

Employers and Educators Drive Learning Together: The Philadelphia Academies, Inc.

Matthew Grewe and Judy Mannix 06 January 2011

Summary

How can an organization that created an evidenced-based model 40 years ago designed to reduce dropout rates and motivate youth to engage in the planning of their own careers remain innovative and relevant? As our country, state, and city look to education as a means to help our economy remain globally competitive, how can innovation occur in traditional high schools and be supported by industry? What career-connected tools can introduce change in the Philadelphia public high school system? Questions like these drive a local nonprofit youth development organization, the Philadelphia Academies, Inc. (PAI), to develop strategies and solutions so that more local youth can benefit from career-connected education.

PAI successfully helps Philadelphia high school students stay in school, graduate, and enter careers by involving industries and businesses in the classroom in a substantive way. PAI comprises individual Career

Academies, small learning communities based in local high schools that have a career theme, link academic subjects and the workplace through project-based learning, and connect students to a network of employers and higher education institutions. Using this model, which has been replicated across multiple sites with different populations in 2,500 schools nationally, PAI has established a 40-year track record of improved academic and employment outcomes for young people in Philadelphia. Building on its success, PAI now plans to scale up the impact of its work by widening its focus from direct service to include training educators in the principles of its model and organizing industry for substantive roles in public education, with the goal of serving 25 percent of all Philadelphia high school students (roughly 25,000 youth) by 2015.

Lisa Nutter is President of Philadelphia Academies, Inc., a nonprofit youth development organization that works in Philadelphia's public high schools to provide career-based learning, college readiness supports, and positive adult networks that motivate young people to graduate and prepare them for the 21st-century economy.

Broken Links Between the Classroom and the Workplace

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Throughout the Philadelphia mayoral campaign in 2007, candidate Michael Nutter consistently invoked three disturbing statistics: 45 percent of Philadelphia's youth drop out of high school; 25 percent of Philadelphia residents live below the poverty level; and only 18 percent of Philadelphia adults hold an undergraduate degree from college, placing Philadelphia 92nd out of the 100 biggest cities in America. Drawing the connection between these three statistics, Mayor Nutter committed his administration to cutting the dropout rate in half within 5-7 years and doubling the percentage of college graduates within the next 5-10 years to ensure the city's future economic viability.

In response to these goals, the School District of Philadelphia developed its own Imagine 2014 strategic plans, which include a number of high school redesign strategies. While the city continues to make progress on increasing high school graduation rates and standardized test scores, much work is needed to make sure that high school prepares youth for both college and careers for the 21st century.

Often, students who navigate a very difficult high school environment and graduate find themselves without knowledge of or connection to employment and the outside world. The recent economic downturn has been hard on Philadelphia's workforce, as indicated by unemployment rates nearing 12 percent at mid-2010, above both state and national levels (Center for Workforce

Information & Analysis 2010). Yet problems related to workers' education and job access predate the recession. A 2009 report sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry describes a Philadelphia workforce weakened greatly by

the relatively poor job access of high school graduates (with no college) and extraordinarily low work rate of adult dropouts in the city. The result is a city with very large excess supplies of labor among persons with low levels of educational attainment at the same time as labor shortages manifest themselves at the bachelor's degree and higher levels in specific occupation and industry sectors in the city (Harrington et al. 2008).

This mismatch between graduates' skills and the demands of the job marketplace requires a response from schools and businesses alike.

A report from the Center for Law and Social Policy argues, "The realities of the job market, the workplace, and the twenty-first-century skill set needed to be competitive must be factored heavily in the redesign of high schools." School-based learning must take place alongside immersion in a professional business setting to expose students to the realities of the demands of a workplace. With an increasing focus on knowledge- and technology-based job skills, "Success in the workplace will require the ability to analyze, quickly adapt, continually upgrade, and develop transferable skills" (Harris 2005, 6).

Research suggests that, at present, many students are not acquiring these transferable skills in school. In a 2006 nationwide survey of 400 U.S. companies evaluating the workforce preparedness of high school and college graduates, over 40 percent of employer respondents rated overall preparation of the high school graduates they hired for entry-level jobs as "deficient." Employers reported poor preparation of high school graduates in traditional areas such as mathematics as well as expressing repeated concern about inadequate levels of "soft" skills essential to success at work. "Well over one-half of new entrants," the report says, "are deficiently prepared" in skills identified by the employers as the most important: oral and written communication, professionalism and work ethic, critical thinking, and problem solving (Conference Board et al. 2007).

