

## PREPARATION FOR AND TRANSITION TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

1. **WHEREAS**, it was just fifty years ago a high school diploma was the gateway to a decent job and a large enough salary to raise a family; and
2. **WHEREAS**, today, the gateway degree for a good job is a college degree or technical certification from a postsecondary institution or program; and
3. **WHEREAS**, the graduation rate from high school in many of our urban centers has continued to be abysmal with some urban high schools graduating less than 50 per cent of the entering class four years earlier; and
4. **WHEREAS**, recent research findings indicate that current high school reform efforts are not preparing most students for college and the challenges of the modern world because the high schools are not providing a rigorous enough curriculum and experiences for students to attain the skills that today's world economy requires; and
5. **WHEREAS**, the data indicate that a majority of people now incarcerated did not finish high school nor hold a high school diploma, and the education provided to those while incarcerated is not equivalent to what is included in a rigorous high school education; and
6. **WHEREAS**, the economic stability and growth of a city is greatly determined by its homegrown workforce that is developed, prepared and trained through its system of public schools, local postsecondary institutions and job training system; and
7. **WHEREAS**, too often in our cities communication and cooperation are lacking when it comes to the public schools, the juvenile justice system, social services, higher education and technical schools which inhibits improving and transforming the public schools, and limits the educational experience opportunities and options for middle grade and high school age students to experience the world of work and connect these to the necessary core educational skills and courses; and
8. **WHEREAS**, mayors need to become involved in education including, if necessary, utilizing their bully pulpit

to raise issues and confront the uncomfortable problems that result from low graduation and high drop out rates, poor performance in schools including not meeting state standards, weak preparation for postsecondary education, low percentages of students attending postsecondary school, and a disinterest on the part of the education establishment to change programs and practices to meet the education and skill needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century in our cities and nation; and

9. **WHEREAS**, there is a need for greater input from the business, government agencies, higher education and the not-for-profit community in how to restructure, transform and reform the middle and high school grades, and in the establishment of education opportunities to create alignment between skills and experiences needed in the curriculum and for individual state standards; and
10. **WHEREAS**, every job matters and the only way to be successful in increasing job development is to ensure the existing and future workforce has acquired mastery in such skill areas as literacy, mathematics, science and technology, as well as the human interpersonal skills required for the workplace from the various educational opportunities and experiences offered,
11. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that The U.S. Conference of Mayors encourages mayors to become more active in bringing together all aspects of the community in order to ensure that students and youth understand the skill requirements and are prepared for making the transition to postsecondary education which includes taking the appropriate rigorous courses needed to attain the skills required to be successful in postsecondary education and the world of work; and
12. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors encourages mayors have a role in and, when appropriate lead the effort to change, transform, redesign and improve the public schools, especially the middle and high school grades so that various education experiences, opportunities and options are available, and if this can not be accomplished within the public schools then mayors should look to other

strategies to enable these to be available to students and out-of-school youth; and

13. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors encourages mayors, in partnership with school systems, to be advocates for or sponsors of programs, experiences and opportunities beginning in the middle grades through high school, that inform and educate both students and parents about what courses need to be taken and passed for adequate preparation to apply to a postsecondary institution (2-year or 4-year school) and the costs involved in attending including the availability of student financial assistance such as GEAR UP and Project Grad; and
  
14. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls for significant reform and redesign of high school education in conjunction with changes in the earlier grades, and that these changes should include reducing the size of schools, increasing personalization of the education experience, and offering a variety of options for in- and out-of school youth in a variety of learning environments and structures such as career academies, theme or magnet schools, traditional high schools, charter schools, alternative learning settings or schools, other pathways to complete high school, smaller learning communities, community schools, early college, joint learning facility/courses with a postsecondary education institution, and other public school choices, all of which can emphasize the preparation for and transition to postsecondary education or the world of work; and
  
15. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors encourages mayors and their public school systems to create joint ventures and partnerships with postsecondary education institutions such as universities and community colleges within their city, county and/or state to provide the needed opportunities for youth both in and out of school to experience education beyond high school, have the opportunity to take courses at such an institution, and/or experience the world of work at appropriate times during their high school years so they may be better prepared to apply to postsecondary schools or

programs including taking courses during and within their high school building; and

16. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the U.S. Conference of Mayors encourages mayors to work with public school systems whenever possible and other governmental entities such as the courts as appropriate to develop a means for out-of-school above high school aged youth to have access to programs and opportunities to achieve the necessary skills and competencies to enable them to complete high school and go to postsecondary education and/or the world of work; and
17. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors encourages mayors to establish new or partner with existing programs in their city that assist students both in and out of school in facilitating attending a postsecondary education including financial assistance programs, counseling, transition and summer support programs, and summer jobs; and
18. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls on mayors to take on a critical role in making sure quality educational opportunities and options are available to in- and out-of-school youth so they are prepared to be the nation's future citizenry and workforce.

**Projected Cost: Unknown**