

Out-of-School Time Audio Conference: High School After-School and School Reform

Karen Pittman: Thank you for joining us for this audio conference on high school after-school and school reform. Hopefully you will have already read the tenth issue of the *Out-of-School Time Policy Commentary*.¹

Allow me to introduce our guest speakers for today:

Naomi Housman is the director of the National High School Alliance, which is housed by the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. Prior to joining the Alliance, Naomi was the Assistant Director for Comprehensive School Reform, where she worked with national, state and district-wide programs.

Sam Piha is the director for Community and School Partnerships at the Community Network for Youth Development in San Francisco. Over the past several years Sam has been working in partnership with the California Department of Education and others to build the capacity of high school after-school programs in California. He works with a statewide learning community which includes over 60 high school after-school programs.

Ken Kay is the president of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. He is also chairman and cofounder of InfoTech Strategies Inc., and runs InfoTech's education tech practice. He's been a major voice in recognizing the potential and promoting the importance of information technology applications in critical areas such as education, health care, electronic commerce and government services.

Thank you to all three of our guests for joining us today.

Out-of-School Time Policy Commentary #10: Rethinking the High School Experience: What's After-School Got to Do with It? is the second Policy Commentary focusing on high school, but this one is really focusing on high school after-school and the whole question of high school reform. We all know that school reform is "in" — it's a hot topic. The whole issue of relevance, rigor and relationships is one that has been brought to the forefront through the Gates Foundation and others. The question is where does this whole idea of after-school fit in? —the three Rs are just as relevant to after-school as they are to high school reform. Youth programs are known for being relevant for their relationships, but the question of rigor is recently being brought into high school efforts. We also know that keeping high school students engaged after-school is sometimes as challenging as to keep them engaged in school. Where we would like to see high school students most engaged in traditional high school programs is where we see students drop off. This is an important time for us to look at how we link after-school with high school reform itself.

One way to think of this is by thinking reviewing the numbers. About one-third of high school students will not graduate; one-third of high school age students are in school but barely hanging on; and one-third of high school

¹ Out-of-School Time Policy Commentary #10: Rethinking the High School Experience: What's After-School Got to Do with It? Can be found on the Forum's Web site at www.forumfyi.org/Files/ostpc10.pdf.

aged students are in school and engaged. There is even more room for us to ask the question of what role other community partners can play to ensure that young people are coming out of high school “ready for work, college and life,” as the Forum says. We are not trying to make after-school a magic bullet, it doesn’t solve everything, but as we’re putting increased attention on how students are leaving high school whether or not they are ready for work, college, we are looking not only looking at graduation rates, but also levels of academic success. As Ken Kay will discuss the question is of 21st century skills and the broader set of schools that young people need. We can fuse the question of how we can do a better job of marrying efforts with engaging young people in after-school hours with efforts made to engage during school. With that overview — I want to turn first to Naomi and ask her to give us an update on where we are in high school reform.

Naomi Housman: Thank you very much. The first two slides (next page) are focused on the National High School Alliance’s “Call to Action” document. I was just going to go over a few things not on the slides as a preface to that. In regards to the state of high school reform, I just want to say that the National High School Alliance is a national partnership with mostly national organizations that have expertise in high school and youth issues. We have been around for about three years. The point of the coalition is to really bring about the best thinking around youth and high school. The Forum is of course a member and has been very actively involved. The purpose is to bring the best thinking across the different camps in the high school and youth worlds so that we can really inform the policy world in a way that will cut across a lot of the thinking. We recently released a report called *The Call to Action: Transforming High Schools for All Youth*.²

Karen asked me to comment on the state of high school reform. Let me make a few points along those lines. There are a lot of investments in different innovations, but the state of high school reform is that we are still in the experimentation stage with all these innovations, because we don’t have the data yet. The media calls me with questions about one reform or another that is being funded in their district or their state and they want to know where the data are. There is really no absolute data; we’re still in experimentation mode.

There are lot of areas we have been investing in; the federal government has been investing for about five years in learning communities, research of literacy programs, and of course there is the Carnegie Corporation, which has a program in five-to-seven large districts, and the Schools for New Society initiative. In February 2005, the National Governor’s Association and the Gates Foundation initiated a huge investment in giving money to governors to push reform at the state level. There is a lot going on, but we still don’t know a lot. We do have better dropout data than we ever had before. We have a clear picture of that.

