A Strategy Session for Achieve American Diploma Project (ADP) Network States
Moving From Some to All:
Upgrading Graduation Requirements for All Students

The Adolphus Hotel, Dallas, Texas
February 8-9, 2007

Expert Faculty

✓ Susan Bodary, former Executive Assistant, Governor Bob Taft
✓ Alex Harris, Senior Policy Analyst, Education Division, National Governors Association
✓ Phyllis Hudecki, Executive Director, Oklahoma Business Education Coalition
✓ Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education
✓ Linda Murray, Superintendent in Residence, The Education Trust-West
✓ Cheryl Orr, Senior Communications Associate, Indiana Commission for Higher Education
✓ Todd Webster, former Public Education Advisor, Governor Perry

Agenda

February 8, 2007

5:30 – 6:30 pm     Reception

6:30 – 8:00 pm     Working Dinner
Matt Gandal: Overview of What States Have Done to Date
Ken James: The Arkansas Story
Cheryl Orr: The Indiana Story
Todd Webster: The Texas Story

February 9, 2007

7:30 - 8:00 am     Breakfast

8:00 – 9:30 am     Defining College- and Work-Ready Graduation Requirements
✓ What does “core” mean? (courses, skills, number of courses, required vs. voluntary)
✓ Relationship with state standards, assessment, accountability, data systems, etc.
✓ Tying incentives in addition to/instead of the diploma (e.g., financial aid/scholarships, admissions, placement, exemptions from required classes)
✓ Default/opt-out provisions and multiple pathways to achieve the standards (e.g. CTE)
✓ Building school capacity and student safety nets

9:30 – 11:30 am    Common Challenges and Areas of Resistance
(Break Into Two Groups)
Common Challenges
✓ Funding (direct and indirect costs; state vs. local responsibility)
✓ Not just more/different courses, but better courses
✓ Increasing teaching quality
✓ Counting and valuing non-traditional courses and school designs (e.g. applied/project-based/experiential learning; CTE courses)
✓ Identifying new delivery methods for advanced courses (e.g. online, AP, dual enrollment)
✓ Required vs. recommended/voluntary; voluntary as a path to mandatory
✓ Ensuring a broad-based high school curriculum

Common Concerns
Higher graduation standards:
✓ Are a local, not state, issue
✓ Aren’t necessary for all students
✓ Will decrease graduation rates
✓ Will push out the arts and other electives
✓ Will push out career and technical education
✓ Will require too much math and science for all students

11:30am – 12:15pm Networking Lunch

12:15pm – 1:45pm Effective Advocacy Strategies to Enact the ADP Core
✓ Build urgency
✓ Identify all relevant stakeholders (supporters and opponents)
✓ Enlist support of key influencers and constituencies
✓ Identify and compile case-making arguments, research and state-specific data
✓ Identify resistance points and proactively address concerns
✓ Develop and implement a supportive grassroots and grass tops communications plan
✓ Be prepared to negotiate on the details
✓ Consider a phase-in approach: voluntary vs. mandatory; incentives tied to completion

1:45pm – 2:30pm State Team Planning: Next Steps and Action Strategies
✓ What policy issues and challenges are most salient in our state?
✓ What needs to happen in our state to raise graduation standards? When?
✓ Who needs to champion the agenda? Who needs to do the work to get it done?
✓ Who is likely to support the agenda? Who is likely to oppose it? What information, tools and strategies will address legitimate concerns and/or help blunt opposition?
✓ What data, resources, information, strategies and tools do we need? What do we already have and what do we need to get? From whom?
✓ How can Achieve and other states in the ADP Network help?
✓ What follow-up from this meeting would be most useful?

2:30pm Wrap Up