

## NATIONAL SCHOOL REFORM

### Accomplishments

CTAC's accomplishments in educational reform have been striking and substantive. This assistance has reached thousands of classrooms and by association several million children throughout the United States. Representative achievements are highlighted below. More detailed descriptions are available on our web site ([www.ctacusa.com](http://www.ctacusa.com)).

#### A. CORE CITIES

CTAC provides intensive on-site assistance to school districts and states. Several examples drawn from CTAC's twenty-nine years of national experience with districts follow.

##### Denver Public Schools (Colorado)

CTAC provided five years of assistance to the Denver Public Schools. This included filling a dual role in Denver's Pay for Performance pilot for teachers – providing the technical assistance to ensure a pilot of quality and integrity as well as researching the impact of the pilot on student achievement, teacher quality and systems change. Accomplishments include: (1) increased district capacity in teacher objective setting, relational use of student achievement and human resource data, professional development, teacher/administrator/community collaboration, fundraising and instructional alignment; (2) students whose teachers had excellent objectives showed increases in student achievement – greater than one year's gain – at all school levels as evidenced on two major independent assessments; (3) comprehensive research findings on pilot impact were based on more than 4.4 million data points related to student achievement and were the catalyst for substantive mid-course corrections; (4) approval of a groundbreaking new teacher compensation system by Denver teachers by a 3 to 2 margin; (5) approval of a \$25 million tax increase by Denver voters by a 3 to 2 margin to support the costs of the new compensation plan; and (6) the national demonstration that linking what students learn to what professionals earn can be a major catalyst for systemic change that benefits both students and teachers.

##### Cambridge Public Schools (Massachusetts)

CTAC provided three years of assistance to the Cambridge Public Schools, a district undertaking voluntary, community-wide desegregation. Outcomes include: (1) the development and implementation of the first desegregation plan in the United States based on controlled choice; and (2) this work has been hailed nationally for being integral to the most successful process of school desegregation in the nation.

### Christina School District (Wilmington and Newark, Delaware)

CTAC provided more than two years of assistance to the Christina School District, the largest school system in Delaware. After conducting and presenting an assessment of readiness and capacity, CTAC provided assistance through the systemic initiative, New Directions in Christina. Accomplishments include: (1) a comprehensive reform of school planning was implemented in two phases, with 13,742 participants active in analyzing organizational conditions at the Standard Bearer Schools – the model for planning that focuses on addressing the root causes of student achievement; (2) the teachers and administrators at the Standard Bearer Schools indicated, to a statistically significant extent, improvements in conditions related to teaching and learning, organizational support and alignment, school planning and human resource practices; (3) more than 3,900 parents were active in school planning and more than 2,900 annually assessed the accountability and effectiveness of the reform; (4) district capacities in data, research, instructional support, organizational development, professional development, fundraising and corporate involvement were strengthened markedly; (5) student achievement increased as evidenced on three major independent assessments; and (6) the most significant improvements in student achievement were among African American and Hispanic students – for the first time ever in this district.

### Albuquerque Public Schools (New Mexico)

CTAC provided five years of assistance to the Albuquerque Public Schools, the 25th largest district in the United States. Outcomes include: (1) a landmark system of site-based reform was implemented at all of the district's 120 schools. Extending far beyond a change in governance, this reform was directly tied to school improvement planning. Academic achievement increased markedly during this time, with improvements at more than 70% of the elementary schools, all of the middle schools and national recognition for achieving the highest ACT scores of any large district in the country; (2) the Comprehensive Human Services Collaborative was implemented on a pre-K through grade 12 continuum. Significant improvements resulted, including increased academic achievement, attendance and family involvement at the schools, lower dropout rates and a higher rate of early identification of problems; (3) Albuquerque became the only district in the nation to include parents as equal partners with district leadership and the union in managing systemwide reform; (4) more than 1,000 parents were trained and then filled active leadership roles on school and community issues; and (5) the reform was sustained and broadened through two administrations. This is the very definition of institutionalizing responsive change.

