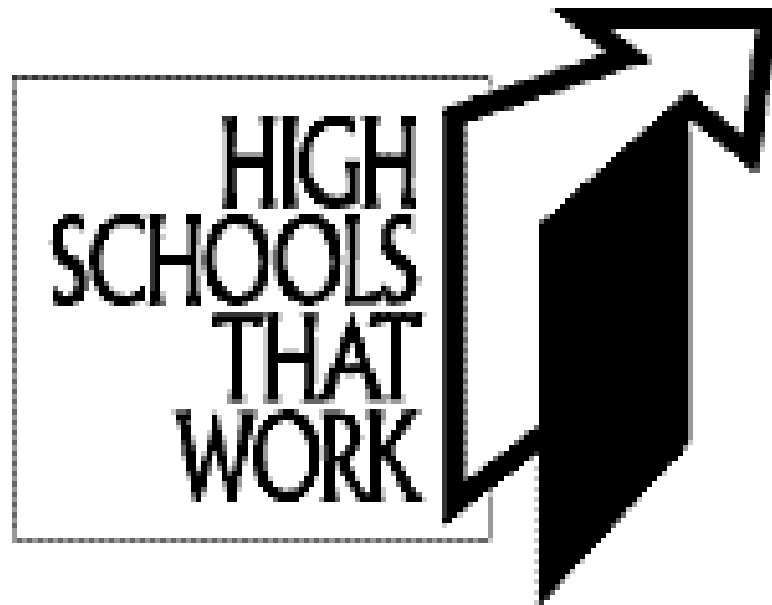


# Major Actions for the Ideal Implementation of the *HSTW/MMGW* Designs



## Recommended School Actions: School and Classroom Practices to Increase Effort

The *HSTW* design emphasizes strong school leadership that focuses on teaching all students to grade-level standards or above; creating a demanding and supportive environment; supporting teachers in developing and implementing new ideas and strategies; creating a series of focus teams that emphasize faculty ownership in helping design how best to achieve the goals and the use of a framework of key practices to create the conditions for achieving those goals. **All publications are available online at <http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/pubindex.asp>.**

### Emphasize Literacy Across the Curriculum

Reading and writing for learning across the curriculum is an initiative that we recommend both middle grades and high schools address in the first year of implementation. There are four major components.

1. Assist the schools in year one to develop a literacy plan around five goals:
  - Students read the equivalent of 25 books per year across the curriculum.
  - Students write short papers weekly in all classes, which are scored against a commonly developed grade-level rubric.
  - Teachers are taught how to use reading- and writing-to-learn strategies to enhance students’ achievement in their content area — academic, career/technical, fine arts, etc.
  - Students complete a major researched piece in all classes each year, geared to a grade-level rubric.
  - All English/language arts classes are taught to the rigor applied to high school readiness standards in the middle grades and to college- and career-readiness standards at the high school level.
2. Prepare all teachers to understand middle grades and high school reading standards and how these apply to the different content areas by assisting teachers to look at strategies they can use to embed these standards into their assignments to advance students’ content knowledge and ability to analyze, paraphrase, summarize, interpret and comprehend materials.
3. Provide intensive training and coaching to all teachers on literacy strategies they can use in their respective disciplines to engage students in the language of the subject matter to advance students’ mastery of appropriate reading standards for the educational level.
4. Revising the school’s instructional planning process so teachers report daily, weekly or monthly the reading standards and strategies they will use to enhance students’ mastery of subject-matter standards.

