

# Archived Information

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## Objective 1.2: Schools help all students make successful transitions to college and careers.

### National Need

**National Concerns.** Statistics show that many students are not receiving the academic or technical skills preparation needed to succeed in college and the knowledge-based economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although the high school dropout rate has declined slightly, about 13 percent of young Americans between the ages of 16 and 24 do not graduate from high school or earn a GED. Of the high school graduates who go on to college, half drop out by the end of their sophomore year. Objective 1.2 focuses on helping schools make lasting changes in teaching and learning so that all students can achieve high academic and technical skills standards and make successful transitions to college and careers. Changes include setting high standards for all students; creating small and safe learning environments; making learning relevant; using technology to expand access to information; using a wide variety of student performance assessments; and cultivating partnerships with parentals, elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary institutions, community leaders, and employers.

**Our Role.** The Department provides national leadership to improve the quality of career and technical, adult, and workforce education. The programs administered through the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) help secondary, postsecondary and adult education students gain the academic and technical knowledge needed to succeed in further education, careers, and citizenship. They promote education reform and improvement, and accountability for results.

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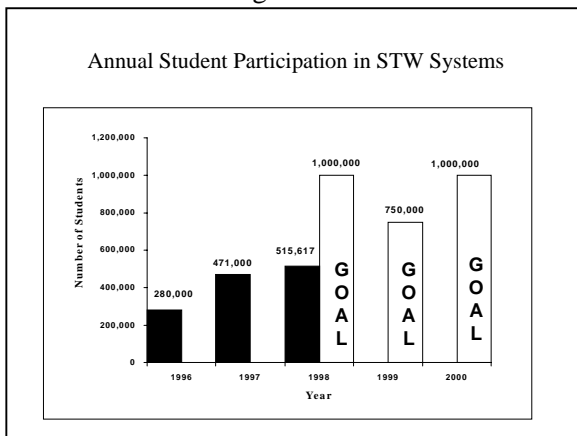
### Our Performance

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#### Indicator 1.2.a. By fall 2000, 1 million youths will participate annually in School-to-Work (STW) Systems.

**Assessment of Progress.** Positive trend toward target. The targets for 1999 and 2000 were reduced by 50 percent because a more rigorous definition of “STW participant” was adopted. “Participants” are defined as students who take integrated academic and vocational coursework and participate in work-based learning.

Figure 1.2.a.1



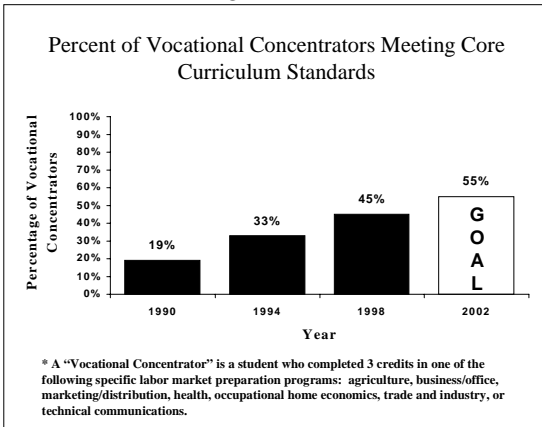
**Source:** Progress Measures Survey. *Frequency:* Annual. *Next Update:* 2000 for 1999-00 school year data. **Validation procedure:** Data were collected before ED standards for evaluating the quality of program performance data were developed. However, data from other sources – including the National STW evaluation – corroborate these findings. **Limitations of data and planned improvements:** This survey is voluntary and collects data only from sub-state funded local partnerships. As the Federal investment in state STW initiatives ends - beginning in 1999 with the first 8 states that were funded in 1994 - fewer local partnerships will be funded and have the resources required to gather and submit data.

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**Indicator 1.2.b. By fall 2000, the percentage of vocational concentrators completing core curriculum standards will double from baseline data.**

**Assessment of Progress.** Positive trend toward target. The previous target set for 2002 was 33 percent; this was raised to 50 percent because the previous goal was already achieved. “Core curriculum standards” include 4 years of English and 3 years each of math, science, and social studies. This course sequence is the basis for a postsecondary preparatory curriculum.

