

STAY THE COURSE

Education Business Alliance Collaboration Efforts in Other States -- Fact Sheet

Massachusetts



Business Alliance: Mass Insight Education

(www.massinsight.org)

Established: 1997

Major Accomplishments (selected): Building Blocks Initiative, Campaign for Higher Standards, Coalition for Higher Standards, Education Leadership Group, State Leadership Group, and School Leadership Program

Continuing Challenges: None noted on website

K-12 Information	
Public schools	1,889
Public school teachers	98,942
Pre-K-12 students	973,140
Annual pre-K-12 expenditures	\$9.96 billion
Spending per student (% of US avg)	112.8
Minority students	24.3%
Students with disabilities	15.4%
English-language learners	4.7%
Source: EdWeek 2002-03	

Postsecondary Information	
<u>Enrollment:</u>	
Public 4-year	102,024
Public 2-year	81,224
Private 4-year institutions	234,369
Private 2-year	3,525
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$1,689,268,000
Public 2-year	\$459,914,000
Private non-profit 4-year	\$7,576,199,000
<u>Average tuition and fees:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$3,999
Public 2-year	\$1,946
Private 4-year	\$21,526
<u>State spending on student aid:</u>	
Need-based:	\$110,711,000
Non-need-based:	\$3,889,000

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education - 2003-04 Almanac

Kentucky



Business Alliance: Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence

(www.prichardcommittee.org)

Established: 1983

Major Accomplishments (selected): Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership, Parents and Teachers Talking Together, Parent Leadership Associates, and Partners for Kentucky's Future

Continuing Challenges: According to the Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions, the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) which the Prichard Committee supported has had little impact on student achievement and equitable spending (Stanley, 1997).

K-12 Information	
Public schools	1,387
Public school teachers	40,375
Pre-K-12 students	654,363
Annual pre-K-12 expenditures	\$4.26 billion
Spending per student (% of US avg)	94.3
Minority students	12.3%
Students with disabilities	15.0%
English-language learners	0.9%
Source: EdWeek 2002-03	

Postsecondary Information	
<u>Enrollment:</u>	
Public 4-year	103,437
Public 2-year	48,536
Private 4-year institutions	30,702
Private 2-year	5,666
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$2,131,659,000
Public 2-year	\$310,459,000
Private non-profit 4-year	\$396,955,000
<u>Average tuition and fees:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$3,194
Public 2-year	\$1,561
Private 4-year	\$10,972
<u>State spending on student aid:</u>	
Need-based:	\$48,322,000
Non-need-based:	\$38,003,000

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education - 2003-04 Almanac

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Texas

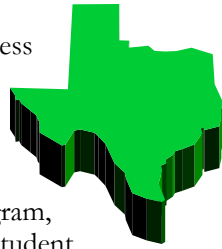
Business Alliance: Texas Business & Education Coalition
(www.tbec.org)

Established: 1989

Major Accomplishments

(selected): Texas Scholars Program, Texas Reading Initiative, and Student Success Initiative

Continuing Challenges: In an article published in Education, John Stevens (Executive Director) admitted that teachers were “reluctant to get involved” (DeSoto, 1995).



K-12 Information	
Public schools	7,646
Public school teachers	282,846
Pre-K-12 students	4,163,447
Annual pre-K-12 expenditures	\$28.19 billion
Spending per student (% of US avg)	92.9
Minority students	59.1%
Students with disabilities	11.9%
English-language learners	14.5%

Source: EdWeek 2002-03

Postsecondary Information	
<u>Enrollment:</u>	
Public 4-year	436,530
Public 2-year	460,004
Private 4-year institutions	124,541
Private 2-year	12,898
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$8,691,668,000
Public 2-year	\$2,128,409,000
Private non-profit 4-year	\$2,478,898,000
<u>Average tuition and fees:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$2,975
Public 2-year	\$981
Private 4-year	\$12,728
<u>State spending on student aid:</u>	
Need-based:	\$210,214,000
Non-need-based:	\$2,271,000