Professional development should include an orientation to the reading initiative for the entire faculty, with teams of teachers in the school receiving deeper training, establishing demonstration classrooms and becoming teachers of other teachers. Literacy coaches become very instrumental in moving this effort across the curriculum. Follow-up coaching would involve assisting a school team to complete its literacy plan and getting support of the faculty, modeling literacy strategies in the classroom, observing literacy strategies in classrooms with the school leadership, creating demonstration classrooms of existing teachers, training existing teachers to become trainers of other teachers, and working with the school leadership and the literacy coach in regard to these efforts.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/ <i>HSTW</i>
1. Develop a literacy plan to address SREB’s five literacy goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read the equivalent of 25 books per year across the content.</li> <li>○ Write weekly in all classes.</li> <li>○ Use reading- and writing-to-learn strategies to learn content in all courses.</li> <li>○ Write a researched piece each year in all classes.</li> <li>○ Teach all ELA classes to the rigor of honors/AP.</li> </ul>	1	<b>Professional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creating an Effective Literacy Plan</li> <li>○ Using Reading and Writing to Learn Content in All Disciplines</li> <li>○ Understanding Essential Literacy Standards and Getting Students to Use Them in Classrooms</li> </ul> <b>Coaching:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follow-up workshops</li> <li>○ Assist literacy team in creation of literacy plans/Provide exemplar literacy plans</li> </ul>
2. Have all teachers embed reading standards into all assignments and use reading and writing instructional strategies for students to learn content in all disciplines.	2 – 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Model of literacy strategies in classrooms</li> <li>○ Observe literacy strategies in use in classrooms</li> <li>○ Create Literacy Demonstration Classroom</li> </ul>
3. Ensure students use key literacy skills to learn content in all classrooms.	1 - 5	<b>Publications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Literacy Across the Curriculum</i></li> </ul>

**Teach Students an Accelerated Academic Core in the Middle Grades and in High School Taught to Grade-Level and College and Career Readiness Standards**

Both national research and *HSTW* data show that increasing the percentage of students enrolled in a solid academic core leads to increased graduation rates and improved achievement. The current system of sorting conveys to many students that they are incapable of doing challenging work. The current system of sorting conveys to most students that they are incapable of doing challenging work and results in many teachers teaching to below grade-level and college- and career-readiness standards.

At both the middle grades and high school levels, we recommend increasing by 15 to 20 percent each year the number of students enrolled in an accelerated curriculum designed to prepare more students for Algebra I or its equivalent, college-preparatory English and college-preparatory science in the ninth grade. At the high school level, we recommend a 15- to 20-percent annual increase in student enrolment in a true college-preparatory curriculum. This may involve expanding the use of pre-AP, AP and IB curricula and increasing the use of dual credit courses, if they are truly taught to college- and career-readiness standards. More students will complete the *HSTW* Recommended Academic Curriculum – four years of mathematics, Algebra 1 and higher; four years of college preparatory/honors English; and three years of college-preparatory, lab-based science, such as chemistry, biology, physics, anatomy and applied physics,. At the middle grades level, more students will complete a challenging and engaging inquiry-based science curriculum, Algebra I or pre-algebra in grade 8, and a language arts curriculum in which students read eight to 10 books each year, write short papers weekly and write research papers each year in grades six through eight, according to grade-level standards.

**Teaching all students a solid college-preparatory curriculum in high school and an accelerated curriculum in the middle grades will require teachers to prepare common course syllabi and agree on what represents grade-level, and college- and career-readiness-level work. Emphasis should be placed on teaching the most essential college- and career-readiness standards (or high school readiness standards in the middle grades). The emphasis should not be on covering everything, but teaching the most powerful standards to greater depth. In essence, less may, in fact, produce higher achievement.**