Current pre-service preparation or in-service professional development programs do not sufficiently equip teachers with the skills to prepare students for success in college and careers (Alliance for Excellent Education 2009).

Research suggests that training and ongoing professional development for teachers is essential to a school district's success, and that many middle and high school teachers are not prepared to connect their classrooms to the workplace in a meaningful way. There are numerous professional development opportunities and resources available to Philadelphia School District teachers, such as the Teachers Institute of Philadelphia (2006), a unique

academic professional development project offered as a collaborative effort of the University of Pennsylvania and the School District of Philadelphia, to address important teaching competencies, but these seldom focus on the career goals and needs of students. Initiatives such as the Teachers Institute, which is focused on improving the quality of classroom teaching in public schools in West and Southwest Philadelphia through a sustained academic professional development effort, are invaluable for the quality of in-class instruction, but do not directly address career development for the students.

The capacity of teachers to influence their students' career paths is further complicated by pressures within the teaching profession that lead to inconsistency in instruction. For instance, alarming long-term retention rates for teachers contribute to the dropout problem in Philadelphia. The convoluted and delay-prone hiring timeline for new teachers, caused by uncertainties about state funding levels and provisions in the contract between the teachers' union and School District that regulate the processing of teacher transfers, remains a significant hurdle to hiring new teachers in a timely way. The district has also had difficulty increasing its percentage of minority teachers and finding enough qualified candidates in certain subject areas (Useem et al. 2007, 2).

A recent article suggests that subject-area teacher leaders/coaches should be established in all schools.

School-based teacher coaches with subject-area expertise provide targeted guidance for their colleagues and play a critical role in creating professional learning communities that are focused on improving student learning (Education First Compact and Philadelphia Cross City Campaign 2009, 6). Another study concludes that successful school districts target professional development investment at the outset of a career and at predictable points over a professional's tenure, responding to individual career cycles and changes in district or school priorities. Evidence from the National Center for Education Statistics' Schools and Staffing Survey suggests that participation in comprehensive induction programs can cut attrition in half. Many smaller studies have corroborated the finding that participation in mentoring and induction programs has a positive impact on teacher retention, though the size of the impact varies by study (American Association of State Colleges and Universities 2006, 2).

About Philadelphia Academies, Inc.

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In an effort to decrease dropout rates, increase graduation rates, and successfully transition students to careers or post-secondary education, the Philadelphia Academies, Inc. (PAI) bridges the business and academic worlds for students in large public high schools. In 2010, PAI served

4,500 students (approximately 7 percent of School District of Philadelphia high school students) in sixteen different schools. PAI has worked over the years to change the outlook and outcomes for students through career-focused academies. The first Career Academy was established in 1969 by a group of Philadelphia business and civic leaders concerned about the young people of the city. Additional Academies that were subsequently founded were united in 1988 under the umbrella of PAI. The Career Academies model of teaching academics and life skills through job-relevant curricula has now been replicated in school districts across the country.

With the exception of several self-contained Academies across the city, PAI students attend traditional comprehensive high schools run by the School District of Philadelphia and take part in Career Academies embedded within their school. These are learning communities of 250 students or fewer, and focus on a specific career area. Students attend one Academy class per day from their sophomore through senior year and develop academic skills in the context of the working world. Academies focused on business, health and life sciences, engineering, and other fields provide real-world application of classroom learning as well as skills tailored to specific future careers. PAI staff guide special events, such as workshops and college tours, and support Academy teachers, who are School District faculty. Meaningful instructional involvement on the part of

businesses, including industry site tours, internship mentoring, and mock interviews, enables students to see beyond the classroom.