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education - 2003-04 Almanac

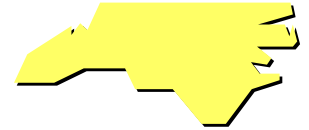
North Carolina

Business Alliance: Public School Forum of North Carolina
(www.ncforum.org)

Established: 1986

Major Accomplishments (selected): Education: Everybody's Business Coalition, NC Teaching Fellows Program, Young Scholars Program, and NC Partners

Continuing Challenges: According to those involved in the Forum, creating broad-based grassroots support has been a challenge.



K-12 Information	
Public schools	2,223
Public school teachers	85,684
Pre-K-12 students	1,315,363
Annual pre-K-12 expenditures	\$8.55 billion
Spending per student (% of US avg)	91.6
Minority students	40.0%
Students with disabilities	14.2%
English-language learners	4.0%

Source: EdWeek 2002-03

Postsecondary Information	
<u>Enrollment:</u>	
Public 4-year	162,761
Public 2-year	166,661
Private 4-year institutions	74,096
private 2-year	1,134
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$3,764,717,000
Public 2-year	\$900,669,000
Private non-profit 4-year	\$3,521,541,000
<u>Average tuition and fees:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$2,646
Public 2-year	\$1,014
Private 4-year	\$15,110
<u>State spending on student aid:</u>	
Need-based:	\$74,171,000
Non-need-based:	\$91,751,000

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education - 2003-04 Almanac

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Maryland

Business Alliance:
Maryland Business
Roundtable for
Education (www.mbrt.org)
Established: 1992



Major Accomplishments (selected):
Nine Essential Components of a Successful
Education System, Maryland Scholars program,
and Achievement Counts, Parents Count
Continuing Challenges: Need to Contact

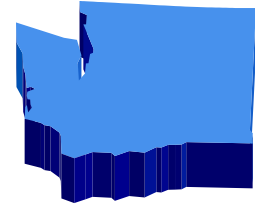
K-12 Information	
Public schools	1,340
Public school teachers	53,774
Pre-K-12 students	860,640
	\$7.48
Annual pre-K-12 expenditures	billion
Spending per student (% of US avg)	110.1
Minority students	47.6%
Students with disabilities	13.0%
English-language learners	3.8%
Source: EdWeek 2002-03	

Postsecondary Information	
<u>Enrollment:</u>	
public 4-year	120,436
public 2-year	103,361
At private 4-year institutions	49,077
private 2-year	871
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$2,337,730,000
Public 2-year	\$583,168,000
Private non-profit 4-year	\$2,204,410,000
<u>Average tuition and fees:</u>	
public 4-year	\$4,973
public 2-year	\$2,244
private 4-year	\$19,652
<u>State spending on student aid:</u>	
Need-based:	\$46,281,000
Non-need-based:	\$6,640,000

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education - 2003-04 Almanac

Washington

Business Alliance:
Washington Roundtable
(www.waroundtable.com)
Established: 1983



Major Accomplishments (selected): Governor's
Council on Reform and Funding, Washington
Alliance for a Competitive Economy (WashACE),
and standards based graduation requirements for
2008.

Continuing Challenges: Need to Contact.

K-12 Information	
Public schools	2,170
Public school teachers	52,534
Pre-K-12 students	1,009,200
Annual pre-K-12 expenditures	\$7.1 billion
Spending per student (% of US avg)	87.7
Minority students	26.5%
Students with disabilities	12.0%
English-language learners	--
Source: EdWeek 2002-03	

Postsecondary Information	
<u>Enrollment:</u>	
public 4-year	92,821
public 2-year	181,107
At private 4-year institutions	43,197
private 2-year	3,715
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$2,828,648,000
Public 2-year	\$978,867,000
Private non-profit 4-year	\$600,315,000
<u>Average tuition and fees:</u>	
public 4-year	\$3,788
public 2-year	\$1,885
private 4-year	\$16,638
<u>State spending on student aid:</u>	
Need-based:	\$101,258,000
Non-need-based:	\$1,211,000