### Camden Public Schools (New Jersey)

CTAC provided four years of assistance to the Camden Public Schools, the fourth poorest city in the nation. Outcomes include: (1) a system of K-8 "Family Schools" was created to address the substantial educational and non-educational needs of children and families in the city, and the alarming dropout rate previously experienced in the district's middle schools. This produced improved learning conditions and created better results in attendance, student achievement, family participation and discipline issues; (2) the Family School model became the basis for Camden's designation as one of only six urban National Empowerment Zones by the President of the United States; (3) the Family Schools reform was adopted by New Jersey as the prototype for the State's 30 special needs districts; (4) the entire central delivery system was reorganized, which resulted in greater support to the Family Schools in the areas of curriculum,

instruction and professional development; and (5) the creation and implementation of Family Schools, coupled with the launching of Camden's first successful school/community health and human services collaborative, provided the framework for generating an additional \$26 million of investment in Camden.

#### Cleveland Public Schools (Ohio)

CTAC provided four years of assistance to the Cleveland Public Schools. Cleveland is a city of marked poverty; the austere fiscal condition of the district resulted in a court-induced state takeover. Outcomes include: (1) Standard Bearer Schools, based on CTAC's Framework for Reform, were implemented in three coordinated phases. This was the first site-based, school improvement initiative in Cleveland that showed sustained performance improvements; the Standard Bearers outperformed the rest of the district in three out of four areas in which the state conducted proficiency testing and had school suspension rates more than 100% lower than the rest of the district; (2) the Standard Bearer Schools became the vehicle for guiding and expanding reform through major leadership transitions -- from one superintendent, through an interim, to the appointment of the receiver. (3) Moreover, Standard Bearers were the model for expanding credible reform, despite the district's severe financial straits, during the state takeover; (4) the Principals' Performance Support System was developed and implemented. This innovative system tied the evaluation of principals directly to the success of students in the schools. In response to requests, this new principals' system was disseminated to twelve urban districts, nationwide; (5) CTAC guided the reorganization of the central administration. This helped build the district's capacity to allocate scarce resources to address the recurring issues at the sites which most affect student learning. Targeted areas included curriculum, instruction, budget and accountability systems.

#### Decatur School District 61 (Illinois)

CTAC conducted a comprehensive assessment of the district's readiness and capacity. This included analyzing the readiness to undertake a pathway of systemic reform and its capacity to do so. Further, CTAC evaluated the longitudinal impact on student achievement of the district's multi-year implementation of six federally-approved school reform models.

#### Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership and Duval County Public Schools (Florida)

CTAC conducted a broad-based professional development audit which examined the impact of literacy professional development on student achievement, classroom implementation and the perceptions of principals, teachers and instructional coaches. Moreover, CTAC tracked every financial allocation for instructional professional development in the district.

#### Seattle Public Schools (Washington)

CTAC conducted the project, "No Parent Left Behind," which focused on implementing the new requirements of *No Child Left Behind*, and involving immigrant and refugee parents as equal partners in school improvement. The initiative was conducted over a two year period and built parents' capacity to understand school performance and teacher qualification data, and partner in school accountability and improvement. The project was conducted in nine languages.

## Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team

The Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) is the arm of the state assembly that is responsible for state-to-district interventions in California. With FCMAT's support, CTAC has served the state in the area of improving pupil achievement. CTAC has filled this function for the state interventions in the Berkeley Unified School District and the Vallejo Unified School District.

## State to District Capacity Building

CTAC has provided the technical assistance within state-to-district interventions in New Jersey, Ohio and California, with student achievement increases in all participating districts; trained leadership teams from more than 40 states on state-to-district interventions; and regularly serves as a policy resource to state legislatures and the U.S. Congress.

Note: Other examples of CTAC's assistance to districts and states are available upon request.

## **B. NATIONAL URBAN REFORM NETWORK**

CTAC provides policy support at local, state and national levels. As an example, in one major national initiative, CTAC created and convened the National Urban Reform Network, an activist 15 city coalition linking effective reform initiatives and key local practitioners in order to shape and advocate for needed public policy. The Network's accomplishments include:

- The National Urban Reform Network was one of only three organizations in the country invited to testify before the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources during the final round of hearings on ESEA reauthorization. All three of the major positions which the Network was spearheading were incorporated into the final legislation. When Congress presented the final version of the legislation to the President, the Network's testimony was highlighted on the first page of the Congressional Record as critical to the final shape of the legislation.
- The Network was invited by the Democratic party in the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Disability Policy to testify in its third round on the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. Based on this testimony, the Republican party invited Network representatives to testify before the Senate. Thus, the Network testified for both political parties, and in both Houses of Congress, on the same legislative initiative - an unparalleled opportunity to shape salient education legislation.