Career Academies include:

- Applied Electrical Science
- Automotive and Mechanical Engineering
- Biotechnology
- Business and Technology
- Communications
- Environmental Science
- Health and Life Sciences
- Hotel, Restaurant, Travel & Tourism
- Process Technology
- Urban Education

In a recent research project that PAI is co-conducting with the University of Pennsylvania School of Education (Rebecca Maynard, PhD) about the most salient aspects of the Career Academy, researchers found that when asked how being in Academy differed from being in a regular high school, or how Academy classes differed from non-Academy classes, students frequently mentioned that the learning in the Academy was “more hands-on.” Descriptions of this type of learning suggest two main features: activity (getting up from one’s desk to do something) and application (the use of a learned skill in a professional context). Students offered a number of explanations of why they preferred this type of learning,

contrasting it to the “seat work” associated with more traditional high school classes. Several noted that hands-on learning was simply more interesting (or phrased in the negative, less boring) than sitting at a desk reading out of a book—an observation that may be as much an indictment of traditional high schools as it is an endorsement of the Academy model. Beyond simply being more engaging, students reported that hands-on approaches were more effective in helping them to understand how academic content was relevant or important. This played out in two ways. At an immediate level, students were able to link certain academic courses to the professional skills they were learning and using in their Academy classes. Linking academics to professional skills had long-term implications as well. By recognizing that certain types of academic knowledge were needed to acquire and develop professional skills, some students began to see the necessity of continuing education in those areas. This led them to see attending post-secondary education as instrumental to career advancement. Importantly, this was due not merely to the symbolic importance of getting a degree, but rather to students’ understanding of the link between academic content and job proficiency.

In their Academy classes, students have opportunities to work in teams on hands-on, real-life projects. Through this project-based learning, a widely recognized best practice in education, students begin to understand the

importance of professionalism, reliability, teamwork, and solid oral communication skills. The programming is designed to help young people develop internal motivation and resilience by:

1. developing mindful career and personal goals and actualizing them;
2. developing specific workplace, occupational, and life skills; and
3. experiencing positive adult relationships that support and provide a bridge to employment and post-secondary education.

The demographics of Career Academies mirror those of the School District, and admission is based on student preferences and not a screening or application process, as in a magnet school. As a result, Academies serve a cross-section of students, including at-risk and special education students. In some cases, adults within individual schools have steered young people in need of hands-on learning experiences toward the Academies, and the concentration of at-risk youth in those Academies has become higher than in other programs.

A unique aspect of the PAI model is the integration of trained volunteers with various professional backgrounds to provide classroom instruction, deliver programs, and act as "industry coaches" to teachers. "Education is a community concern," PAI CEO Lisa Nutter says, and at the heart of the Academies model is the involvement of the

community outside of the school system, including a network of over 400 labor, corporate, and academic partners and volunteers. PAI was founded by businesspeople and as a result possesses a distinct capacity to connect to and involve the business community in ways the School District could not achieve on its own. PAI very deliberately markets its partnering relationships to businesses as an opportunity to train and develop highly qualified, work-ready high school graduates. When interacting with businesses and employers, Nutter emphasizes that "this is not volunteerism for volunteerism's sake" and challenges businesses to think of involvement with PAI as an investment. She says industry partners tend to catch on quickly when they hear the organization's mission. After all, they see it as in their best interest to cultivate the next generations of qualified workers coming out of the school system.

Nutter says that when students evaluate their Career Academies experiences, they most often point to the importance of the high expectations placed on them, as well as the relationships they develop with peers, teachers, and volunteers. Learners graduate with networks and social capital they likely would not find in a normal comprehensive high school program, and have experienced three years of adults consistently asking them questions, taking interest in their lives, and "nudging them," as Nutter says, to achieve higher goals.

Governance boards called Citywide Industry Advisory Boards provide support for the Academies and other career-related programs within the School District. Experienced professionals from within the Academies' career areas staff the boards and meet three to four times per year. They evaluate and provide input on curriculum development and program design and equipment, and provide annual curriculum recommendations to the School District's Office of Career and Technical Education. Nutter says the boards "are a lot to manage" but provide PAI with up-to-date industry knowledge, drive volunteer networks and internship opportunities for students, support teacher development, and serve as advocates for the type of relevant education occurring at the Academies. This involvement encourages community involvement in young people's lives while freeing up PAI staff for the work of training and coordination.