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education - 2003-04 Almanac

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Alabama

Business Alliance: A+

Education Foundation:

Working for Excellence in
Alabama (www.aplusala.org)

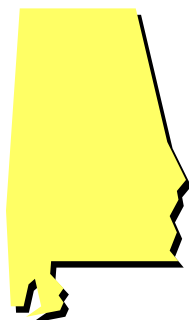
Established:

Major Accomplishments

(selected): Best Practices

Center,

Continuing Challenges:



K-12 Information	
Public schools	1,381
Public school teachers	46,796
Pre-K-12 students	737,294
Annual pre-K-12 expenditures	\$4.4 billion
Spending per student (% of US avg)	87.3
Minority students	39.5%
Students with disabilities	13.2%
English-language learners	1.0%
Source: EdWeek 2002-03	

Postsecondary Information	
<u>Enrollment:</u>	
public 4-year	136,992
public 2-year	70,443
At private 4-year institutions	25,770
private 2-year	757
<u>Expenditures:</u>	
Public 4-year	\$2,943,176,000
Public 2-year	\$394,781,000
Private non-profit 4-year	\$387,431,000
<u>Average tuition and fees:</u>	
public 4-year	\$3,245
public 2-year	\$1,990
private 4-year	\$10,229
<u>State spending on student aid:</u>	
Need-based:	\$1,874,000
Non-need-based:	\$5,494,000

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education - 2003-04 Almanac

Massachusetts



Business Alliance: Mass Insight Education (www.massinsight.org)

Mass Insight Education and Research Institute is an independent not-for-profit corporation focused on improving student achievement in Massachusetts' public schools. Through public outreach initiatives, school leadership training programs, and public opinion and policy reports, Mass Insight Education supports the implementation of the 1993 Education Reform Act, with a primary focus on its central initiative, the statewide standards and testing program.

Mass Insight's primary goal is to raise academic achievement for all students, including those who have been trapped in a cycle of low expectations. To meet this goal, Mass Insight Education and its Coalition for Higher Standards work in three areas: *Public outreach, Strengthening schools, and Policy.*

Mass Insight Education was formed in 1997 to assume the education initiatives of Mass Insight Corporation, a public policy and communications organization focused on issues affecting the competitiveness of Massachusetts.

Established: 1997

Major Accomplishments (selected):

- Building Blocks Initiative – helps school and district leadership teams put successful school improvement strategies into action. The initiative develops benchmarks to help educators and local leaders set priorities for school improvement. The program also offers practical guidance and field-tested strategies from schools that are making a difference.
- Campaign for Higher Standards - is Massachusetts' principal statewide public service outreach program focused on helping the Commonwealth's historic drive to raise student achievement succeed. It was launched in 1997 by Mass Insight Education in collaboration with a wide range of partners across the state seeking ways to advocate for higher-standards reform.
- Coalition for Higher Standards - is a group of 30 urban and suburban school districts and two regional alliances led by school superintendents. The Coalition represents 359 schools and over 180,000 students. Coalition members work together to:
 - Create model school programs to improve student achievement using the state standards and tests; Participate in the School Leadership Program: performance-based school training; Share best practices for raising academic achievement; and Develop and share parent and public outreach materials
- Education Leadership Group - represents key education stakeholders from across Massachusetts, including leaders from the Department and Board of Education, business, the legislature, media and schools. These leaders meet on an ad hoc basis to review policy choices and implementation strategies surrounding the implementation of the state standards and testing program.
- State Leadership Group - Mass Insight Education's State Leadership Group brings together Massachusetts CEOs, business and community leaders, the governor, legislative leaders and Coalition superintendents to review the progress of the standards and testing implementation. Group members also support Coalition initiatives and direct the Campaign for Higher Standards. Members send information on the standards and tests to employees and constituents, communicate their support to the public and review school-business partnerships to focus on raising student achievement.
- School Leadership Program - is a professional development program that focuses on incorporating standards-based instructional practices in the classroom and strategies to lead

other teachers to do the same. This program is part of an ongoing effort to create a critical mass of trained educators statewide who are familiar with standards-based education and using the state standards to raise student achievement.

