

An Alliance to “Stay the Course”

Overview

The Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement is committed to the continuation of the A+ Plan which is based upon expectations and high achievement, as well as the restructuring of education that is underway in all of the delivery systems. Florida needs to “Stay the Course” and enhance the efforts that are underway. Governor Bush has demonstrated the political courage to “Stay the Course” in spite of strong political and social pressures to retreat from high expectations.

Quality learning is in everyone’s best interest. The Council is interested in trying to develop a strong public/private alliance made up of groups and citizens from around the state that will represent the students and taxpayers of the state and provide strong support for high expectations and achievement.

This idea is based upon the concept that numerous entities involving dedicated citizens in Florida and throughout the nation are working to make a difference. What does not yet exist is a broadly based coalition with the ability to gain and focus the attention of business, policy makers, administrators, students, parents, teachers and all others involved in or affected by our educational system. ***Florida needs a public/private entity that will serve as a significant force for sustaining and enhancing the transformation that is currently underway at all levels of education.*** This new alliance should consist of leaders of Florida business, industry and education and should represent the interests of a wide variety of constituencies from throughout the state.

This coalition of state leaders should be involved in setting priorities, establishing specific action plans and advocating these initiatives to the Legislature and education policymakers. Alliance members should be active partners in Florida’s education reform efforts and should serve as visible advocates for students to ensure they receive the quality education they need to be productive and successful citizens.

Recommended Action

1. Identify and seek participation of leaders of key constituent groups, such as the Council for Education Change, TaxWatch, the Florida Chamber Foundation, the Council of 100, etc., as well as emerging groups such as the Commission on Constitutional Accountability.
2. Identify key issue(s) for consideration, such as:
 - development and training of school principals, superintendents, school board members and teachers,
 - the performance and quality of high school graduates,
 - the provision of quality career education,
 - the improvement of low performing schools.

3. Identify potential sources of support – corporations/foundations, federal and state sources.
4. Design a timeframe and plan of work.

The Council does not intend to try to be or run this alliance but to design a template for such an endeavor with interested businesses and individuals around the state.