As far as the state of reform, we have a lot of states responding to the rigor aspect. Many are responding to this call to action for better high schools by only looking at rigor and assessing students through exams. And then you have a few other states that are on the edge. I would say Rhode Island is one of those states. They understand the fact that assessment really does drive curriculum and instruction in the classrooms. Rhode Island has really invested in performance-based assessment systems.

Another piece of data that I want to throw out there is the report by ETS [Educational Testing Service] that Karen mentioned where they look at the number of kids who are no longer in the system, the different thirds — thirds who are disengaged, out, doing well. I thought that the report was important to this audience because it points out that coinciding with the decreased value of the high school diploma is less federal

² The National High School Alliances report, *The Call to Action: Transforming High Schools for All Youth*, can be found online at www.hsalliance.org/_downloads/home/Call%20to%20Action%202005/CalltoAction2005.pdf.

investment in second chance programs, a shift focus on the GED programs, and a greater scarcity of guidance counselors. Another report to by NDRC looks at some positive models such as the First things First model, which implemented in high schools district-wide in Kansas City.

The High School Alliance recently released “A Call to Action.” This represents what all the partners believe needs to happen in order to transform high school youth. The center is what we believe is the purpose of high school — are youth ready for college, careers and civic participation? And around that are the six core principles. I’ll go through those quickly and then I’ll focus on two of those that are relevant to the after-school learning community. The first is personal learning environment, then, academic engagement of all students, engaged community in youth, empowered educators, accountable leaders, and finally, an integrated system of high standards in curriculum instruction assessments and reports. I’d like to say that the personalized learning environments principles and the integrated learning supports are sort of like the bookends. You have to have high standards and supports.

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ALLIANCE

Key Messages of A Call to Action

- ◆ Major changes to high schools are needed
- ◆ Systems change & alignment is critical: address high school in the context of K-12 reform
- ◆ The core principles are non-negotiable
- ◆ No “silver bullet” programs; context matters
- ◆ Ownership rooted in the school & community
- ◆ Schools cannot do the work alone
- ◆ Change will require major investment of resources

A L L I A N C E

We think that the parallel with after-school is that schools that are trying to implement innovations are really trying to implement relationships along with the rigor. They help build the capacity of schools based on what they know about how to motivate and engage what is relevant. Conversely, I think that one of the common responses that we see in the high school reform models is teachers teaming with the middle schools and elementary reform models, bringing teachers together. And if there is a way to have after-school staff be a part of those teams to make sure there is a link between the regular school day and the after-school day, I think that could be very powerful. We really do have the three Rs and there is a potential to really integrate those three during the school day and after school. Another opportunity for after-school programs to help with the school day programs is by connecting with the business community and other community resources to build on the school day.



Karen Pittman: I just have a quick question. Without even thinking about the after-school providers and programs and the larger issue around careers and the other things that are out there, to what extent, as

educators are thinking about high school reform, are they naturally gravitating towards the options of either pushing the time boundaries, so that young people have more time to catch up and work in school or pushing the physical boundaries and inviting the community to provide instruction inside the school or provide the young people internships and things during the school day? Are those options that sort of blur the traditional time and place boundaries part of high school reform?

Naomi Housman: Absolutely — I think that is where some of the big parallels that are happening with after-school and high school reform are — trying to provide different use of time during the school day. What you see are grouping and block scheduling, teaming of teachers and moving across the school day in small cohorts, more shared learning time for teachers. The First Things First model has the Advocacy system, which basically assigns every student in the school with one adult who is responsible for making sure that things are going okay and connecting them with the community and engaging the family.

Another thing we see are more opportunities for catch-up. This is crucial for students who have already experienced failure and are coming into high school maybe having already repeated a grade. Some of the models — First Things First in particular — are providing *acceleration*, not remediation, — where they have longer blocks of time in reading and math. The whole point is to not keep them at remedial level but to get them on grade level and get them moving beyond ninth grade. The data are showing that they are sustaining grade promotion and retention across the levels, and these are schools that have high risk categories.

Karen Pittman: Sam, you've been in the after-school work forever, although you are not as old as I am. California is one of the first states to have used some of their 21st Century dollars to earmark funds to allow for innovation and high school after-school in a time when people were still thinking that the term high school after-school was somewhat of an oxymoron. So tell us a little bit about what it has to look like, opportunities for blurring the lines; what does it look like when we say high school after-school and what is its relevance to the high school reform space?