Kentucky

Business Alliance: Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence
(www.prichardcommittee.org)



- The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence is a non-partisan, non-profit, independent citizen's advocacy group. Since 1983, the committee, made up of volunteer parents and citizens from around Kentucky, has worked to improve education in the Commonwealth at all levels.

Established: 1983

Major Accomplishments (selected):

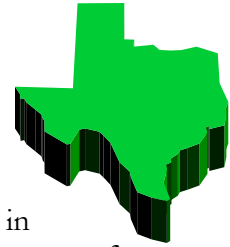
- Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership - brings together parents and others, giving them training, information, and experiences to enable them to work with teachers and other parents to raise student achievement in their home communities.
- Parents and Teachers Talking Together - "Parents and Teachers Talking Together" brings together the adults who deal most directly with Kentucky's children to exchange ideas on their aspirations for children and what each wants to happen to improve education. The sessions involve no more than 30 participants each and are held in local settings like community centers, schools, churches, and private homes.
- Parent Leadership Associates - is a collaboration between the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence and KSA-Plus Communications. Their mission is to improve student achievement by engaging parents to become decision-making partners in public schools through on-site consulting, technical support, workshops, conferences and materials.
- Partners for Kentucky's Future - The levels of education in Kentucky — early childhood, elementary and secondary, postsecondary, and adult — represent a continuum of opportunity for all Kentuckians. Each part relies upon and reflects the progress achieved by the others. As a result, all rise with the success of each, just as all falter when one is diminished. To ensure economic success and a high quality of life for its citizens, Kentucky must sustain its commitment to this continuum of education and build on the positive momentum created by its forward-looking actions of the past. The Partners for Kentucky's Future are committed to continuing the improvement of education at all levels.

Continuing Challenges: According to the Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions, the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) which the Prichard Committee supported has had little impact on student achievement and equitable spending (Stanley, 1997).

Texas

Business Alliance: Texas Business & Education Coalition (www.tbec.org)

The Texas Business & Education Coalition's mission is to secure the future of Texas and the nation by bringing business and education leaders together to affect improved performance of the Texas public school system. Their strategies include: advocate education policy that will drive improved performance of public education in Texas; stimulate and support systemic school improvement initiatives; and build awareness of the importance of high quality public education to the social and economic well-being of Texas.



Established: 1989

Major Accomplishments (selected):

- Texas Scholars Program - is a community-driven effort involving individuals from the education and business sectors, along with local volunteer organizations. It helps students and their parents understand that good, well-paying jobs go to those who have prepared themselves by obtaining a fundamentally sound academic education. Only by satisfactorily completing rigorous courses can students expect to compete in the high technology, global economy of the 21st century.
- Texas Reading Initiative - is a scientific, research based educational reform movement that is extremely serious about student success in reading. The TRI provides focused instructional leadership through administrator and teacher professional development academies. It is a multi-pronged effort aimed at providing information, resources, and knowledge to assist parents, educators, school board members, administrators, public officials and business and community leaders as they seek to support this goal of literacy for all children.
- Student Success Initiative - The goal of the SSI is to support on grade level academic achievement for every student. This depends greatly on schools, parents and community members working in partnership to meet individual student needs. In collaboration with education service centers, the agency plans to develop and distribute suggested materials to help schools focus on what is most important in this initiative: working for every student's academic success.