The strength of the Network came from its base in urban communities, bringing together a diverse constituency from across the country. Unlike interest-group advocates who speak for such individual groups as teachers, principals, or board members, the National Urban Reform Network brought all these constituencies together with corporate executives, health and human service leaders, community activists and parents to create a consensus around issues of importance to urban children and families. The direct connection between legislators and people working in cities has been critical to the Network's success.

The strength of the Network's connections with a broad range of constituencies in every part of the country – a strength valued in both Houses of Congress and with state legislatures -- made it ideally suited to play this leadership role in advocacy for urban children and families.

## C. COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY

CTAC created the national model, Comprehensive District Accountability, a system of assessment and accountability that enables states and districts to determine the performance and effectiveness of a school district: overall, school by school, grade by grade, classroom by classroom, and student by student. Numerous school districts are implementing CTAC's accountability model. In so doing, they are developing concrete strategies to address the core issues affecting the academic performance of students and are able to assess the components of their reform initiatives against indicators of system success, as well the success of children at the schools.

Two primary goals appear in virtually every urban district. They address (1) academic achievement – every student will meet high academic standards, sufficient to successfully enter and succeed in post-secondary schooling or the work force, and (2) safety and security – schools will provide a safe, secure learning environment for children.

The over-arching challenge of Comprehensive District Accountability has been to create and develop a system for measuring, through a range of indicators, how well programs, schools and the overall school district are performing in meeting these goals and helping children to achieve. The means to assess programs, schools and school systems so that they can be compared with their own annual growth as well as with other schools, programs and districts with different student populations and conditions – and the ability to use the data to manage the district and to communicate with the community – has been developed in a realistic, preliminary assessment structure.

This critical accomplishment has resulted from several inter-related strategies. These include:

- Coalescing five representative urban school districts: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Des Moines, Iowa; Long Beach, California; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Savannah, Georgia. They were assisted to develop the paradigm, identify indicators and serve as field test districts.
- Developing preliminary indicators and analysis matrices for academic achievement and safe and secure schools. These were analyzed by the five vanguard districts and applied to two of the districts (Salt Lake City for academic indicators; Savannah for safety and security indicators).
- Establishing the national framework by (1) analyzing the existing report cards and evaluation mechanisms issued by schools, districts or states in 40 different states. On-site assessments were conducted in several of these states; and (2) developing linkages with the Malcolm Baldrige assessment process.

As an example of subsequent phases, Comprehensive District Accountability became an anchor of CTAC's California Accountability Project. Through this demonstration initiative, CTAC provided assistance to five California school districts, the Los Angeles County Office of Education and the Santa Clara County Office of Education. *The results were marked: all participating districts met or exceeded California's Academic Performance Indicator targets for individual schools and districts.*

Comprehensive District Accountability enables district leaders to identify, strengthen and perpetuate what is working, and to correct what is not. This fundamental tool for skilled leadership has never before existed in public education.

## D. DISSEMINATION

CTAC's national initiatives, including the examples described above, are all critical elements of an overall dissemination strategy. In addition, the dissemination strategy includes publications and presentations. The following publications have been used to inform practice and guide policy decision-making. Also, presentations by Center representatives have been delivered regularly at the annual conventions of prominent educational, governmental and corporate associations, as noted below.

### Publications

As part of the Center's National School Reform efforts, a range of major written products have been prepared. They underscore the lessons emerging from multiple states and districts throughout the United States.

- *Focus on Literacy: Professional Development Audit* is the groundbreaking audit of the effectiveness of professional development in literacy provided by the Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership to educators in Duval County Public Schools (Florida). The audit examined the impact of professional development on student achievement, teacher and principal perspectives, and classroom implementation. It also describes all of the district's financial resources targeted to instructional professional development.
- *Tying Earning to Learning: The Link Between Teacher Compensation and Student Learning Objectives* analyzes the breakthrough of using student learning objectives as a cornerstone for compensation reform. It provides a step-by-step guide for successfully designing and implementing a system of student learning objectives as a basis for improving student achievement and teacher compensation.
- *Guide for Standard Bearer Schools: Focusing on Causes to Improve Student Achievement* explains the standards, tools and processes used in assisting entire school communities to identify and address the *causal* factors that affect student and school performance. Using this process has markedly increased student achievement for all subgroups in diverse urban districts throughout the nation.
- *New Directions in Christina: Accomplishments for Children, Challenges Ahead* is the report that delineates the significant impact on student achievement, and the causal factors contributing to that impact, of a major urban systemic reform initiative.
- *Catalyst for Change: Pay for Performance in Denver* is the final report of CTAC's study of the impact of the teacher Pay for Performance pilot on student achievement and system change. It is the most comprehensive, longitudinal analysis of performance-based compensation conducted in the United States.
- *Informed Decision-Making: An Introduction to Student Achievement and Teacher Data Comparisons* is a primer on understanding and using student data to guide practice. Using actual student results, it shows how to analyze the progress of students, not just overall, but by individual child, by subgroups of students, by classroom, and by school. Moving from basic to more complex analyses, it presents a step-by-step guide for how to understand data, make useful comparisons, draw fair conclusions – and avoid conclusions that cannot be drawn fairly.