PAI's results are convincing. By leveraging the power of the community, PAI graduates are more likely to become employed and capitalize on workforce needs. Graduates can make a contribution to society and avoid the steep social and economic costs associated with dropping out of school. To track outcomes, PAI surveys students at 6 and 18 months post-graduation. Recent survey results make a strong case for the effectiveness of the Academies model.

Graduating class / Months post-graduation	2008 / 18 months	2009 / 6 months
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Percent of graduates surveyed	59%	60%
Enrolled in college	62%	66%
Enrolled in trade school	7%	13%
Employed or in military service	18.5%	16%

While most Academies function as “schools within a school,” Parkway West High School is unique in that all students take part in the Academy of Urban Education. Electives prepare them for a career in teaching, and internships in local elementary schools provide immersive work experience. Parkway West is a small school by Philadelphia district standards, and many students plan careers in fields other than teaching, but the school’s basic success is clear: The class of 2010 had a 97 percent graduation rate. Sixty-six percent of the class of 2007 and 76 percent of the class of 2008 were enrolled in college at the time of PAI’s most recent surveys. The Academies of Urban Education at two other schools, Overbrook High and Furness High, have also seen graduates working or attending college or trade school at impressive rates.

The Students’ Perspectives

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Rosalind Sutch entered a business-focused Academy in her freshman year at Fels High in Philadelphia’s Lawncrest

neighborhood. She remembers coming to school an hour earlier than non-Academy students. By the time other Fels students had arrived at school, Rosalind and her Academy classmates had already spent a full class period learning skills such as typing, resume preparation, and spreadsheet development. This knowledge gave her an advantage at work; as an intern at an accounting firm while still in high school, Rosalind created Microsoft Excel spreadsheets that became the company standard. In addition to the valuable work experience Rosalind gained during her year-long senior year internship, she feels that the "soft skills" she learned at the Academy were the most critical to her development, and recalls an environment of constant high expectations. Learners' work and behavior were held to the standard of a workplace, she says, and students were expected to work hard but also to seek help when needed. All of this "gave me such an edge" in the job market, she says, and helped her to "learn early" the work skills and habits that many workers learn only through hard experience. After her high school graduation, Rosalind went on to college and then to earn a master's degree in taxation, and became a shareholder in her accounting firm before the age of 30. Her firm has hired Academy graduates at her recommendation, and Rosalind is now part of an alumni network that supports PAI's ongoing work.

Jamal Yusuf, a 2010 graduate of West Philadelphia High and the Business and Technology Academy located there,

says he entered high school only with the goal of graduating and “nothing past that.” A career seemed like a far-off idea, and based on what he had heard in school to that point, “college seemed inaccessible, something only for the top students in the class.” Through the Academy, Jamal developed career-relevant abilities such as public speaking, interviewing, and computer skills, as well as more general competencies such as financial literacy that would help him throughout his life. Visits from colleges and financial aid workshops made college a tangible, accessible goal. “The little stuff I might have otherwise overlooked or not known about” rounded out Jamal’s preparation, he says, as he learned work etiquette, how to dress professionally, and even “which fork to use” at a business dinner. PAI helped Jamal locate his 2010 summer internship at Philadelphia’s Convention Center. With PAI’s assistance, Jamal applied to attend Penn State University and secured scholarship money. He has begun his freshman semester and plans to study global business and Japanese. Jamal intends to stay in close contact with PAI, where he says staff have offered support and help after his graduation.

A Former Teacher and Current Principal: Helping PAI Build Success

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David M. Kipphut, Principal of Swenson Arts and Technology High School

Recognizing in the early '70s the importance of workforce development in the high school classroom, David Kipphut has enriched the lives of many students at Lincoln High School and Swenson Arts and Technology High School, both in the Philadelphia School District. After graduating from Lincoln High School in 1969, David began his career teaching at the school and introduced a program in ornamental horticulture. The program began with just one teacher but within seven years had grown to include 300 students and five teachers. By the late '80s, as the field of environmental technology grew, the program was split to accommodate a student population of 550-600. "We were involved with the Philadelphia Flower Show, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and Fairmount Park," David explains. "With this much success and recognition in the community, the Philadelphia Academies contacted me to inquire about our programs."