Continuing Challenges: In an article published in Education, John Stevens (Executive Director) admitted that teachers were "reluctant to get involved" (DeSoto, 1995)

North Carolina

Business Alliance: Public School Forum of North Carolina (www.ncforum.org)



- The Public School Forum of NC is a not for profit policy think tank which is a partnership of business leaders, educational leaders, and governmental leaders in North Carolina. Since opening its doors in 1986, the Forum has evolved into an organization that has made a significant contribution to schools across North Carolina.

Established: 1986

Major Accomplishments (selected):

- Education: Everybody's Business Coalition - the Coalition has attempted to engage more people in discussions about policy issues having an impact on public schools. Through its publications, the Coalition reaches Chambers of Commerce, educators, and large and small business people across the state. By issuing position statements and working with media outlets, the Coalition has helped involve more and more people in the debate over ways to improve the schools of North Carolina.
- NC Teaching Fellows Program - The Teaching Fellows Program provides a \$6,500 per year scholarship for four years to 400 outstanding North Carolina high school seniors. Upon acceptance of the scholarship, the student agrees to teach for four years following graduation from college in one of North Carolina's public schools or United States Government schools in North Carolina. If the recipient cannot repay the scholarship through service, the loan is repaid to the State with 10 percent interest.
- Young Scholars Program - The Young Scholars Program is an extended learning program aimed at building the academic and personal capacity of promising youth through additional and enriched learning opportunities. In launching the Young Scholars Program, the Foundation is attempting to demonstrate several things:
 - The potential for such a program to contribute to young people's succeeding academically while growing personally and socially as a result of enrichment programs that go far beyond those offered during the school day
 - The potential for building upon early education programs such as SmartStart and ensuring that school readiness gains do not fade over time.
 - The potential to develop model programs that offer policymakers an affordable and efficient way to bolster the chance for academic success for young people across North Carolina.
- NC Partners - formed as an umbrella organization for all those groups, organizations, and businesses involved in fostering partnerships for improved student achievement. NC Partners serves as a link between organizations involved in school/community partnership activities.
- NC Institute for Policymakers - The Institute for Educational Policymakers is a one-of-a-kind institute created solely to serve policymakers who shoulder the responsibility for determining the direction and quality of public schools in North Carolina, as well as those in the media who report on their actions. Created in 1997, the Institute came into being as a result of a North Carolina-based foundation's belief that the state would benefit greatly if elected and appointed officials had access to an institute devoted to building their capacity to make decisions about increasingly complex education issues.

Continuing Challenges: According to those involved in the Forum, creating broad-based grassroots support has been a challenge.

Maryland

Business Alliance: Maryland Business Roundtable for Education

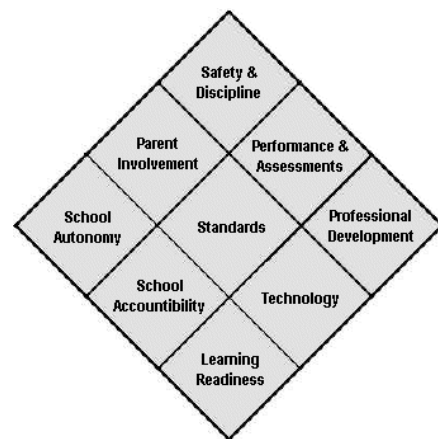
(www.mbrt.org) is a coalition of more than 100 leading employers that have made a long-term commitment to support education reform and improve student achievement in Maryland. MBRT works to achieve meaningful, measurable and systemic improvement in schools and student achievement. We believe the keys to this improvement are high standards, rigorous assessments, and strong accountability. We identify the most compelling educational issues that need to be addressed, and targeted our involvement where we can be most effective. Our objectives are ambitious, but we are convinced that their achievement will result in a brighter future for Maryland -- its business, its citizens, and its children. MBRT supports - and works to preserve and improve - key elements of school reform through leadership changes in the legislature, the executive office, and State Board of Education.



