

Welcome To *High Success Schools*

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High Success Schools are where . . .

. . . Three students at Jefferson Senior High are holding a teleconference in the media center with a class of students in Russia. They have been working all year on a project to investigate the effects of rapid social and economic change on their communities and how technology impacts those changes. Their collaborative report will be presented to scientists and technology experts around the world who have been assisting their research efforts through the *Internet* and have agreed to evaluate their research.

. . . The community's senior center will be visited today by a group of students from the Prairie View Primary School who have interviewed the residents and studied the historical events that occurred during their lifetimes. The students will present their published biographies to the residents, who, in turn, will critique them.

. . . It is Wednesday evening, and First Avenue Elementary is buzzing with activity as students and their parents arrive together for Student-Led Conference night. Students are presenting to their parents the products and results of their learning over the previous several weeks. They use audio and video tapes, models, and written products to demonstrate their "best works" and "work in progress" in relation to the school's Quality Outcome Standards. At the conclusion of each conference, the student, the parents, and the teacher will set new goals for improving the student's performance on the Standards during the next several weeks.

. . . The local grocery market manager is presenting to a large group of students gathered in the auditorium of Pioneer Middle School. She is showing the students how the store helps consumers make financially sound and health conscious decisions. The students will then begin their planning process for demonstrating what they have learned, including plans and recommendations for how they will use the information they have gathered in subsequent shopping experiences. Down the hall, another group of students is filming a video of a simulated newscast . . . and outside, several student teams are measuring areas of the playground to determine the cost and feasibility of resodding worn, potentially dangerous play areas.

These scenarios are real! By applying the principles and strategies of *High Success Schools*, these students, parents, community members, and

educators are implementing the most powerful integration of what is known about intensive learning, performance systems, the future our students are entering, and how an entire community can respond to the most compelling learning crisis North America has ever faced: the transition from an Industrial Age to a global, Information/Communications Age economy and society.

High Success Schools . . .

Are purposeful learning communities where adults and young people actively participate in a supportive world of significant challenge, positive relationships, clear accountability, and continuous improvement.

Build high-level competences for all students that match the challenges and opportunities adults and young people face in our complex, Information/ Communications Age.

Develop talent and capacities of all students and staff to the fullest and encourage them to do their very best at all times.

Embody powerful ideas and principles from the past twenty five years of research and practice on exemplary performance-based learning systems, educational models, and organizations of all kinds.

Respond directly to the widespread movement to establish charter schools, alternative schools, and schools-within-a-school as replacements for ineffective and unresponsive public school models.

Promote extensive involvement in both program planning and direct instructional support of all those with a stake in student learning and success.

Focus on Quality Performance Standards that reflect the high-level knowledge, competence, and personal qualities needed to succeed in today's and tomorrow's complex, rapidly changing world.