Implementation of this initiative will require choices of low-level courses to be removed from the curriculum. The faculty, working in collaboration with counselors and others, would identify those 15 to 20 percent of the students now enrolled in low-level courses who could benefit from higher-level instruction with some support. Teachers and guidance counselors would work with parents and students to get them enrolled into higher-level courses. It will also require building into the schedule support time for students who will need additional coaching and reteaching in order to meet the higher standards. This process will be repeated each year until 85 to 90 percent of all students in middle grades and high school are enrolled in academic courses that are taught to grade-level and to college- and career-readiness standards.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/ <i>HSTW</i>
1. Increase the percentage of students completing the <i>HSTW</i> Recommended Curriculum; reduce by 15 to 20 percent annually the number of low-level course sections.	1 – 5	<b>Professional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teaching All Students to College and Career Readiness Standards</li> <li>○ College Board Vertical Teaming Training</li> </ul>
2. Increase the number of students taking pre-AP, AP, IB and/or dual credit courses.	1 – 5	<b>Coaching</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assist with scheduling</li> <li>○ Follow-up professional development</li> </ul>
3. Have teachers create common course syllabi and come to agreement on examples of grade-level work.	1 - 5	<b>Publications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>High Schools That Work: An Enhanced Design to Get All Students to Standards</i></li> <li>○ <i>Making Middle Grades Work: An Enhanced Design to Get All Students to Standards</i></li> <li>○ <i>Ten Strategies for Improving High School Graduation Rates and Student Achievement</i></li> <li>○ <i>Closing the Achievement Gap: A HSTW Design for Challenged Schools</i></li> </ul>

**Assist Students in the Middle Grades to Explore Career Opportunities and Provide Opportunities in High School for All Students to Complete an Academic, Career or Blended Concentration**

**All high school students would go beyond the academic core and complete one of these concentrations** (Note: we recommend only two academic concentrations):

1. A mathematics and science concentration would involve students completing four years each of mathematics (Algebra I and higher) and science, including one or more AP classes. Science would include the traditional lab-based college-preparatory science sequence and additional courses. Dependent upon a school’s master schedule, it would not be unusual for students to complete five years each of mathematics and science. For some students, the mathematics and science may be blended with pre-engineering, bio-medical science or another career concentration with a heavy mathematics and science underpinning.
2. A concentration in the humanities and fine arts, for which we advocate all students take four years each of college-preparatory social studies and language arts, with one or more courses at the AP or IB level, and four additional credits drawn from fine arts humanities areas. Some students may elect to combine the humanities/fine arts concentration with a related career/technical sequence.
3. A career/technical concentration would involve completing at least four years of career/technical courses. These concentrations would be one of two types. The first type would serve those students seeking a sequence of career/technical courses leading to employment or employer certification at the end of high school. These students, many of whom are at risk of not graduating, would need to be enrolled in two career/technical course each year, beginning in grade nine. Several research studies have confirmed that taking two career/technical credits each year, along with a solid academic core increases their chances of finishing high school. The second type of concentration is a theme-based sequence of career/technical courses leading to postsecondary studies, such as Project Lead The Way’s pre-engineering curriculum, the banking and finance curriculum of the National Academy Association, and the bio-medical science curriculum being developed by Charitable Venture Trusts.

Career/technical teachers would need training in developing course syllabi; identifying major anchor projects each grading period; and embedding into those anchor projects college- and career-readiness standards in language arts/reading, mathematics and, where appropriate, science.

Career academies certainly serve as one type of a career concentration and, when coupled with a team of academic teachers, can create a very powerful learning community that fosters greater motivation and improve achievement.

Create a range of career exploratory experiences in the middle grades that serve as an extension of the student’s reading, mathematics and science classes. Students in the middle grades need to begin to see how school links to life. They need to begin to envision themselves in possible career roles and perform career activities. One excellent curriculum in the middle grades is the Gateway to Technology program developed by Project Lead The Way

Coaching for both getting the rigorous core and a concentration would involve assisting with scheduling and visiting classrooms, particularly career/technical classrooms to see if academics are being embedded into assignments, projects and problems.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/HSTW
1. Increase by at least 15 to 20 percent the number of students who complete an academic or career concentration beyond the recommended academic core each year.	1 – 3	<b>Professional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Defining Career Pathways</li> <li>○ Creating Programs of Study</li> </ul>
2. Develop a set of career pathways that lead to certification and/or dual credit opportunities in high wage, high demand fields (possible elimination of some programs).	1 – 2 Expand in 3-5	<b>Coaching</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follow-up to PD</li> <li>○ Assistance with development of pathways and programs of study</li> </ul>
3. Develop more lab-based career exploration opportunities for students in the middle grades, including authentic applied learning experiences in mathematics and inquiry-based science classrooms.	1-5	<b>Publications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High Schools That Work: <i>An Enhanced Design to Get All Students to Standards</i></li> </ul>

