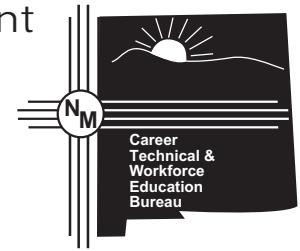


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Career Technical and Workforce Education Bureau

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK

High Schools That Work (HSTW) is based on the belief that, in the right school environment, students can learn complex academic and technical concepts. The initiative targets high school students who seldom are challenged to meet higher academic standards.

HSTW engages state, district and school leaders and teachers in partnerships with students, parents and the community to improve the way high school students are prepared for work and further education.

HSTW provides a framework of goals, key practices and key conditions for accelerating learning and setting higher standards. It recommends actions that provide direction to schools as they work to improve academic and career/technical instruction at schools and at work sites. These recommendations meet the criteria for comprehensive school reform.

MAJOR GOALS OF THE HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK PROGRAM:

Raise the mathematics, science, communication, problem-solving and technical achievement of more students to the national average and above;

Blend the essential content of traditional college-preparatory studies — mathematics, science and language arts — with quality career/technical studies by creating conditions that support school leaders, teachers and counselors in carrying out key practices

Advance state and local policies and leadership initiatives necessary to sustain a continuous school-improvement effort for both academic and career/technical studies.

KEY CONDITIONS FOR ACCELERATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

High Schools That Work is based on the belief that everyone in the education hierarchy must work together to align policies, resources, initiatives and accountability efforts to support schools as they adopt comprehensive school-improvement designs.

Several conditions are fundamental in using *HSTW* to raise student achievement:

- An **organizational structure and process** for ensuring continuous involvement by school administrators and teachers in planning strat-

egies to achieve the key practices — Each school needs a clear mission statement to prepare high school students for success in postsecondary education and the workplace.

- **Leadership** from the district and the school to improve curricula, instruction and student achievement — Each school site should have a leadership team consisting of the principal, the assistant principal and teacher leaders who support, encourage and actively participate with the faculty in implementing the key practices.
- A **commitment** from the school board to support the school in replacing the general track — Schools should offer a more demanding academic core and either an academic, a career/technical or a blended concentration.
- A system superintendent and school board members who **support** school administrators and teachers in carrying out the key practices — This commitment includes financial support for instructional materials, time for teachers to meet and plan together, and six to eight days per year of staff development on using the key practices to improve student learning.
- A school superintendent and a school board that will allow the high school to adopt a flexible schedule that enables students to earn more credits.

High Schools That Work

KEY PRACTICES

- **High expectations** — setting higher expectations and getting more students to meet them
- **Career/technical studies** — increasing access to intellectually challenging career/technical studies, with a major emphasis on using high-level mathematics, science, language arts and problem-solving skills in the modern workplace and in preparation for continued learning
- **Academic studies** — increasing access to academic studies that teach the essential concepts from the college-preparatory curriculum by encouraging students to use academic content and skills to address real-world projects and problems
- **Program of study** — having students complete a challenging program of study with an upgraded academic core and a major
- **Work-based learning** — giving students and their parents the choice of a system that integrates school-based and work-based learning. The system should span high school and postsecondary studies and should be planned by educators, employers and employees
- **Teachers working together** — having an organization, structure and schedule giving academic and career/technical teachers the time to plan and deliver integrated instruction aimed at teaching high-level academic and technical content
- **Students actively engaged** — getting every student involved in rigorous and challenging learning
- **Guidance** — involving all students and their parents in a guidance and advising system that ensures the completion of an accelerated program of study with an in-depth academic or career/technical major
- **Extra help** — providing a structured system of extra help to enable students who may lack adequate preparation to complete an accelerated program of study that includes high-level academic and technical content; formalizing a transition plan (Next Step) for middle to high school and high school to college and/or careers
- **Keeping score** — using student assessment and program evaluation data to improve continuously the school climate, organization, management, curricula and instruction to advance student learning and to recognize students who meet both curriculum and performance goals.

HSTW-RECOMMENDED ACADEMIC CORE

- Four credits in college-preparatory/honors English
- Four credits in mathematics — Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II and above
- Mathematics in the senior year
- Three credits in college-preparatory science; four credits with a block schedule
- Three credits in social studies; four credits with a block schedule

HSTW-RECOMMENDED CONCENTRATIONS

Humanities — four credits each in college-preparatory level language arts and social studies with at least one at the Advanced Placement level and four additional credits from foreign language, fine arts, journalism, debate, etc.

Career/technical — four credits in a planned sequence of courses within a broad career field, such as pre-engineering, health/medical science, etc.

Mathematics and science — four credits in each field with at least one at the Advanced Placement level.

The **Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)** was founded in 1948 at the request of Southern leaders in business, education and government; it was the nation's first compact for education. Over the years SREB has worked to improve every aspect of education — from early childhood education to doctoral degrees and beyond. For a summary of what SREB does, visit <http://www.sreb.org/>

High Schools That Work is the largest and oldest of the Southern Regional Education Board's school-improvement initiatives for high school and middle grade leaders and teachers. More than 1,000 *HSTW* sites in 31 states are using the *HSTW* framework of goals and key practices to raise student achievement.

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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