Sam Piha: Community Network for Youth Development is an intermediary organization in San Francisco. We are here to ensure that principles and practices of youth development are at the table when we talk about after-school and increasingly high school reform.

What do we know about high school after-school? There are four points I want to cover. A question that arose when we talk about high school after-school in California is — will there be a demand in the communities? Are people ready to accept this? Will there be a demand from high school students? I want to say a little about what we found that makes a difference to after-school and the relevance to high school redesign.

In California there was a legislative bill specifically for high school after-school using 21st century dollars for program design. In 2002–2003, they allocated

A growing DEMAND for high school afterschool.

California HS ASSETs Initiative:

- 2002-03: \$2.5M
- 2003-04: \$2.4M
- 2004-05: 64 Grantees seeking \$24.6 M

1/8 Ratio: Accepted/Applied; \$3.6M Awarded

\$2.5 million, \$2.4 million the following year, and \$2.6 million the year after that. During the last cohort we had a lot of people requesting resources. So, is there a need and demand to communities for high school after-school to better serve their high school students in after-school? The answer is a big yes.

The next question is, is there a demand from students? The answer is yes. The program designers did a good job of thinking through and putting these programs together. There is a huge demand. You would find on any given day anywhere from 100–200 youth very engaged, really focused on age-appropriate work. They are really focused. The programs are not just playing basketball or “hanging out” time. We know that if you develop age-appropriate programs properly they will attract young people. One mantra of the reform movement is relationships, rigor, relevance; I would add one more in terms of after-school — we have to look at alignment — some of the time, not all of the time — in after-school to the mission of the school to ensure young people graduate.

What do we see that is different in high school after-school from middle school after-school and school itself? One is that young people in high school are not looking for school. They are looking for adults who are highly competent, highly prepared. They are not looking for tinker time; they want a rich learning environment. They are interested in pursuing passions in a professional way or generating new interests.

What is very different is that there is a sense of a ticking clock that we don’t experience in elementary or middle school after-school. These young people are aging out of the system. We can’t afford to think only about relationships. These young people do care about whether or not they are graduating and to some degree, test scores. Not all students may care about test scores, but they certainly care about credits. And young people are looking for that in after-school. Are we building programs that really bridge to life after high school, whether it is higher learning, or into the world of work through internships, mentorship, building social capital, etc.? Those things are really relevant.

I guess there is a pressure of the ticking clock, but I also want to point out that young people are in need of real time support for things outside of graduation and life after school, such as adults that are there to listen, medical supports, opportunities to develop new interests, opportunities to hear that you can. They often hear that you *can’t*; they want to hear you *can*.

**High School Reform Through
An Afterschool Lens**

Relationships: Trust and Respect

**Rigor: Competence and Mastery
Beats “Cool”**

**Relevance: Passion, Graduation
and Back to the Future**

**FIELD OBSERVATIONS and
POSITIVE PRACTICES**

STAFF MATTER:

- **Passion and highly skilled;
from school and outside**
- **Prep time needed**
- **Hiring older youth**

• **Full time project director**

Just a few things about what we learned that seem to matter: The staff is critical. They must be a staff that has passion and is highly competent and prepared — ready to work in a hands-on way, shoulder to shoulder with students. After-school teachers need prep time like school teachers if they are going to meet the demands of rigor that the students are bringing. Hiring older youth within the community is a great way to attract students. [To run] this program, you need a full-time person to really carry this forward.

There has to be a space that is youth- friendly. They want to be their own leaders and create and decorate that space as young people need to in order to attract other young people. A wonderful model seen in New York and San Francisco is where adults are using common space with young people with desks right next to each other. A work atmosphere is developed with no physical separation. The young people often help with technology and they are able to see for themselves what it means to be in the workplace.

In terms of programming, real support for graduation and credit approval, etc. is really vital. There is a reckoning because of the ticking clock and we all need to help young people leave school with a degree. After-school is the opportunity where we can really build young people's social capital. We are connecting young people with the community leaders and people in the business industry where they can go back to these people and say, "Hey, I'm looking for something for this summer, can I intern at your office?" After-school can build social capital bridges.