The success David achieved at Lincoln, including increases in the graduation rate and in daily student attendance, attracted the involvement of leaders within the Career Academies, who agreed to support David's programs. David explains what that support entailed: "By state law, you must have a Governance Board for approved career and technical programs. Prior to this, the school had just had a committee, with, say, an owner of a

local flower shop. Now, business and industry partners would be on the board." These stakeholders included, among many others, local businesses such as the Bartlett Tree Company and Snipes Nursery, and representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Fairmount Park Commission. This board helped in the fundraising efforts, curriculum development, and internship opportunities for students and supported many other projects and initiatives.

With the introduction of the Academies into the school, David became an Academy coordinator and eventually the Assistant Principal, overseeing the Academies programs at Lincoln High School. In 1996 he was appointed principal of Lincoln High School and led the movement to establish Lincoln as the first "wall to wall," all-Academy high school in the Philadelphia School District by 2000. By 2002, there were seven Career Academies in the school. Lincoln had now become "schools within a school." This model created a familial atmosphere for all students, teachers, and staff, where the focus was on career and real-world connections, and the advantages of interdisciplinary work proved beneficial to the students.

With great conviction, David says, "The principal must invest in and support the Academies or else the school will revert back to a shopping mall school," meaning a school that is attempting to cater to a variety of consumers, some of whom want very high-quality goods, others of whom want a kind of "live and let live" approach.

There is no interdisciplinary involvement with this approach to high school education. In 2004 David was appointed as Principal of the Swenson Arts and Technology High School, a citywide career and technology high school in the School District of Philadelphia. At Swenson High, where he supports a number of Academies, David is moving to again establish the school as an "All Academy High School." Swenson's graduation rate is 96 percent, and it has an average daily attendance rate of 93 percent. David wants his students to have a career, not just a job, and he has cultivated this success through the model of the Philadelphia Academies. A dedicated teacher, Academy coordinator, and principal like David demonstrates the administration-level investment needed to implement the model successfully.

Innovation: Scaling Up Impact

Innovation: Scaling Up Impact (Without Scaling Up the Budget)

PAI's track record is strong, but the organization recognizes the value of periodic innovation to stay relevant and continue to positively impact the lives of more young Philadelphians. While the Career Academies model was developed in Philadelphia and has been successfully replicated across the country, PAI is mindful that its approach has taken hold in only a portion of

Philadelphia's public high schools. Accordingly, PAI has committed to a new strategic plan for the 2010-11 school year and beyond, which will continue the organization's direct service delivery while dedicating significant resources to teacher training and capacity building for entire high schools.

This new strategy will enable PAI to achieve the same depth of impact for individual students as in years past, but in greater numbers throughout the School District of Philadelphia. PAI hopes to double the number of students impacted by 2013, change the culture of targeted comprehensive high schools, vastly improve the life chances of Philadelphia's young people, and make an increased economic difference in the city. In order to achieve these goals, PAI will scale up the number of teachers and adult practitioners prepared to deliver a career-focused curriculum. By working with teachers within the school system and with volunteers from the business community, PAI avoids increased costs, the most common barrier to successful institutional growth in the social sector.

Up to the present, PAI staff has been on-site at Career Academies on an informal, as-needed basis to facilitate events or workshops and to support Academy teachers. Moving forward, staff will be stationed at schools throughout the week and serve as a resource to the entire school. Their focus will be on providing ongoing professional development for teachers, both current

Academies instructors and regular school faculty, through the establishment of professional learning communities. In the classroom, teachers will act as project managers for project-based learning assignments, with PAI supporting the process. If, for example, an Automotive and Engineering Academy plans a project learning activity such as designing a car, PAI will bring an automotive engineer into the classroom to help the teacher develop a curriculum and to share expertise with the students as they work.

In addition to drawing more on the schools, bringing Academy-style learning to more classrooms by building the capacity of entire schools will require increased capacity on the part of business volunteers. To date, partnering and developing relationships with businesses has been an informal process. PAI now recognizes that increased structure will be necessary to successfully involve volunteers in more classes. Trainings will prepare volunteers to act as industry coaches who can help teachers stay current on workforce needs and trends. Increased emphasis will be placed on preparing volunteers as classroom instructors who are integrated into the curriculum, not as guest speakers who present and then leave. PAI will help employers design site tours in such a way that students visiting a workplace will be engaged and stimulated as they learn about the business. Volunteers who plan to serve as workplace mentors for students will receive training as well.