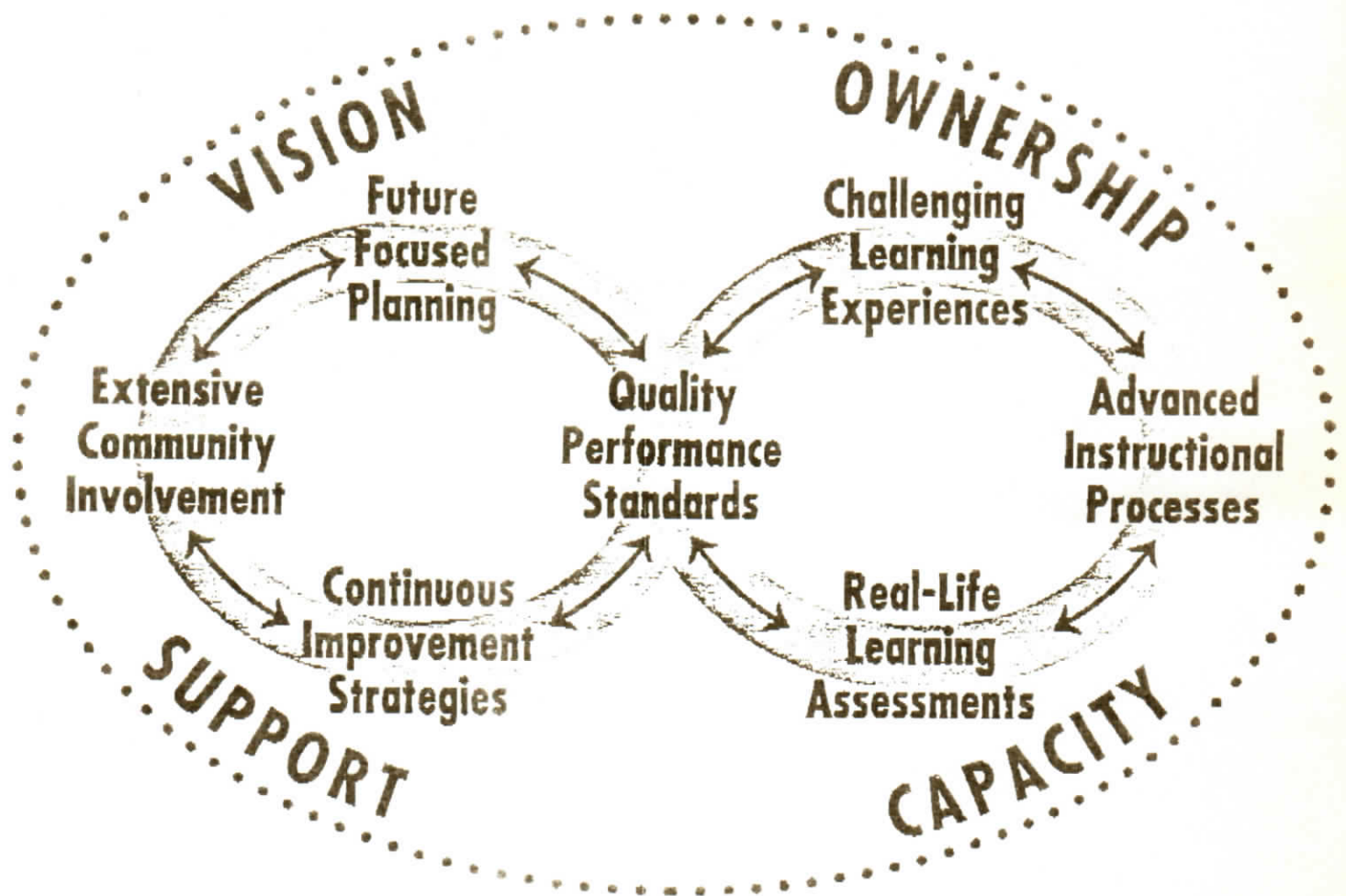
Are "Infinite Learning" models that place no limits on learning, achievement, or on when, how, where, from whom, and how well students can learn and advance.

Provide new, powerful models of curriculum, teaching, and learning success that communities can use as alternatives to outmoded and ineffective schooling practices that need replacing.

Use advanced technologies to access world-wide information bases, national and local agencies, and expert resources and to give students and staff the tools they need to learn, produce, and perform in new ways.

Apply Total Quality and Transformational Leadership principles and strategies used extensively in the business world to facilitate greater personal and organizational effectiveness and successful change.

IMPLEMENTING HIGH SUCCESS SCHOOLS



*Purposeful Learning Communities,
Integrated Performance Systems*

What Are the Defining Features of *High Success Schools?*

High Success Schools are tightly integrated learning and performance systems that embody a positive, "SUCCESS FOR ALL" philosophy. They are composed of seven key components of powerful practice which work together to create "Purposeful Learning Communities." These seven components are shown in the first graphic. The central component in this picture is the performance system's **Quality Performance Standards**. These Standards are the focal point and driving force of all of the other components in the system: the four in the right circle -- which constitute the school's Instructional Delivery System -- and the four on the left which constitute its Organizational Support System.

Quality Performance Standards

The Quality Performance Standards reflect the clearly defined, high-level knowledge and performance abilities students must possess in order to be successful in facing the challenges and opportunities that await them in today's Information/ Communications Age world. These Standards represent the substance and actions that will be expected, taught, and assessed throughout a student's career in a *HS School*. In many circles they are called either **Exit** or **Learner Outcomes**. These Performance Standards clearly embody and convey the quality learning and performances expected of **all students**, both during school and when they graduate.