Established: 1992

Major Accomplishments (selected):

- The Nine Essential Components of a Successful Education System, as developed by The Business Roundtable, continue to serve as the basis for MBRT's efforts to affect education reform in Maryland. We plan our work and measure our achievements based on these standards.
- MBRT successfully pushed for more rigorous high school standards and assessments that will be linked to receipt of a high school diploma.
- MBRT launched *Achievement Counts* -- an innovative and highly-acclaimed campaign that demonstrates the important connection between achievement in school and success in the workplace. Elements include:
 - Since 1999, a Speakers Bureau consisting of 1,500 business people has made presentations to 138,000 9th grade students in 140 high schools in 14 school districts.
 - The Maryland Scholars program has been established to ensure that more students are well prepared to succeed in college by encouraging students to take and master rigorous high school coursework -- particularly in math and science. MBRT provides speakers to help motivate and guide 8th grade students as they are preparing to select courses for their high school program and incentives to encourage students to stay the course throughout high school.
 - A Parents Count webpage was initiated to provide parents with monthly information on how they can help their child succeed in school. More than 200 businesses and organizations are promoting the webpage to employees and members.
 - MBRT is developing an interactive teen website to sustain the *Achievement Counts* conversation with teens, reach students of many ages, and move students from interest to action. Teen Web will bolster student motivation by highlighting exciting careers, demonstrate what a student will need to accomplish in school to qualify for a great job, and provide examples of outstanding student and employee work.

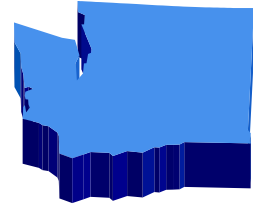


- MBRT - in partnership with other stakeholders - conducted three Workforce Skills Surveys (1997, 1999, and 2001) to gauge employer needs and satisfaction with high school and college graduates. The survey results help guide business, public policy, and instructional decisions.
- MBRT developed "skills for success" - the abilities to communicate, problem-solve, use technology, work in groups -- which were effectively integrated into high school standards and curriculum.
- MBRT developed and continues to monitor the *Maryland Plan for Technology in Education*, which has significantly increased student and teacher access to technology and promotes effective use of technology. MBRT's Committee on Technology in Education created one of the nation's first on-line school-by-school technology inventory systems that tracks access and use of technology in schools and provides data that reveals the digital divide and technology's impact on learning.

Continuing Challenges: Will need to call to talk with someone.

Washington

Business Alliance: Washington Roundtable (www.waroundtable.com) is composed of forty chief executive officers. It was formed to study and make recommendations on critical public policy issues affecting Washington State. The Washington Roundtable is a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization and its work is supported by its corporate members. The Washington Roundtable's bylaws require members to participate in the studies themselves. Three-quarters of the membership must agree on the recommendations resulting from the research to create an official Washington Roundtable policy. No proxy voting is permitted.



The Goal: The Washington Roundtable exists to apply the knowledge, creativity, and leadership resources of its members and their business organizations to serious challenges facing the state of Washington.

The Issues: The Washington Roundtable restricts its involvement to a small number of issues of broad importance to the social and economic well-being of the state of Washington. Issue selection is focused on areas where the knowledge and perspective of the Washington Roundtable's members can make a unique contribution.

Established: 1983

Major Accomplishments (selected):

The Washington Roundtable initially chose two areas of focus: education (both K-12 and higher education) and state fiscal policy, and in 1985 it added key environmental issues such as endangered species and wetlands management. In 1994, the Roundtable chose our state's economic climate as an area of focus, addressing issues that impact Washington's ability to attract new investment and create jobs in our state. (Selected activities and accomplishments.)