## Increase Expectations in Classrooms

Taking college-preparatory courses will not improve achievement unless the courses include rigorous experiences that prepare students to meet college- and career-readiness standards. Setting high expectations and making sure students meet them sends a message that teachers care about the success of each student. Schools find that as they hold students to raised expectations, more students remain in school and view the challenge in a positive way. Teachers create high expectations by communicating what it takes to make an A or B in class, providing students extra help to meet raised expectations and showing they will not give up on students. Having teachers collaboratively define what grade-level work looks like and communicating that to students is a key. Using course syllabi and rubrics along with quality student work all provide clear expectations for students. Having a grading system that communicates that, with effort, every student can achieve is important. Using incomplete grades and requiring students to attend extra help when their work does not meet standards sends the message that school work is important. SREB supports schools by working with teachers to define grade-level work, providing professional development on creating rubrics and course syllabi and facilitating discussions about grading practices.

In year one, mathematics, reading and language arts teachers in grades seven through 10 teach all students to grade-level standards. This will require agreeing on what grade-level work looks like, aligning teacher assignments and assessments to those expectations and holding students accountable to produce work that meets those expectations. It would also involve developing a system to provide the extra help students will need to meet grade standards. This will involve developing a grading system that clearly defines (to parents and students) A work as above grade level, B work as grade level, C work as approaching grade level. Work that is not approaching grade level would receive an “Incomplete.” All students receiving an Incomplete will be asked to redo their work, will go through a relearning process and will be given a second assessment. Failure will not be an option in these four grades. The goal is to work with students until they meet grade-level standards, so students do not accept a failing grade.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/HSTW
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create clear, raised expectations in classrooms:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clearly define what A and B work looks like (define grade-level work).</li> <li>○ Create common course syllabi that define what is expected of students.</li> <li>○ Create common assessments (formative and summative).</li> <li>○ Use rubrics and student work to define quality.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Use grading practices that increase effort to meet expectations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Require students to re-do work that does not meet standards.</li> <li>○ Implement a no-zero grading policy, such as The Power of I.</li> <li>○ Require students not meeting standards to attend extra help.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 - 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Implement in high-failure classes in year 2; expand to other courses in 3 – 5</p>	<p><b>Professional Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Defining Grade-Level Work</li> <li>○ Creating Common Course Syllabi and Common Assessments</li> <li>○ Using Rubrics and Student Work Effectively</li> <li>○ Protocols for Teachers to Analyze the Rigor of Teacher Assignments and Assessments</li> <li>○ Using Formative Assessments to Guide Instruction</li> <li>○ Effective Grading Practices that Encourage Effort</li> </ul> <p><b>Coaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follow-up to support development of clear expectations</li> <li>○ Follow-up support for effective grading practices</li> <li>○ Support for development of policies and procedures to raise expectations and increase student effort</li> </ul> <p><b>Publications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Getting Students Ready for High School</i> series</li> <li>○ <i>Getting Students Ready for College and Careers</i> series</li> <li>○ <i>Planning for Improved Student Achievement: 10 Steps for Planning and Writing Standards-Based Units</i></li> <li>○ Site Guide 10: Advancing Students’ Academic and Technical Achievement by improving Classroom Assessments</li> <li>○ Site Guide 13: Ten Strategies for Creating a Classroom Culture of High Expectations</li> <li>○ SREB Report: <i>The Power of I (Draft)</i></li> </ul>