- *Pathway to Results: Pay for Performance in Denver* is the mid-term report of CTAC's study of the impact of the teacher Pay for Performance pilot in the Denver Public Schools.
- *Myths and Realities: The Impact of the State Takeover on Students and Schools in Newark* is a comprehensive study of a major school district's experience under state takeover. It serves as a resource for policy makers and educational leaders throughout the country when managing the increasingly complex and highly charged issue of takeovers of public schools and school districts.
- *Advice and Consent: A Study of Collaborative Decision-Making in Denver* examines the success, issues and concerns of the community regarding collaborative decision-making (a form of site-based management) in the Denver Public Schools. The analyses and recommendations are valuable for any district that seeks to engage school communities in improving their schools.
- *Best Practice in School-to-Work: Lessons Learned* presents an overview of School-to-Work transition programs throughout the United States. It describes what works, what does not work, and which are the critical elements of a successful program.
- *Winning: How to Advocate for Public Education and Get What Your District Needs* develops the capacity of school districts and communities to win important battles on behalf of children and families at national, state and local levels.
- *Organizing for Better Schools* is targeted to parents and their role in school improvement.

### **Representative Presentations and Training Sessions**

The Center provides presentations and assistance to a range of organizations, including the U.S. Congress, state legislatures, state boards of education, federal and state departments, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the Hechinger Institute on Education and the Media, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), the National Staff Development Association (NSDA), the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Education Association, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the American and Canadian Evaluation Associations and others.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT and HUMAN SERVICES**

### **Accomplishments**

CTAC also assists hundreds of non-profit organizations, public sector institutions, coalitions and networks throughout the United States. Representative examples are provided below.

#### **A. URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Areas of focus include:

- Assisting community development organizations to preserve and rehabilitate more than 5,000 units of at risk housing, produce 2,110 units of new affordable housing and develop more than 30 minority-owned small businesses.
- Coalescing and assisting Roxbury's Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, the broadest-based effort to revitalize an urban neighborhood in the United States and the first community organization in the United States to win the power of eminent domain.
- Leading intensive, on-site initiatives for residents of HUD expiring use properties to build effective organizational structures and the leadership skills necessary to purchase and maintain their properties as affordable housing. These efforts have saved more than 1,800 units of family housing.
- Conducting Leaders in Neighborhood Revitalization, a major initiative which has assisted community-based organizations to plan and organize on a comprehensive neighborhood basis, develop and manage projects, build professionally managed organizations, and strengthen collaboration with residents, businesses and government.

#### **B. HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES**

Areas of focus include:

- Initiating and providing a program of technical assistance and training to health and human service organizations and collaboratives throughout the United States. In the past twenty years, more than 600 groups have been assisted by this initiative.
- Implementing the landmark national HIV/AIDS project that builds the capacity of diverse communities to develop comprehensive and collaborative approaches to AIDS prevention and care. As an example, this initiative strengthened Houston's response to HIV/AIDS by integrating funding streams, planning groups and organizational structures.
- Coalescing and training African American, Cape Verdean and Hispanic elders. This work has been the catalyst for the introduction of major Medicaid access legislation.

## **C. DEVELOPMENT**

Areas of focus include:

- Serving as a re-grantor for more than two decades as a selected national intermediary by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Through the foundation's program, Intermediary Support for Organizing Communities, CTAC has provided and overseen grants – and provided technical assistance – to hundreds of non-profit organizations.
- Conducting extensive national development program, successfully including foundations, corporations and public sector sources. These efforts have generated more than \$200 million in contributions and awards on behalf of communities in the United States.