Relevance on high school reform — what we're learning is that high school redesign is bringing into the school what matters for young people, and after-school is the perfect place to bring that to the next level. There is real action learning going on. We are seeing that the after-schools break into small schools. We are seeing that after-schools are serving as a hub for all the small schools to come together. This allows the schools to keep their identity as a small school, as well as bring the economy to scale in terms of bringing in the business, tutors and health reps, etc. We have heard from some teachers that they are using after-school programs as laboratories for new efforts in innovative programs. In terms of academic alignment, we are seeing people doing test preparation, credit retrieval and allowing kids to receive up to ten credits for graduation for 120 days of participation in after-school. We are seeing strategies through after-school that encourage kids through the door of graduation that day schools cannot provide.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS and POSITIVE PRACTICES

SPACE MATTERS:

- Need to create a “youth friendly” culture
- Dedicated youth space
- Adults and youth use common space



FIELD OBSERVATIONS and POSITIVE PRACTICES

PROGRAMMING MATTERS:

- Offering real-world experience that builds social capital (hire community resource developer)
- ASB in Afterschool
- Real support for graduation



Karen Pittman: Are there any early indications or examples of principal and district-level recognition of the potential for these partnerships?

Sam Piha: You know these programs don't really work well if they are not working shoulder to shoulder with leaders — principal or districts — especially credit-building programs. They have to go through the principal or local boards of education in order to be ratified. I think that more than elementary or even middle school, people are seeing the potential to really serve a larger academic agenda with a youth development lens through after-school.

Karen Pittman: Who else is helping? You mentioned teachers, but what other community organizations, partnerships are participating in this?

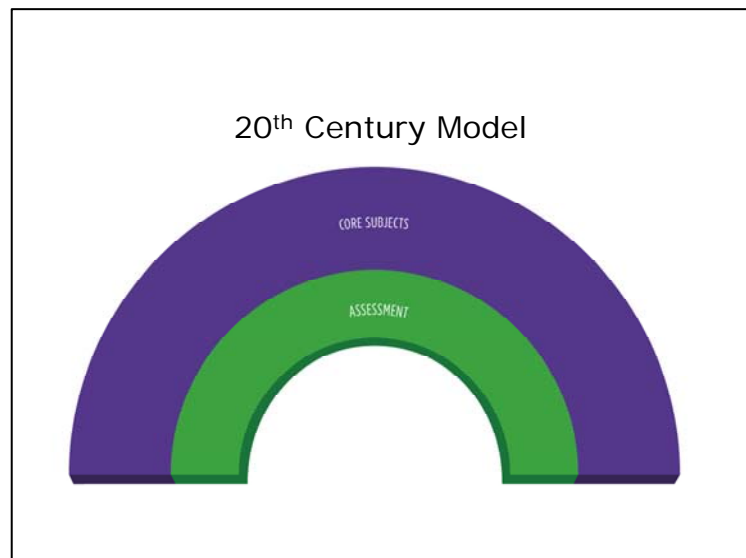
Sam Piha: We are seeing that the staff models are bringing in teachers' expertise. A lot of these people have their own expertise, like robotics or media to bring into the program. There is a real advantage to the combination of bringing in the community organizations to really understand work with youth in a developmental setting. I think they are ready to participate if we really think about the high level of rigor to design where they can participate

Karen Pittman: Ken, the reason that we wanted to make sure you were on this call, is that you really have taken a youth focus rather than a system focus look at this and you have really taken a step back and asked business leaders, educators and others what skills young people need. And that list looks at what is needed in school and after school communities and in some ways helps us bridge what has been seen as a tension between academics and soft skills or academics and youth development skills.

Ken Kay: Karen, thanks. I'm going to cover four quick topics: 1) who is the partnership; 2) what is our framework; 3) how is it relevant to after-school/nonschool communities; and 4) how is it relevant to high school reform.³

The Partnership is a unique partnership between the business community, education community and policy makers that was put together to try to define what the skill set young people should have when they get out of high school. We have now been at that partnership for three years, with 26 members as of last week, and we have tripled our membership in the last year — which is a sign, I think, that the business and education communities are paying attention to the framework we've developed.

The 20th century model is what we have mostly been doing in K–12 education, focusing on mastery of subjects and then trying to assess the ability of students to master those subjects. What we did was ask what are the buckets to add to the core subjects in



³ The Partnership for 21 Century Skills Web site can be found at www.21centuryskills.org.

order to really distinguish between what was adequate for 20th century and what is now required to produce 21st century citizen and workers?