**Expand the Use of Authentic, Engaging Assignments — Activities, Projects and Problems**

In order to foster greater student motivation, more purposeful effort needs to be made to create assignments that will motivate *all* students to make an effort and to see a connection between what they are asked to do in class and their futures. This holds true for both middle grades and high school. The intent will be to expand the use of authentic assignments that involve students’ activities, assigned problems and major projects. An initial step in this process is to shift teachers from daily planning around a specific standard to a unit planning process that integrates several standards that can be linked together. By linking standards, students connect learning and the units provide opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of the concepts through integrated projects. These can often be designed to connect two or more classes (e.g., language arts and social studies, mathematics and science, science and career/technical). One of the professional development activities would provide opportunities for interdisciplinary teams of teachers to meet and plan a series of integrated anchor projects and supporting activities that embed high school readiness and college- and career-readiness standards, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and where appropriate science.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/HSTW
1. Move from lesson planning to standards-based unit planning (begin with English/Language Arts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unit Plans</li> <li>○ Lesson Planning Template</li> <li>○ Real-world projects</li> </ul>	2 -5 by content areas	<b>Professional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Standards-Based Unit Planning/Effective Lesson Planning</li> <li>○ Effective Instruction in Mathematics Classrooms</li> <li>○ Effective Instruction in Science Classrooms</li> <li>○ Integrated Project-Based Learning</li> <li>○ Leading a Focus on Effective Instruction</li> </ul>
2. Improve mathematics instruction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Authentic instruction – real world context</li> <li>○ Work in cooperative groups</li> <li>○ Using technology</li> <li>○ Use literacy strategies</li> <li>○ Engaging strategies</li> </ul>	2 – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using Research-Based Instructional Strategies</li> <li>○ Cooperative Learning</li> <li>○ Using Planning Time to Improve Instruction</li> <li>○ Linking 21st-Century Work Skills to Engaging Instruction</li> </ul>
3. Improve science instruction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lab-based science</li> <li>○ Use technology</li> <li>○ Problem-based instruction</li> <li>○ Use literacy strategies</li> <li>○ Work in cooperative groups</li> </ul>	3 – 4	<b>Coaching:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follow-up to all PD</li> <li>○ Model strategies in classrooms</li> <li>○ Observe teachers attempting strategies</li> <li>○ Develop Demonstration Classrooms</li> <li>○ Support leaders in conducting walkthrough observations and creating an instructional focus</li> <li>○ Provide reflective questioning in classrooms</li> </ul>
4. Utilize integrated project-based learning.	2	<b>Publications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Planning and Conducting Professional Development That Makes a Difference</i></li> </ul>
5. Use 21st-century skills to engage students in classrooms	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Instructional Strategies: How Teachers Teach Matters</i></li> <li>○ <i>Cooperative Learning Staff Development Package</i></li> <li>○ <i>Doing What Works: Moving Together on High Standards for All Students</i></li> <li>○ <i>Site Guide 4: Staff Development</i></li> <li>○ <i>Site Guide 11: Using Real-World Projects to Help Students Meet High Standards in Education and the Workplace</i></li> </ul>

**Align Career/Technical Courses, Teacher Assignments and Assessments to Essential College- and Career-Readiness Standards in Reading and Mathematics**

The intent of this initiative is to make career/technical programs an integral part of school redesign. Each career/technical program connects to a college-preparatory academic core, around either a career theme or a sequence of occupational-specific courses. Priority would be given to career/technical sequences of courses that lead to high-wage, high-demand, and high-skill fields. Career/technical teachers will enhance the rigor in their courses through development of course syllabi that identify major anchor assignments that embed literacy and mathematics standards. The ideal approach would pair career/technical teachers with academic teachers to work through an eight-step process for teaching appropriate academic skills around the anchor assignment. This strategy involves career/technical studies as a significant part of high school reform and positions the program to add value to both academic and technical achievement.