These Quality Performance Standards are directly determined by the Future Focused Planning, Extensive Community Involvement, and Continuous Improvement Strategies components in a *HS School*. In turn, the Standards provide the foundation for the School's Continuous Improvement Strategies, for continued Future Focused Planning, and for the design and implementation of its Challenging Learning Experiences, Advanced Instructional Processes, and Real-Life Learning Assessments. **In short, these Performance Standards are the focus, starting point, and reason behind everything that happens in *HS Schools*.**

Many *HS Schools* use a framework like that in the second graphic to guide the development of their Standards. This framework of fundamental performance abilities goes beyond the knowledge and skill development typical of traditional schools and programs. It is **comprehensive, challenging, and directly relevant to both the technical and interpersonal performance abilities needed by adults in carrying out their career, family, and civic roles and responsibilities**. In short, most *HS Schools* want all of their students to emerge as sound:

Learners & Thinkers

Implementers & Performers

Problem Finders & Solvers
Planners & Designers
Creators & Producers
Listeners & Communicators
Leaders & Organizers
Team Members & Partners
Supporters & Contributors
Teachers & Mentors

Extensive Community Involvement

Everyone with a direct interest in the current and future learning and performance success of students is invited to become involved in the planning and implementation of *High Success Schools*. *HS Schools* openly encourage the fullest possible level of Community Involvement in carrying out their Future Focused Planning, their Continuous Improvement Strategies, and the determination of their Quality Performance Standards. In addition, they also encourage the continual involvement of parents and a variety of community-based experts in directly supporting both student and staff learning and performance.

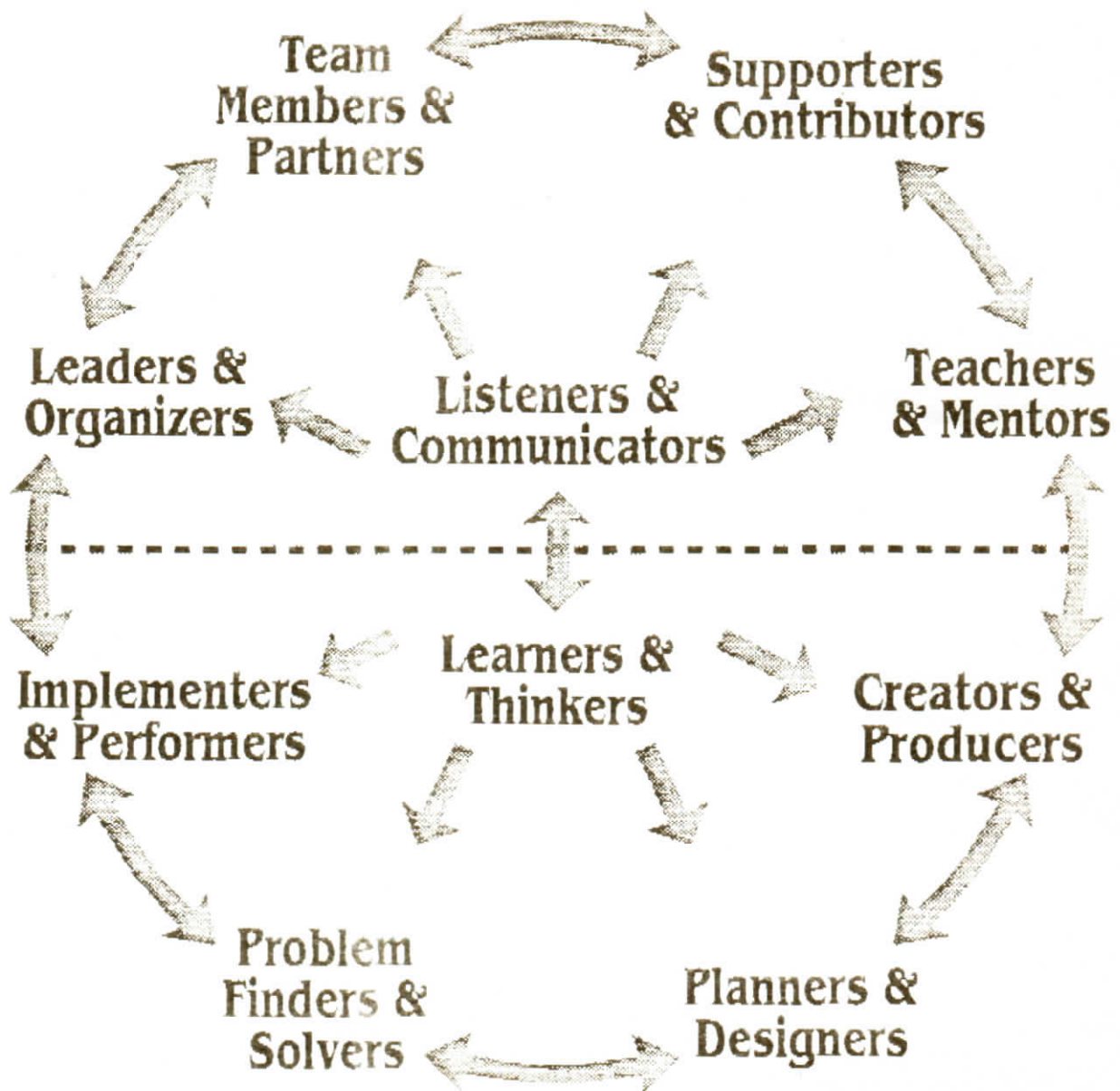
This extensive level of external participation in setting direction for the School's instructional programs provides it with an enormous source of legitimacy and support. In addition, Community Involvement in the instructional program is especially valuable when the School's Quality Performance Standards require students to acquire and demonstrate high-level learning related to significant life challenges and adult role performances.