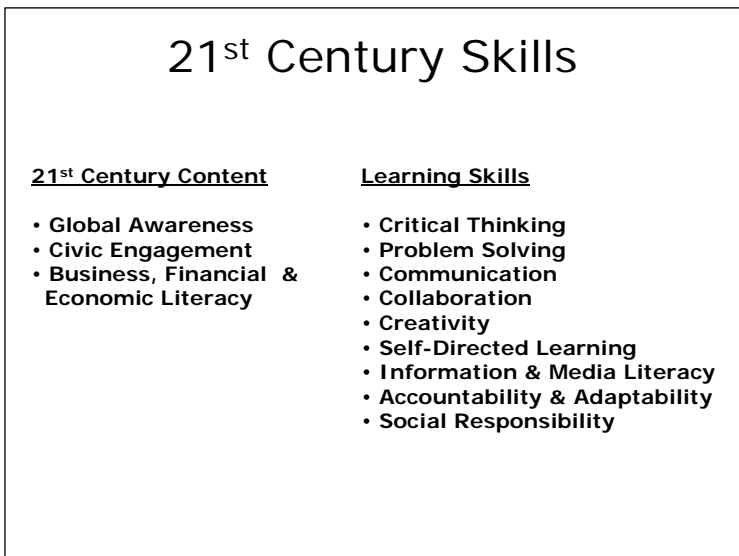
There are at least four primary buckets that need to be added. We call them learning skills — 21st tools, or technology, 21st century content and 21st century context. And then, importantly, we say that assessment should not just be of the mastery of core subjects, but the ability to integrate your core subjects.

I try to delineate what the current learning skills are that we have identified and content areas we have flagged as being particularly important in the 21st century context. The learning skills are critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, self directed learning, information and media literacy, accountability of adaptability, and social responsibility. For the content areas we flagged are global awareness, civic engagement and business, financial, economic literacy.



We believe that by putting together this broad umbrella of learning skills, 21st learning content, and the ability to access all of these through the use of technology, that we have created a broad but useful construct to understand what it is we are trying to accomplish in K–12 education. What are the skills sets that potential employers are looking for?

A couple of observations — When I look at the content area/learning skills, I refer to these as the ‘design specs’ for 21st century education. It is not that we are not going to stick with core subjects, but the real end results or purpose needs to be the accomplishment of these learning skills and content areas. That argument is what is missing.



People say that this looks like other work that has been put out. I agree that we really do build on a lot of work that has been done in the last 12 years, but we recontextualized them in a context of what 21st century employers are looking for, how this fits into the U.S. competitiveness challenges that we all face over the next 20–30 years, and it fits into the changing nature of the workforce in terms of the number of jobs/careers that an individual is likely to have over his lifetime. And we think that for a lot of those reasons our framework is particularly relevant now, and this is why it’s picking up as much momentum as it as.

One of the most gratifying aspects of our work is that we set out to create a framework for the K–12 environment, but we’ve really been gratified that the after-school community has come to us. The Forum for Youth Investment, Citizens Schools, Junior Achievement — which has become a board member in our executive community — they’ve all said, “Look, we appreciate what you have done for K–12 — these aren’t skill sets that are limited to the 9:00–3:00 environment. If you think about the role that after-school plays in global awareness, self directed learning, etc is there any reason why this is list is just a 9:00–3:00? Yes, it is traditionally a K–12 responsibility, but it really requires all the institutions to work on this. We have actually advocated everywhere that requires partnership. The K–12 community needs to recognize the role of after-school community in this effort and after-school/non-school community should play a supporting role. This is a set of skills we should work on together and we should come together on how we can work to develop it.

It seems to us that some of the important major movements in high school reform — I’m going to mention some of the same things — metrics and accountability. It seems that some of the important, major movements in high school reform are potential strategies, but we haven’t necessarily defined the end game — so we’re working on high school reform, but to what end? It seems the identification of this skill set and articulating this as the goal of high school reform is that we believe every 18 year-old, no matter where they sit, should be working towards building this skill and content set to be ready for 21st century citizenship and work. Therefore, there should be a close alignment between the high school reform conversation and 21st century skills conversation. How would you know what high school reform should look like if you don’t know that you are attempting to create critical thinkers, problem solvers, or effective communicators? We are beginning an effort to reach out to the high school reform community and create dialogue with them and say we believe that all the 21st century skills movement and all of the folks of the high school reform movement should reflect on how these two pieces of work inform each other, and we believe that there is a lot of potential for cooperation between the two movements.