Figure 1.2.b.1



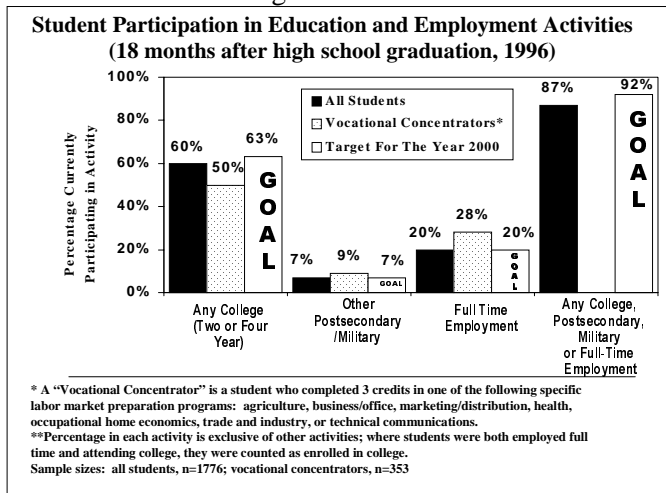
**Source:** NAEP. *Frequency:* Approximately every 4 years. *Next Update:* 2002 for 1997-98 school year data. **Validation procedure:** Data validated by NCES review procedures and NCES Statistical Standards. **Limitations of data and planned improvements:** In future years, this indicator will be supplemented with another measure of academic attainment – performance on state-established academic proficiencies – as specified in the 1998 Perkins Act.

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**Indicator 1.2.c. By fall 2000, the percentage of high school graduates, including vocational concentrators, who make a successful transition into employment, further education, or the military will increase to 90 percent.**

**Assessment of Progress.** Eighteen months after graduating from high schools that participate in School-To-Work systems, 60 percent of 1996 graduates were enrolled in a 2-year or 4-year college, 7 percent were in other postsecondary training programs or the military, and 20 percent were employed full time. Overall, 87 percent of all students were enrolled in postsecondary education or the military or were employed full time. A similar proportion of vocational concentrators made successful transitions, although these students were less likely to be enrolled in postsecondary study and more likely to be employed full time (see Figure 1.2.c.1).

Figure 1.2.c.1

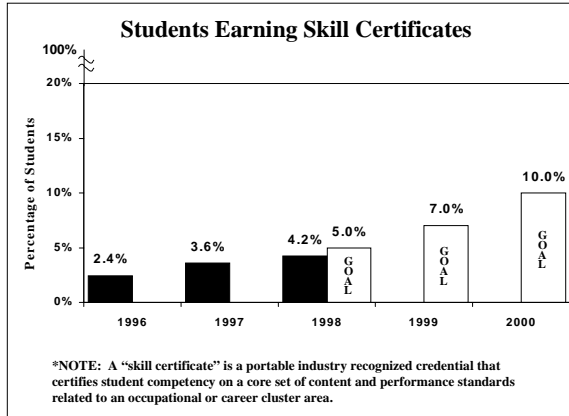


**Source:** Student surveys from National Evaluation of School-to-Work Implementation, Mathematical Policy Research. *Frequency:* Biennial. *Next Update:* 2000 for 1998 high school graduates. **Validation procedure:** Transcripts are a rigorous method for collecting information on coursework, although course titles may differ across communities for similar courses. **Limitations of data and planned improvements:** Results based on high school transcripts for sample of high school students in 8 states.

## Indicator 1.2.d. By fall 2000, 10 percent of students in local School-To-Work Systems will earn skill certificates.

**Assessment of Progress.** Positive trend toward target, but the results fall slightly short of the target.

Figure 1.2.d.1

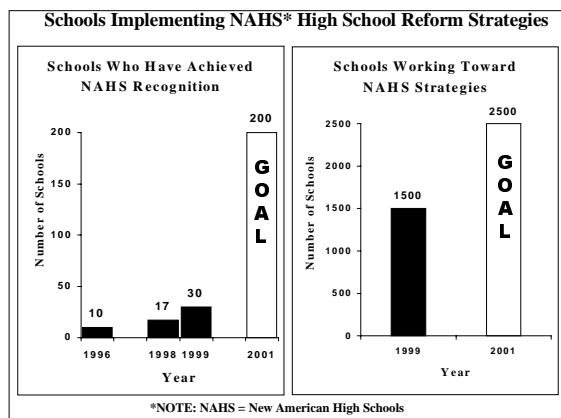


**Source:** Local partnership surveys from National Evaluation of School-to-Work Implementation, Mathematical Policy Research. *Frequency:* Annual. *Next Update:* 1999 for 1997-98 school year. **Validation procedure:** Survey subject to rigorous data quality procedures. **Limitations of data and planned improvements:** Based on aggregate estimates of STW partnerships.

**Indicator 1.2.e. By fall 2001, 200 high schools will receive and 2,500 will be working toward Departmental recognition for implementing New American High School (NAHS) strategies that combine career and academic preparation.**

**Assessment of Progress.** Positive trend toward target. As of 1999, 30 high schools received NAHS recognition and 1,500 schools were working with 3 high school reform networks to implement NAHS strategies. High school reform networks include High Schools That Work, Sonoma State University—California State Department of Education, and Jobs for the Future (JFF).