During year three, the emphasis may expand to include embedding essential inquiry-based science standards into appropriate career and technical courses. These will be career/technical fields that have a strong linkage to science.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/HSTW
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make C/T an integral part of school reform.</li> <li>2. Embed academics in C/T classes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read, write and present technical materials</li> <li>○ Embed high-level math</li> <li>○ Include a written final exam</li> <li>○ Teachers create 4-6 anchor projects annually that embed academics</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Provide quality work-based learning opportunities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Opportunities to speak with workers in the field</li> <li>○ Mentor at a job site</li> <li>○ Expansion of opportunities (school-based, virtual, work-based)</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2 - 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 - 5</p>	<p><b>Professional Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Embedding Literacy in C/T classes</li> <li>○ Embedding Mathematics in C/T classes</li> <li>○ Embedding Science in C/T classes</li> <li>○ Creating Anchor Projects to Assess Student Learning</li> </ul> <p><b>Coaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assist with pathway development</li> <li>○ Support involving C/T in whole-school reform</li> <li>○ Follow-up PD</li> <li>○ Assist with work-based learning development</li> <li>○ Observe C/T classrooms</li> <li>○ Arrange site visits to high-quality C/T programs</li> <li>○ Assist with anchor project development and scoring</li> </ul> <p><b>Publications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Crafting a New Vision for High Schools: How States Can Join Academic and Technical Studies to Promote More Powerful Learning</i></li> <li>○ <i>Site Guide #8: Teachers in the Workplace: A Staff Development Approach that Benefits Faculty and Students</i></li> <li>○ <i>Finishing the Job: Improving the Achievement of Vocational Students</i></li> </ul>

**Guidance and Advisement: Connect every student to a goal beyond high school and to an adult in the school and connect parents in a meaningful way.**

We recommend assigning a mentor/adviser to each student, beginning in the middle grades and continuing through high school. The mentor/adviser would act as an advocate for the student, help them set postsecondary goals and, with their parents' involvement, plan a program of study to achieve that goal. The adviser is to become the one person that connects students, the school and the parents together in framing a program of study/pathway for students. The adviser may have a scheduled period with students once a week or once every other week with a planned lesson. The topics for these planned lessons would vary across grade levels and would be developed into a single period lesson plan by a team of teachers during the summer. We conduct a national workshop each year to help teams from schools plan a guidance and advisement program and to develop guidance and advisement units.

The overall intent is to create a guidance and advisement program that is aimed at accelerating more students into a challenging academic core with an academic, career or blended focus. The adviser monitors students' progress and, for those students who are falling behind, works with their teacher(s) and other school leaders to make sure they get the support they need to succeed.

Every attempt should be made to match students' interests with the expertise and interest of adults. Many years ago, a popular high school devised an excellent guidance and advisement program in which it took an interest inventory of students and faculty. The school was very successful in matching students to advisers. All teachers will need training on how to be advisers, and some may resist. But done well, this strategy can create positive relationships. Many students are not known by adults in their schools. Connecting students to an adult who believes in them and helps them set and achieve goals is fundamental to improving graduation rates and fostering greater student motivation.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/HSTW
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create an adviser/advisee program in which every student has an adult advocate.</li> <li>2. Help students establish career aspirations by the end of grade nine and develop a program of study to achieve the goals.</li> <li>3. Increase parent involvement.</li> <li>4. Increase student and parent access to college/career information.</li> </ol>	<p>Plan in year 1 Implement in year 2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2 - 5</p> <p>2 - 5</p>	<p><b>Professional Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creating an Adviser Program</li> <li>○ The Role of the Teacher as an Adviser</li> <li>○ Making Parents Partners</li> </ul> <p><b>Coaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support the development of curriculum for the adviser program</li> <li>○ Arrange site visits to exemplary advisement program schools</li> <li>○ Help develop programs of study</li> <li>○ Assist leaders in developing policies and procedures to involve parents</li> <li>○ Recommend actions to expand college/career awareness</li> </ul> <p><b>Publications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Site Guide 5 – <i>Guidance</i></li> <li>○ <i>Establishing an Effective Guidance and Advisement System</i></li> </ul>