- Study entitled *Recommendations for Improving Financial Management in State Government* forms the basis for a series of subsequent reports designed to bring government operations more in line with sound business practices.
- Roundtable Education Committee selects early childhood education, teacher preparation, and teacher compensation and evaluation as key priorities, publishing two reports: *Study Committee on Education: Teacher Preparation* and *Educational Governance and Finance in the State of Washington*.
- Publication of *Interim Roundtable Report on Education* leads to adoption of a statewide achievement test for tenth graders, revision of school levy limits, continued expansion of the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP), and improved training for student teachers.
- *K-12 Education in Washington: Report and Recommendations* is released, re-emphasizing the importance of programs for at-risk individuals, recommending a K-3 pilot system allowing children to progress according to the mastery of skills rather than age, a comprehensive dropout prevention and re-entry campaign to reduce high school dropout rates by one-third, and a state funded remedial program for grades 10 through 12.
- *Creating Exceptional Public Schools for the Next Century* is published. Legislature supports five of the nine recommendations put forth in the report, including increased funding to expand early

childhood education and Schools for the 21st Century programs, improvements in K-3 adult-to-student ratios, and increased professional development opportunities for teachers.

- Release of study *Becoming Competitive in Higher Education*. The legislature, agreeing to the recommended three biennia commitment for faculty salary enhancements, appropriates \$168 million.
- Roundtable recommendations on state pension system adopted into law.
- Roundtable joins with the Association of Washington Business in supporting a \$213 million legislative package to enhance children's programs designed to assure that children begin the education process physically and mentally ready to learn.
- Roundtable supports and financially backs creation of the Education Renewal Institute, a separate nonprofit organization to provide assistance to selected school districts as a testing grounds for recommendations offered in *Creating Exceptional Public Schools for the Next Century*.
- *Managing Capital Spending: Findings and Recommendations* is published.
- Roundtable efforts play significant role in formation of the Governor's Council on Reform and Funding (GCERF).
- Release of the report *Principles for Prosperity: How Washington's Business Climate Compares, How Washington Must Change to Compete*, outlining how Washington State's economic climate ranks among all the states in 88 categories, and recommending seven "principles for prosperity" to improve our state's competitiveness.
- *Preparing for Washington's High-Tech Future* is published. Based upon the seven "principles for prosperity" now fundamental to Roundtable economic climate policy recommendations, this study looks specifically at the nature and needs of the high-technology sector.
- Washington Roundtable supports publication of the study *The Reality of Reform: Factors Limiting the Reform of Washington's Elementary Schools*.
- Washington Roundtable joins forces with the Washington Research Council and the Association of Washington Business to found the Washington Alliance for a Competitive Economy (WashACE), to increase awareness of competitiveness issues and encourage job creation and investment in our state.
- Roundtable is leading business voice for HB 2195, which passes both state houses with strong bipartisan support and implements standards-based graduation requirements for high school students beginning with the class of 2008.

Continuing Challenges: Will need to call to talk with someone.

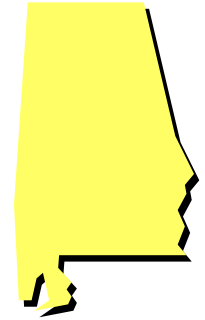
Alabama

Business Alliance: A+ Education Foundation: Working for Excellence in Alabama (www.aplusala.org)

Vision - Every school in Alabama will be organized around the needs of children, with the primary focus on student learning.

Mission - A+ Education Foundation advances policies, programs and initiatives in Alabama's K-12 education system that result in high achievement by every child.

- All children deserve an excellent education, regardless of where they live.
- All students can achieve at high levels if taught to high levels.
- More money is needed for all Alabama schools to be effective. What matters most, however, is directing resources to proven strategies that improve teaching and learning.
- Effective public education is fundamental to a democratic, civil, and economically prosperous society.
- A child's academic success is enhanced by the active involvement of caring adults, especially concerned parents.