Karen Pittman: I have a few questions. Let me see if I can get controversial for a moment by building on the last few things that you said. You know that the Forum is also adamant in determining the end game, defining it through a youth point of view, and understanding what skills young people need to have, whether it’s going into any reform movement — whether it’s workforce rebuilding, school career youth employment effort, looking at what we need to do to address the increasing number of young people who are not in school, high school reform, after-school, etc. Given this list, let’s go directly to the question of not just assessment, but also of credentialing — and ask if we are going to go all the way to 21st century skills, how does the definition of 21st century skills connect with actual assessments of whether or not young people actually have these skills? How can that help accelerate us towards an alternative way of credentialing competence that allows young people to get certification that they have these skills through traditional seat time, working in after-school programs, taking on internships, having on-the-job experience that gives the young people who are not in schools a chance to demonstrate success.

Ken Kay: We actually believe that 21st century skills are critical and if these skills cannot be assessed then the movement can never be taken seriously. One of the comments that I often move away from is that we advocate for soft skills, and I don’t think that they are. If critical thinking and problem solving is a soft skill, then math and science are soft skills. I believe that we need to create assessment tools. We just came out with a report in June in the CCSSO talking about how there is movement to create a set of tools to move critical thinking skills, and communication skills. There are tools being built in the United Kingdom and the United States to assess the use of technology for the accomplishment of the learning skills that we’ve identified. We think that those developments are very important because we think that schools need to know that critical thinking and problem solving can be measured and in fact those should be the end results of all academic programs.

There has been talk about developing 21st century portfolios, much like students have art, architecture and IT portfolios. The thinking is that employers might request and certainly would receive evidence of individual students' critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration skills. We can think of this as a real potential tool because then the student can develop their portfolio of demonstrated skills of projects in those areas. You can really imagine the collaboration of the after-school/nonschool community with traditional K–12 community because your evidence of citizen learning and problem solving could just as easily come from an after-school program as a credential K–12 environment. Part of the way of thinking about this assessment is not just paper and pencil tests, but evidentiary tests for nonschool, school environment

Naomi Housman: I think as important as assessment is, there is also a need for building capacity of educators to bring those skills to life in the classroom or whatever context in and out of the classroom. During the school day, after-school and career-tech teachers all learn from one another. Traditional vocational education teachers are always looking to vamp up their skills to keep up with the economy, and traditional educators during the school day are trying to build capacity to teach in a way that makes the curriculum relevant. So they need to learn from the career tech education teachers on how to do that. And I think that after-school professionals should speak to all of those professionals about how we can bring these pieces together to have our students engaged in learning in real ways that are connected to those skills, and of course how we assess them. Teachers really need to understand not just curriculum and teaching in a separate way, but understand assessment — that they have a role in assessment just like the community has a role in assessment — in a sense that they truly demonstrate it.

Sam Piha: Without coming in with new strategies and approaches that we can train teachers on, we can't come in and tell principals that this is how things should be done in the classroom. I think increasingly people are realizing that we need to look upstream. In some of the communities in this area, we are drawing on teachers who are in school to build credit through after-school programs. They are relationship building and engaging in strategies and they are finding that they are gaining a skill set that they cannot learn in the classroom.

Question and Answer Session

Question: Are there any strategies in forming community/schools partnerships to support high school after-school programs and how do after-schools approach high school and vice versa? How do you sustain those partnerships?

Sam Piha: In California the funding stream for high school after-school is connected to the high school programs themselves. It's coming from the State Department of Education. Therefore the high school is the lead in that endeavor. It's up to the high school to lead what that partnership will look like. In order to be eligible, you need to show a successful effort of attracting and engaging the community and business leaders to make decisions together. I think that's the beginning of a good partnership. It's hard for a high school to do it alone; it is vital to form partnerships.

Karen Pittman: And for those schools that do not have the benefit of having funding streams come into the high schools and are looking to develop partnerships, I would recommend to look at the after-school alliance website and look at other strategies for creating these strategies.