Future Focused Planning

The Future Focused Planning component is essential in establishing the direction, purposes, mission, values, and vision that govern *High Success Schools*. They engage in this critical and comprehensive planning process by enlisting Extensive Community Involvement in what is called the "Strategic Design Process." This future focused process involves large numbers of staff, students, parents, and community members collaboratively examining research and information related to the critical challenges and likely conditions that students will face as young adults. The insights they generate are then used to derive a compelling and realistic system mission, vision, and framework of Quality Performance Standards for all students. Once developed, these Standards serve as the foundation for all of the other components in the system.

Well implemented systems engage in this Future Focused Planning process on at least a bi-annual basis to stay abreast of emerging future trends and to reorient its Quality Performance Standards and programs accordingly.

Fundamental Life Performance Roles



Continuous Improvement Strategies

HS Schools are committed to pursuing Continuous Improvement Strategies that govern all aspects of their planning, programs, and operations because they recognize that a commitment to continuous growth and improvement is critical to success in our complex, rapidly changing Information/Communications Age. The keys to this vital Continuous Improvement decision-making process are:

1. **An information system** that is linked directly to the School's Real-Life Learning Assessments of students' learning and that continuously monitors their achievement of the Quality Performance Standards and how well the School's other components are functioning.
2. **An organizational culture** that endorses using this information to assist every member and every component of the School's learning community to continuously improve.

This is a clear application of the powerful organizational improvement process known in the corporate world as "Quality Management," and it is very tightly aligned with the purposes, beliefs, and principles that guide the philosophy and functioning of *HS Schools*.

Challenging Learning Experiences

HS Schools extend far beyond traditional notions of "curriculum" when designing and implementing Challenging Learning Experiences for students. Since these Experiences are defined and designed directly from the Quality Performance Standards, they directly reflect the substance and challenges embodied in those future focused Standards and continuously challenge students to "show what they know and can do" in accomplishing them.

These Experiences typically go far beyond conventional classroom learning by directly preparing students to **apply their learning under a variety of realistic challenges and circumstances**. These realistic challenges require students to develop significant knowledge, competence, and personal qualities and use them actively in addressing both academic and major life and career issues. **In *HS Schools* the higher the level and more challenging the Performance Standards are, the more "real-life" and challenging the Learning Experiences will be.**

Advanced Instructional Processes

A *HS School's* Advanced Instructional Processes are imbedded directly in its Challenging Learning Experiences and respond to the substance and challenges of its Quality Performance Standards. These Processes involve the techniques, strategies, and technologies

used to help each student learn successfully. In *HS Schools* these Processes involve the consistent use of advanced technologies as well as powerful "**Learner Centered Principles.**" These principles are guidelines for instruction that have teachers take into account:

1. The diverse aptitudes, developmental stages, prior learning experiences, and multiple learning styles of learners.
2. The complex ways that students construct meaning from what they learn within the contexts and settings in which that learning occurs.

By employing these Principles, *HS School* staff are able to integrate these Advanced Instructional Processes with what students need to learn and demonstrated successfully -- the Quality Performance Standards. The result is a seamless and continuous process of learning and improvement that takes the unique characteristics and motivations of the learner directly into account. Therefore, these Advanced Processes tap the diversity of students' aptitudes and engage them in a realistic, motivating, active learning process in which they are constantly challenged to become better and better at the kinds of performance abilities embodied in the second graphic.

Real-Life Learning Assessments

The Real-Life Learning Assessments provide a critical, continuous improvement feedback loop to students, teachers, parents, and *HS School* leaders regarding each student's progress in meeting the Quality Performance Standards. These Assessments are derived directly from the Standards, embody the criteria built into the Standards, and reveal exactly what students are able to do in relation to those criteria. Evaluation, record-keeping, reporting, and student credentialing and promotion also directly reflect those clearly defined criteria.