Established:

Major Accomplishments (selected):

- 11 Things That make a Successful School - A+ outlines the components that research has demonstrated can make schools successful for all children.
- What A+ Works For - Core beliefs outlined - rooted in the best research - on what we want to see and what we don't want to see in Alabama education.
- Best Practices Center - The Best Practices Center was established in mid-1999 by A+ as a public/private partnership to focus on improving student achievement by raising the quality of teaching through professional development.

Continuing Challenges:

OBSTACLES TO PARTNERSHIPS

The Perception of Cost-Effectiveness

Partnerships are often perceived as “fads” that have little or no chance of attacking a school district’s basic needs such as more money, staff development, the improvement of the core curriculum, and the retention of districtwide programs. Therefore, many partnership initiatives are rejected by school districts on the basis that benefits the program would bring to the students and staff are just not worth the time and effort.

Breadth of Commitment

School districts are used to committing resources over long periods of time. Usually, resources are either added or maintained at current levels. Drastic cuts are reserved for budget defeats, school closings, or other catastrophes. On the other hand, most companies will not or cannot commit resources for extended periods of time, and may find many partnership agreements too binding. Lack of understanding of alternative partnership arrangements by all partners, can hinder the development of an alliance.

School Rigidity and Bureaucracy

Partnership program directors and their community-business partners cite the difficulties of forming partnerships with bureaucratic school districts. Rigid regulations and procedures cause delays in reaching agreement and obtaining approval on courses of action, in establishing operating procedures and bylaws, and, where applicable, in coordinating a multidistrict model involving separate boards of education and superintendents.

Conflicting Misperceptions

It is often difficult for the worlds of work and school to speak to each other. Schools, used to their established bureaucratic processes, fear the unknown. They perceive that business might meddle in affairs about which it knows nothing, or else look at public education in terms of limited corporate interests. They will manifest such suspicions through both passive and active resistance strategies.

Potential business-civic partners may fear contact with schools in general and urban schools in particular. In addition, corporate disillusionment and misunderstanding regarding the products of public education can result in alternative forms of foot-dragging behavior.

Competing Demands on Available Time

Educational leaders and their complements in other organizations have many responsibilities. Competing demands on time can result in apathy and impatience to planning and development of vital procedures and organization for creating a partnership. For business managers, short-term profits and large staff I turnovers can take priorities over long-term community relations investments. For educators, the day-to-day running of a school and the myriad administrative reports and (duties usually come before commitment to the pursuit of additional resources for program enrichment or staff development.

Quantity versus Quality

Partnerships are often developed in a topsy-turvy manner. People get an idea or a bit of funding, pounce on either or both, and then build on a rather shaky foundation. Those responsible for administering such projects find that they are forever trying to get them under control to meet the educational needs for which they were intended. Doing too much too soon can cause the partnership to lose credibility and I the partners to reject continued participation.

Problems Specific to Foundation Partnership Formats

Foundations are intermediary units and, as such, have the potential for being independent allies of public education. This independence can be perceived as threatening or out of the control of the school system, with agendas not necessarily consonant with those of educators. Although foundations constitute only one area of support for schools, the need to consistently seek “legitimacy” in the eyes of all partners can prove an obstacle to any foundation’s productive efforts on behalf of the schools.

Problems Specific to Rural Areas

All the obstacles to forming partnerships listed above are compounded in rural areas, where

- National committees and reports do not usually address rural needs.
- Isolation is a prominent factor. Resources in general are more limited and, specifically, large corporations are not usually linked to rural school systems.
- Dissemination systems are usually inadequate to meet the communications needs necessary in building a partnership.
- Legislative representation is less, and thus schools have limited influence or impact on legislatures.

Why Start a Partnership?

- Educators have little experience in working effectively with other organizations.
- Subaverage salaries, high teacher turnover, and shortages discourage school staff from working on projects in addition to usual instructional and administrative responsibilities.

Source: Otterbourg, Susan, (1986). *School partnerships handbook: How to set up and administer programs with business, government, and your community*. Englewood Cliffs: NJ, Prentice-Hall Inc.