Question: How can after-school programs serve as an opportunity for youth to partner with adults in taking the direction of school reform initiative?

Ken Kay: My experience is that wherever 21st Century Skills is picking up momentum the business community is always present. I think that all the stakeholders need to be brought to the table. Karen and I talk about this all the time, the after-school community needs to bring in the K-12 and the business communities. And where the K-12 is taking the lead, they absolutely have to bring in the business and after-school communities. I think that that we've been trying to stress to our businesses that when they start having these conversations, limiting it to just K-12 community doesn't make sense. I must say that they are very open to the notion of having the after-school community at the table. I guess what I would say is to make sure it's an early stakeholder conversation and, quite frankly, I think it's important to have that conversation around what the skill set is that you want your young people to have. We have to ask is, "Is this the skill set we want to have for our community and how do we refine the list to the needs of our community?" The Partnerships for 21st Century is just one model.

Naomi Housman: I would concur with that and really feel that the after-school community has strength in reaching out to the business community. I think businesses are often weary in trying to connect with the K-12 community and I think they might be more amenable to the after-school community and the after-school community is in connection with the K-12 community.

Karen Pittman: As we bring the stakeholders to the table, in some ways the young people are the biggest stakeholders themselves. We have examples where high school students themselves, in part because they are participating in an after-school program either based on the school campus or in a community program, are doing the research being informed and working with adults to create the opportunities to bring their research, ideas and recommendations back to the table for school reform process.

Sam Piha: My examples would be more for high school after-school than the high school reform process. The young people take real ownership over the programs themselves by providing giving their input on program and designing it. This effort really helps with attracting and retaining students.

Karen Pittman: Community IMPACT!, Philadelphia Student Union — programs that are working closely with schools and equipping their students with all those 21st century skills and determining what kind of education they want. We have found firsthand that giving young people these frames, helping them understand these skills and ask them if we are giving them these skills — that’s a useful way to start the conversation.

Question: What is being done with the professionalization of after-school instructors — e.g., supplementing/complementing high school curriculums in math and science? One of the concerns is that maybe the after-school instructors don’t have much upward mobility and therefore don’t stick around for more than a few years.

Sam Piha: A lot of successful programs are drawing on the expertise on the day school teachers. They are not after-school instructors trying to learn how to do algebra work. Rather they are algebra teachers who agree to work on the after-school programs for credit retrieval programs, or they use programs during the school day as a benchmark in the after-school programs and folders are given to tutors with specific skills in order for students to pass the benchmark. Academic competence needs to be provided by educators in schools themselves and other subjects such as arts, science and media can be complemented by community-based organizations.

Karen Pittman: When we think about those young people who are not engaged, how can we really address those young people to not only stay in school but come out with 21st century skills they need?

Ken Kay: I guess what I’d say is that I believe that the three dimensional model of 21st century learning, which may be the combination of global positioning, software and critical thinking, and for analyzing a problem in the urban area — is a much more vital, engaged, applied model. And I think that by making a break from the 60-year-old model that relies on strict memorization, we have a chance of engaging young people and leap-frogging over a system and pedagogy which is less engaging and also less relevant to what kids need to do. So I think that 21st Century model provides a much more engaging system and plays to young people’s critical thinking skills and meets them in a way that is more meaningful and relevant.

Sam Piha: Within that group of you people that you described is a subgroup that have some ideas with what they want to do after school and they know that they really want to graduate. If we know who they are we can develop programs for them. For the young people who don’t want to stay in school, (i.e., young people who fail math a couple of times or those who don’t have a reason to stay in school), we should really engage them with skills they could use and are going to be interested in. I know students who say “Before, I didn’t see a reason for school, but now that I’m learning these new skills that I am interested in, I see that I do need to finish school.” I think that after-school can really fill that gap.

Naomi Housman: I was going to say something along the same lines about tapping into young people’s passions. Because when I think of high school, I don’t think anyone was motivated to go. A common theme across the reform schools is really to tap into young people’s interest and passions. There’s got to be a different culture, and schools have to be more student centered. And that’s not only for the students, but for the teachers as well. Why does anyone want to go to a high school and be there? There has to be a different culture and different focus, as Ken has also mentioned.

Karen Pittman: Well I want to thank you for joining us for the past hour. Please go to the Forum’s Web site to download related resources and read more.