills, shadowing experiences, and a related work-study program. Students are trained in word processing, data processing, data management, computer-based building design, and electronic assembly and testing. Replication costs are estimated to range from \$419 to \$969 per pupil to provide meaningful basic skills and occupational learning experiences to a population of adolescents with histories of academic failure, truancy, poor self-concept, family problems, and social misconduct.

Project COFFEE was validated earlier this year for dissemination by the U.S. Department of Education's National Diffusion Network. NDN offers school districts an array of career education programs, K-3 and up, described in their annual catalog, *Educational Programs That Work*.<sup>5</sup>

Another place to turn for information, ideas, or help is the Private Sector Initiative Program operated by the National Alliance of Business under contract to the Department of Labor. NAB's energies are focused on bringing together, regionally or locally, leaders in business, labor, and government to try to solve unemployment problems of the disadvantaged.

Two programs developed for the District of Columbia Public Schools are particularly good examples: Multicultural Career Intern Program, a combined high school/career exploration for youths 16-21, and Promethean's Adopt-a-School Program, which was operated by a community-based group of black veterans.

These two programs, and many others initially funded under the Department of Labor's Youth Initiative, did not survive recent cuts in public demonstration project funds. But they were pioneer efforts that built contacts, trust, and confidence among community leaders. Thus when the new superintendent of the D.C. school system decided to make partnerships with business her priority strategy for revitalizing the quality of public education, much of the groundwork was ready.

In the past year the D.C. schools have worked with national and local businesses to create five or six career high schools: communications; information sciences; hospitality; finance; engineering; and possibly health. Superintendent Floretta McKenzie, aided by loaned executives and a new assistant

superintendent recruited from business for the program, has developed more than \$1 million in materials and executive time to create entirely new magnet schools within existing high schools. Starting in the fall of 1983, ninth grade students will enter intensive courses using latest occupational training techniques and equipment. Major sponsoring corporations include Control Data, Digital Equipment, IBM, Xerox, Mobil, General Motors, and Marriott. Equally important, smaller local firms have also responded. The aim is to build outward from the initial small schools-within-schools into larger, well-managed programs with systematic contacts between students and employers in school, out of school, and during summers over the four-year course of study.

The National Institute for Work and Learning, an independent policy research organization in Washington, D.C., has concentrated its efforts on collaboration among business, labor, community service agencies, governments, and education institutions at the local and regional levels. In its most recent work with local collaborative councils, supported by the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education, NIWL has produced *Action Guide*, a 346-page directory to over 150 councils nationwide; a literature review; and more.

The directory, published in 1981, leads its readers to organizations such as the Worcester Area Career Education Consortium, mentioned above, or to over 150 other independent councils with names like Chicago United; Adopt-a-School, Inc. in Denver; Oakland's Community Careers Council; the Mid-Michigan Community Action Council in rural Alma, Michigan; the Tri-County Industry-Education-Labor Council in East Peoria, Illinois; the Arizona Business-Industry-Education Council in Phoenix; or to statewide activities like Jobs for Delaware Graduates, the Industry Education Council of California, and Ohio's Vocational/Technical Resource Consortia.

From the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education will emerge, in the winter of 1983, a thorough analysis of *Collaboration in Career Education: The Role of the Private Sector* by Robert D. Bhaerman of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. It attempts to define collaboration ("the parties involved share responsibility for basic policy decision making" . . . "participation

of representatives of education, business, labor, parents, the voluntary and service organization sector, the public, students" . . . "an agenda of substantive actions" . . . "vested interest groups within a community give up a portion of their self-interest in creating a new, overarching identity").

Such compatibility doesn't come easily. Bhaerman also cites a study conducted by the Education Commission of the States which enumerated some of the factors that discourage private sector involvement:

- Time requirements for travel, meetings, and so on
- A feeling that business people are "invading" the educators' domain
- Red tape and bureaucracy
- Educators' lack of interest
- Lack of funding
- Educators' inability to set objectives
- Proliferation of educational jargon
- Slow decision processes in educational institutions
- Union restrictions.

Other barriers noted elsewhere in the paper include certification and credentialing (business people face hurdles), security and insurance problems, inertia, and the difficulty of maintaining continuous communications.

### Summing Up

Comparing the structure and organization of public school systems with those of large profit-making corporations is like comparing rural roadside apple vendors with fabricators of nuclear submarines. Levine and Doyle say, "The process of getting such different systems to work creatively together requires sensitivity to differences, constant feedback, and nurturing. . . . Both partners must be aware of their differences in organizational structure and management style."<sup>6</sup>

Others have suggested that for collaboration to work at the local level, schools may need to be sure there is a consensus between the school system and the community in terms of educational needs, goals, programs, and resource allocations. Linkages between schools and outsiders must be multidirectional and flexible: schools may need to modify aspects of their otherwise restrictive scheduling, their normal curriculum, and the awarding of credit. The business community and labor unions—along with civic leaders and parents—must be made full partners at a

very early stage in any planning effort, since noneducators may be reluctant to act as junior partners or as invitees after policies have already been established.

Every collaborative venture should have a broad base of participating groups and individuals, but at least one person should assume primary responsibility for the day-to-day functioning of the intermeshing components. And that person should be politically aware and sensitive to the differences between the "service" sector and the profit-making partners. No one interest group should dominate the collaboration, which—for obvious reasons—should not attempt more than is feasible in terms of resources (time, money, personnel, facilities, logistics).

Ideally, there would be, by this time, a single impartial "clearinghouse" to which anyone considering such collaborative endeavors might turn for guidance. Regrettably, no such clearinghouse exists, yet no one needs to fly blindly. Information is available from:

- ♦ National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation, 53 E. Stewart Ave., P.O. Box 06235, Columbus, OH 43206
- ♦ National Alliance of Business Clearinghouse, 1015-15th St., NW, Washington, DC 20005 (202/457-0040)
- ♦ National Institute for Work and Learning, Suite 501, 1302-18th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036 (202/887-6800)
- ♦ ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1960 Kenny Rd., Columbus, OH 43210 (614/486-3655)
- ♦ National School Volunteer Program, Inc., 300 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314 (703/836-4880). EL

<sup>1</sup>U.S. General Accounting Office, PAD-82-06, March 29, 1982.

<sup>2</sup>*Business-School Partnerships: A Plus for Kids*, Education USA Special Report (NSPRA, 1980).

<sup>3</sup>S. M. Jung and L. Steel, "Business/Industry/Labor Involvement in Career Education: A National Survey" (Palo Alto, Calif.: American Institutes for Research, ERIC ED 200 817).

<sup>4</sup>"Good Business in D.C. Schools," *Washington Post* editorial, June 6, 1983.

<sup>5</sup>Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 8th ed. (San Francisco, Calif. 1981).

<sup>6</sup>Marsha Levine and Denis P. Doyle, *Meeting Human Needs: Toward a New Public Philosophy*, ed. Jack A. Meyer (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1982).

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