PAI views technology as another means to increase impact and minimize costs. For example, a pilot effort in the coming months will harness cellular phones, smart phones, and SMS text to provide students with alerts, event announcements, and internship connections. A partnership with the Philadelphia Youth Network will use mobile phone applications to reinforce work-relevant skills. With such uses of technology, PAI can reach students and enhance their learning outside of the classroom at very little cost.

Replicating its success on a larger scale will present PAI with inevitable challenges. Overcoming these will depend on the skill and knowledge of PAI's staff, who will benefit in their training roles from their decades of implementation experience. Increased scale may require PAI to rely on Academies' advisory boards (aka Citywide Industry Advisory Boards) for program oversight in new ways, and new relationships will need to be forged with employers in order to provide opportunities for an increased number of students. Faced with the task of managing many more classrooms, PAI will have to rely on the successful transmission of its principles, rather than detailed program prescriptions, in order to replicate its past success.

Social Return on Investment

Social Return on Investment

From a financial perspective, PAI is very successful in promoting a strong social return on investment. Research specific to Philadelphia conducted by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University has quantified the lifetime earning potential represented by successful high school graduates, as well as the costs to society (in unpaid taxes, transfer payments associated with various social welfare programs, and incarceration costs) that accrue when young people drop out of school. These metrics provide a useful way to evaluate the impact of PAI's work.

- "Over their entire working lifetime, high school dropouts in Philadelphia city are expected to earn only \$457,100 and high school graduates, \$870,600. Philadelphians who complete some college education below a bachelor's degree can expect to earn \$1.178 million or 2.6 times as much as high school dropouts, whereas those with a bachelor's or a higher degree are expected to earn 4.5 times as much as high school dropouts over their working lifetimes" (Fogg et al. 2009).
- "Over their working lives, the negative annual net fiscal contribution of adult residents of Philadelphia city who failed to complete high school would accumulate into (-)\$319,000. In contrast, a high school graduate (without any college education) is estimated to make a net fiscal contribution of (+)\$261,000. The mean lifetime net fiscal

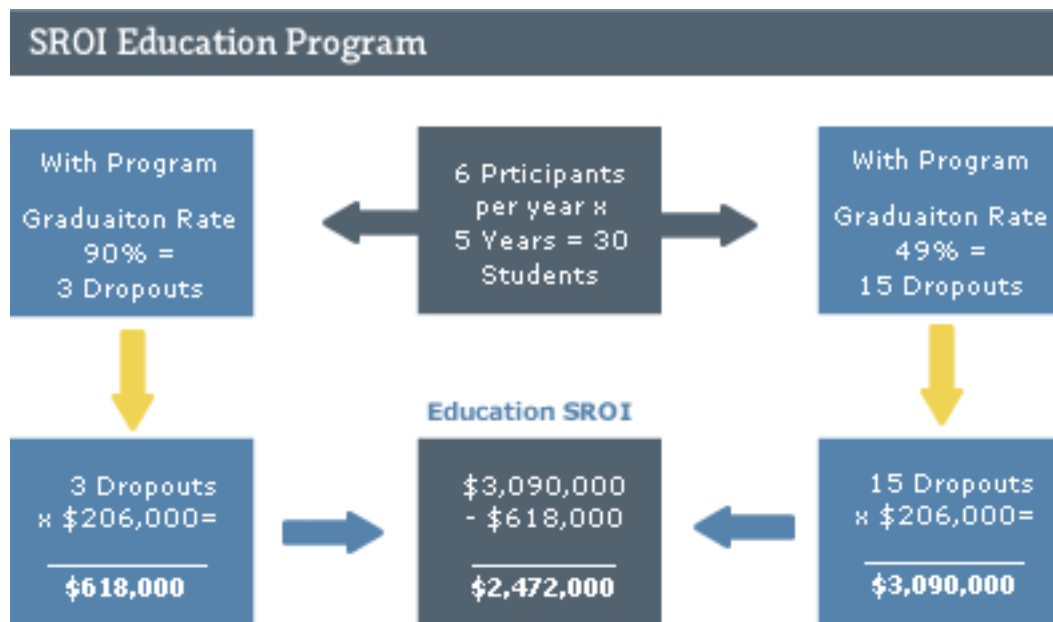
contributions of adults with a bachelor's or a higher academic degree are estimated at (+)\$623,000" (Fogg et al. 2009).