### **Middle Grades to High School Transition: Accelerating the Middle Grades, Redesigning the Ninth Grade**

The transition from middle grades to high school can be strengthened by working collaboratively to align middle grades curriculum to high school readiness standards and to identify students — beginning as early as grades five and six — who will not be prepared for challenging high school work. Providing an accelerated curriculum for these students in the middle grades will prepare them for high school without remediation. This may require extending the school day or school year to get them to grade-level standards.

High schools will need to orient students, parents and middle grades teachers to the critical factors that lead to success in high school; provide middle grades students an opportunity to visit the high school; and even provide middle grades students some early experiences prior to the beginning of the ninth grade so that they might become more acclimated to the high school culture.

Another potential part of the strengthening the transition would involve providing a four- to six-week summer program for seventh- and eighth-grade students who are not ready for challenging high school work in reading or mathematics. This summer experience would be planned collaboratively by middle grades and high school teachers and, if possible, taught jointly. A key to success is the focus on a non-traditional approach to instruction — hands-on learning, authentic assignments and perhaps the involvement of career/technical teachers on teacher teams. The emphasis would be on reading and mathematics skills, habits of success and the use of technology for learning purposes. A half day each week would be devoted to providing students an orientation to postsecondary opportunities and to work-site learning so that they can see a reason for studying.

At the end of the summer experience, those eighth-graders who are still not ready for regular college-preparatory language arts or mathematics would enroll in a special 90-day, 90-minute, standards-based catch-up course in language arts/reading or mathematics. The catch-up courses are designed to get students ready for college-preparatory English and mathematics in grade nine. The intent is to have the same algebra and English teachers teach both the catch-up semester and the second semester of Algebra I or college-preparatory English. The school would need to develop a special schedule for this ninth-grade effort. These students would also rotate through several career/technical or fine arts courses during the ninth-grade year and they would complete many projects that will be an extension of their reading and mathematics classes.

The publication, *Redesigning the Ninth Grade: Reduce Failure, Improve Achievement and Increase High School Graduation Rates* lays out the conditions for an effective ninth-grade experience. This includes ensuring the student-to-teacher ratio in ninth grade is no higher than in any other grades and getting some of the more experienced teachers to teach ninth-grade courses. The goals of this initiative are to reduce the failure rate in grade nine to less than five percent, to get most students to set a goal beyond high school and a program of study/pathway for achieving that goal by the end of grade nine, and to have their parents or guardians involved in the process. **Specific actions for addressing the middle grades to high school transition are found on the next page.**

### Middle Grades to High School Transition

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/HSTW
1. Orientation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Involve all students and parents.</li> <li>○ Align orientation efforts with feeder schools.</li> <li>○ Schedule content area meetings between high school and middle grades teachers.</li> </ul>	1	<b>Professional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Redesigning the Ninth Grade</li> <li>○ Teaching the Habits of Success</li> <li>○ Creating of a Project-Based C/T Exploratory Program</li> </ul>
2. Summer Bridge Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide further instruction with an English/Language Arts and Mathematics focus.</li> <li>○ Teach habits of success through the content instruction.</li> <li>○ Target the most at-risk students for the program.</li> <li>○ Consider providing an elective credit to students completing the program.</li> </ul>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Getting Students Ready for College-Prep               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English</li> <li>○ Math</li> <li>○ Science</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Institute:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Transition Course Institute (Catch-up Courses)</li> </ul>
3. Catch-Up Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Design the curriculum using standards-based units.</li> <li>○ Schedule the same teacher to teach both the catch-up course and Algebra I or college-preparatory English.</li> <li>○ Teach habits of success through the content instruction.</li> <li>○ Provide an elective credit for the catch-up course.</li> </ul>	2 - 3	<b>Coaching:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follow-up with ninth-grade redesign team with program development</li> <li>○ Arrange visits to exemplary ninth-grade programs</li> <li>○ Model habits of success instruction</li> <li>○ Support ninth-grade academy teams</li> <li>○ Observe and critique catch-up courses</li> <li>○ Follow-up PD</li> </ul>
4. Access to Career/Technical and Fine Arts Courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a series of projects and mini-course in each career area to expose ninth-graders to different career opportunities.</li> <li>○ Adjust the master schedule (do not eliminate opportunities with double-dosing).</li> </ul>	2 - 3	<b>Publications:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Redesigning the Ninth-grade Experience: Reduce Failure, Improve Achievement and Increase High School Graduation Rates</i></li> </ul>
5. Effective Scheduling Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recruit the best teachers for grade nine.</li> <li>○ Create an academy with MESS teams that have common planning and a common group of students.</li> <li>○ Reduce the student-to-teacher ratio in grade nine.</li> </ul>	2 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Getting Ready For High School Series</i></li> <li>○ <i>Planning for Improved Student Achievement: Ten Steps for Planning and Writing Standards-Based Units</i></li> </ul>