Figure 1.2.e.1

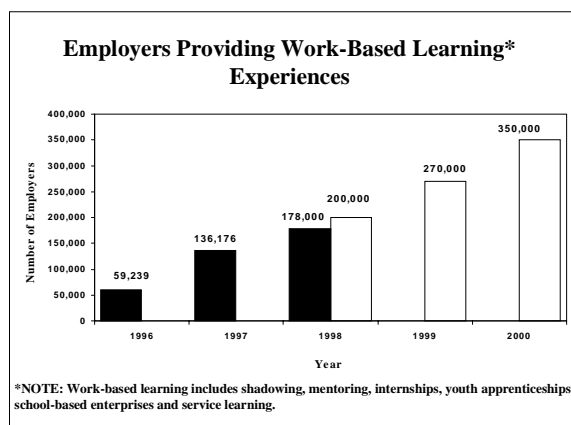


**Source:** NAHS application tracking documents. *Frequency:* Annual. *Next Update:* 2000 for 1999-00 data. **Validation procedure:** Data collection processes were developed before ED standards for evaluating the quality of program performance data were developed. **Limitations of data and planned improvements:** No data limitations are noted.

**Indicator 1.2.f. By fall 2000, 350,000 employers participating in School-to-Work systems will offer work-based learning opportunities.**

**Assessment of Progress.** Positive trend toward target, although the results fall slightly less than the target.

Figure 1.2.f.1



**Source:** Progress Measures Survey. *Frequency:* Annual. *Next Update:* 2000 for 1998-99 school year data. **Validation procedure:** Case studies in 4 states are underway to examine the process by which local partnerships gather the information reported in their progress reports. **Limitations of data and planned improvements:** The nature of work-based learning experiences may differ considerably across employers.

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## How We Plan to Achieve Our Objective

### How the EDs Activities Support the Achievement of This Objective.

- **Promote Effective Practices, Strong Program Outcomes, Evaluation, and Assessment.** National program dollars support new strategies and approaches to high school reform that promote high academic standards and career preparation. Special features include small learning environments; recruitment, preparation, and professional development of teachers; career-related curricula and certificates that incorporate industry standards in areas of high-demand occupations; program performance indicators; dissemination of research-based strategies and practitioner-oriented products that improve the quality of career-technical, adult and workforce education; and continued support for a national assessment of vocational education.
- **Support State and Local Sustainability of School-to-Work Systems.** Support the refinement, further implementation, and long-term sustainability of School-to-Work systems in all 50 states and territories through technical assistance to identify future funding and professional development activities.
- **Support High School Reform.** ED will continue support for the New American High Schools initiative, which helps promote high academic standards.
- **Promote and Support Transition to Postsecondary Education.** Tech-Prep funds complement state efforts to build statewide career preparation systems that provide students with technical and academic skills, and the postsecondary education required for high-tech careers and employment mobility.
- **Strengthen State Performance and Accountability Systems.** The Department will continue to work with state vocational education agencies to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of state accountability systems. Currently, all states are involved in a national effort to develop and implement common or consistent performance measures, measurement approaches, continuous improvement strategies, and reporting system definitions for both. The Department will annually publish state reported accountability results and assess the quality of these data.
- **Small Schools Initiative.** The Department will award grants to create smaller learning communities for students in large high schools, using strategies such as schools within schools, career academies, restructuring the school day, and other innovations that allow schools to ensure that every student receives personal attention and support.

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## How We Coordinate with Other Federal Agencies

- **Joint Administration and Management.** The Departments of Education (ED) and the Department of Labor jointly administer the School-to-Work (STW) initiative and improve the management of this program by aligning grant-making, audit, technical assistance, budget, and performance reporting functions.
- **Research.** The Office of the Under Secretary (OUS), the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Employment and

Training Administration, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics collaborate on the development and implementation of a comprehensive research and evaluation agenda for STW and high school education reform.

- **Special Populations.** The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the Department of Labor’s Offices for Youth Opportunities and Job Corps, the President’s Council on Youth with Disabilities, and the Social Security Administration work together to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities and out-of-school youth have access and accommodations to participate in School-to-Work activities.
- **High School Reform.** The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, the Blue Ribbon Schools Initiative, the Parents and Families in Education Initiative, the Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Communities Initiative, and the America Counts Initiative provide leadership and technical assistance on high school education reform. Through partnerships with the Departments of Labor, Transportation, and Commerce, and the National Science Foundation, they develop career-related curricula and certificates that align industry technical standards with challenging academic standards.
- **Accountability Systems.** OUS, OESE, and the National Governor’s Association jointly develop tools and products to support state and local efforts to build shared accountability systems.
- **Professional Development.** OERI’s Postsecondary Institute and EDs Professional Development Team work together to provide professional development for preservice and in-service teachers on contextual teaching and learning approaches.

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## **Challenges to the Achievement of Our Objectives**

Implementing School-to-Work Systems is a long-term effort that will require state and local support beyond the period of the initial Federal investment for system building. The Departments of Education and Labor are working closely with states to develop ways to sustain promising STW activities after Federal funding ends.