- "Each high school dropout in Philadelphia city is estimated to impose a lifetime cost (negative net fiscal impact) of (-)\$319,000. Each high school graduate (without any college education) resident of the city is expected to make a net positive fiscal contribution of (+)\$261,000 over their working lives. The difference between the two (the contribution of each high school graduate (\$261,000) minus the (negative) contribution of each high school dropout (-\$319,000) (or $(\$261,000) - (-\$319,000) = \$580,000$) represents the potential gain to the federal, state, and local governments for each successful high school graduation of an urban area student who would have otherwise dropped out of high school" (Fogg et al. 2009).

PAI's outcomes indicate a completion rate 16 percent higher than that of the Philadelphia School District average. Calculated for the current cohort of 4,500 students:

**4,500 students x 16% boost in completion rate over general Philadelphia high school population
x [\$580,000 net societal gain + \$413,500 gain in earnings over dropouts in Philadelphia]
= \$715,320,000**

Social Return on Investment



- Graduation/completion rate 16 percent higher than School District average
- Graduation means great social benefits *
 - Lifetime earnings boost of \$413,500 over Philadelphia dropouts
 - Societal contributions in tax revenues as well as avoided costs net \$580,000 per graduate

* Source: Fogg et al. (2009)

If 4,500 students take part in the Career Academies over three years, implying three years of associated program costs for PAI (currently \$3.2 million annually) and an assumed 10 percent increase in the organization's budget each year, the return on investment is over \$67 in social return created for every dollar invested in PAI. These figures do not account for financial savings to businesses in avoided retraining and rehiring costs where PAI helps to deliver well-prepared high school graduates into the

workforce. Further, the rate of college attendance for recent Academies graduating classes is over 50 percent, which supposes even larger future earnings and social contributions. Finally, PAI's social return will grow tremendously if plans to widen its impact through teacher training and capacity building are successful and many more students find educational and career success. As a hypothetical illustration, serving 9,000 rather than 4,500 students with the current model would net a social return of over \$1.4 billion in three years.

Additionally, social return on investment can be evaluated through a Project U Turn research study that looks at engineering "turnarounds" within organizations. The consequence of education's failure to recognize turnarounds as a means of school improvement is twofold: in education, turnarounds have been tried rarely and studied even less. While education researchers catch up, practitioners can use the turnaround lessons of other sectors (Hassel and Hassel 2009). It appears that PAI has successfully utilized this approach, and some of its turnaround methods are identified below. How did they do it?

U-Turn Precursors	Action	PAI
Leadership	Turnaround leaders work in an environment that	PAI ha comm impro movec formu

	gives them what is called the "big yes"	improvement and stakeholder change
Leadership	Bad-to-great transformations require a point-guard leader who both drives key changes and deftly influences stakeholders to support and engage in transformation	The C... fundin... stakeh... board... and ar... skills r...
	Consistent Actions	
Early wins must tackle similarly visible goals essential to the learning mission	Develop tools to achieve academic results and convince stakeholders that additional focused change will produce more success. Adapt methods for struggling students or schools. Tackle barriers blocking success for those students or schools	Caree... of 400... labor, delive... resulti... gradu... prepar... workp... and th... protoc...
Successful turnaround leaders are innovative and create disruption	Pursue strategies that will increase performance	PAI te... engag... them t... within... busine... create... on a r... and w...