**Transitions from High School to Postsecondary Studies and Careers: Giving Some Students a Jump Start and Giving Other Students a Ready Start for Postsecondary Studies and a Career**

An objective of the senior year transition program is to identify students who are ready for postsecondary studies and enroll them, where possible, into college-level courses for credit through AP, IB, dual credit courses that meet true college-level work, or full-time college courses.

The second objective is to identify students who plan to go to college but fail to meet college- and career-readiness standards in reading/writing or mathematics and provide them with a redesigned language arts and mathematics course that will teach the fundamental knowledge and skills needed to avoid postsecondary remediation courses. The necessary knowledge and skills would be agreed upon by high school and postsecondary faculty as the most essential skills. These courses would be built around a series of standards-based units that incorporate the use of authentic, engaging assignments along with other research-based instructional strategies.

The third objective is to identify students who do not plan to go on to postsecondary studies and to make sure that they are enrolled in an occupational program of study that will prepare them for their chosen future career. These students would receive intensive concentration studies in that area during the senior year, including internships or work-site learning and the completion of an employer certification exam. Those students who do not complete all requirements for their career/technical program of study would continue studying in that field at a community college. For some students, the high schools may not have a choice for the career/technical programs they want to pursue and may enroll these students into a special program at the college during the senior year or through an apprenticeship program with employers that starts them off on a journey toward a career field of choice.

SREB offers a national workshop to assist teachers to design senior transitional course and prepare more students for success in postsecondary studies and careers.

ACTIONS	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR (S)	SUGGESTED SUPPORT FROM SREB/HSTW
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Require 12th-graders to take a full schedule that includes English, mathematics and science.</li> <li>2. Implement a Senior Project requirement. This could be a product, research or a presentation.</li> <li>3. Enroll students who do not meet college-readiness standards into Senior Transition Courses.</li> <li>4. Expand opportunities for students to earn college credit while in high school.</li> <li>5. Work with area colleges to give entrance exams to 11th-graders.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plan in 2 Implement in 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p><b>Professional Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creating a Senior Project</li> <li>○ Transitional English</li> <li>○ Transitional Math</li> </ul> <p><b>Institute:</b> Transition Course Institute</p> <p><b>Coaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Follow-up PD</li> <li>○ Assist with development of Senior Project</li> <li>○ Support development of Senior Expectation Policies</li> <li>○ Help link with area colleges</li> </ul> <p><b>Publications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Senior Project Guide</i></li> <li>○ <i>Getting Students Ready for College and Careers Series</i></li> <li>○ <i>Lost in Transition: Building a Better Path from School to College and Careers</i></li> <li>○ <i>Planning for Improved Student Achievement: Ten Steps for Planning and Writing Standards-Based Units</i></li> </ul>