<p>To ensure more widespread, successful turnarounds in education, state and district leaders need to focus on critical policy changes. National trends need to work in favor of new agendas, including accountability and experimentation</p>	<p>States, particularly governors, need to create much more political will to try turnarounds at the district level and retry when some inevitably fail</p>	<p>PAI vice admin and so suppoc helped noned innova</p>
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Source: Hassel and Hassel, 2009

Policy Landscape

Policy Landscape

The ongoing work of PAI depends on the alignment or foundation set in motion with the citywide educational goals as well as the School District of Philadelphia's high school redesign strategies and the Philadelphia Council for College and Career Success (a governing body that oversees significant workforce initiative and public welfare funds). Additionally, PAI has invited discussions with the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT), the union representing the district's teachers. The PFT is represented on PAI's board in order to keep that relationship strong and open. At present, Nutter sees "alignment" among Philadelphia's school superintendent,

the Mayor's Office on Education, and even President Obama in education and funding priorities supporting programs like the Career Academies. Governor-elect Tom Corbett campaigned on education policies that may favor PAI's approach, such as support for career and technical schools and increased accountability for student outcomes. Lori Shorr, chief education officer for the Mayor's office, said that she believes that there are national trends working in favor of Superintendent Arlene Ackerman's agenda, with the Obama administration stressing many of the same themes: accountability, experimentation, and emphasis on improving academic performance among the poorest students. "I am optimistic that some interesting things can happen here in Philly that we could not imagine five years ago, because the national mood is changing," Shorr said (Pew Charitable Trusts 2010). Nutter says PAI acts as a "critical partner for the School District" with the ability to "speak from an operational point of view" into the district's workings. Changes in political climate and administration may require PAI to adapt, particularly as a nonprofit agency working on the premises and with the staff and faculty of the public school system.

The Academies approach has emphasized diverse funding sources in addition to the support it receives from the School District, but its model ultimately depends on adequately staffed and funded public schools. The balance between state and local funding remains a

complex and challenging one. When Pennsylvania's public school system was created in the 1830s, the law limited the state funding share to one-third. By the 1960s, the law had changed to require a state share of at least 50 percent. However, in the 1980s, the law was changed to eliminate any specific figure. As a result, since 1974, when the state share was 55 percent, the figure has steadily declined to today's 36 percent (Education Law Center 2006, 3).

Funding issues will persist this year. According to a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article from July 2010, "'Philadelphia will get about \$35 million less than it had planned on,' said Michael Masch, the district's chief business officer. Even with a total budget of \$3.2 billion, 'that's a large enough reduction that will hurt somewhat,' he said, 'but it will be several months before the district makes a final decision on what changes it will need to make'" (Hardy 2010). It is also unclear how the state budget will support the School District of Philadelphia's Imagine 2014 plans when Governor-elect Tom Corbett takes office in January 2011.

To ensure that the issue of connecting education to industry needs remains relevant and engaging to a diverse audience of elected officials, PAI relies on the CEO Ambassadors for 21st Century Skills. Launched on April 22, 2008, the CEO Ambassadors for 21st Century Skills is an ad hoc committee of CEO and executive-level partners who view investments in education, particularly public

education, as investments in our workforce and our local economy. The group was initiated by and is managed by Philadelphia Academies, Inc., in an effort to provide a vehicle for critical industry and other stakeholders to have a voice in the instructional agenda in schools and the need for intentional and sustained focus on the development of what are commonly known as 21st-century skills (see www.21stcenturyskills.org).

Ambassadors are leaders in the regional employer community and have been selected for their first-hand understanding of how career-connected approaches to learning along with mentorship and work-based experiences can produce dramatically different long-term outcomes for young people.

To date, the Citywide Industry Advisory Boards also have been able to offer recommendations to the School District on curriculum, but have no formal authority to require action on their advice.

Systemic change is critical for solving some of Philadelphia's educational challenges and addressing the need for an educated workforce to compete in a global economy. As identified by researchers at the Bridgespan Group in their report, "The Strong Field Framework" (2009), one of the most important levers for bringing about change is field building—coordinating the efforts of multiple organizations and individuals around a common goal and creating the conditions necessary for them to succeed. With the Mayor of Philadelphia's goal setting for

high school and college attainment rates for the city, the School District of Philadelphia and other public and nonprofit partners have begun to align resources and priorities to help more youth make a successful transition to careers or post-secondary education. Within this context, PAI is playing a critical role: It is offering the public education field a model program that demonstrates the promise of career-connected education for both short-term and long-term economic outcomes. The time for expansion is ripe with the growing demand for the supply of trained teachers, curricula, industry input, and technical assistance to impact high school youth in Philadelphia

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