Consequently, in *HS Schools* this careful matching of what the Standards require and what the Assessments reveal about student learning and performance is the key tool for establishing and maintaining accountability for all those in the School. These Assessments are often called "**Authentic**" because: 1) they directly embody the substance, criteria, and situational realities imbedded in the Quality Performance Standards; 2) they have meaning to the learner because they match "real-life" challenges; and 3) they both reflect and support the continuous nature of learning.

What Is the Philosophy of High Success Schools?

The philosophy of *High Success Schools* reveals itself in three ways: through purpose, through belief, and through the principles that guide

decision-making and action. Together the School's purposes, beliefs, and principles define a philosophy that is optimistic about learners and learning results, encourages clarity regarding purpose, policies, and operations, and supports the empowerment and success of everyone in the System.

HS Schools focus everything they do around three clear and compelling purposes, and they commit themselves to accomplishing those purposes. They are:

1. Achieving genuine learning success for all students in the performance areas that directly affect their future success.
2. Establishing close collaboration among staff, students, parents, experts, and other community members in program planning and delivery.
3. Employing powerful learning models and improvement strategies in all areas of the curriculum that foster success for all students and staff.

High Success Schools also embrace three key beliefs that underlie and support the accomplishment of these purposes. They are:

1. Everyone is capable of being a successful learner and performer, but individuals develop those abilities in different ways and at different times.
2. Successful learning and performance promote more successful learning and performance.
3. Educational systems and those within them determine the conditions that directly influence the learning, performance, and continuous improvement of those within the system.

High Success Schools consistently, systematically, creatively, and simultaneously apply eight key principles to the decision making and actions that shape the seven components. This results in the School operating in direct support of the three purposes and the accomplishment of the Quality Performance Standards. Four of these principles apply specifically to the four components of the Instructional Delivery System, but they apply to the functioning of the Organizational Support System as well. These principles are:

1. **CLARITY OF FOCUS** on the system's Quality Performance Standards.
2. **DESIGNING** Learning Experiences, Instructional Processes, and Performance Assessments derived **DIRECTLY FROM** the Quality Performance Standards.
3. **HIGH EXPECTATIONS** for all learners to achieve the Quality Performance Standards at the highest levels.
4. **EXPANDED OPPORTUNITY** and strategies for all learners to achieve the Quality Performance Standards.

The other four principles apply particularly to the four components in the Organizational Support System because they combine to create a culture of, and commitment to, personal and organizational participation, effectiveness, and success. But they apply to all aspects of organizational functioning as well. These principles are:

5. **CLARITY OF COMMUNICATION** that supports personal and organizational growth and effectiveness.
6. **EXTENSIVE PARTICIPATION AND RECOGNITION** of contributions made to organizational purpose and quality.
7. **TIMELY, DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING** that fosters organizational purpose and encourages commitment to continuous improvement.
8. **EXPANDED-OPTION POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS** that foster organizational purpose and continuous improvement.

What Are the Key Patterns of Practice in *High Success Schools*?

When these purposes, beliefs, and principles are consistently and systematically applied to implementing the systemic integrity of the seven components, the resulting patterns of action and achievement depart dramatically from those of conventional, Industrial Age schooling practices. These patterns represent "restructuring" in its truest sense: that is, **the major patterns of action and decision making that define how a system operates are fundamentally different than before. Both their internal character and their outward appearance are significantly changed.**

The centerpiece and defining structure of *High Success Schools* are their **Quality Performance Standards**. These Standards, rather than the clock, schedule, and calendar, are the fundamental definers of what the School is and does. While conventional models of schooling make **WHEN** and **HOW** students learn more important than **WHAT** and **WHETHER** they learn successfully, ***HS Schools*** use these Standards to reverse that relationship. They make **WHAT** and **WHETHER** the unvarying constants that govern all program design and decision making, and they define learning and performance in clear, universal, criterion-based terms.

The changes that flow from this core dimension of system restructuring are many and profound. Listed below are some of the most characteristic and important changes that occur when communities, districts, and schools agree to implement the seven components and philosophy of *High Success Schools*. Conventional patterns of practice are listed on the left (**FROM**) and the corresponding ***HS Schools*** patterns are shown on the right (**TO**).

FROM
Conventional Patterns

Emphasis on curriculum
stability and content

Curriculum experts and
educators involved in
curriculum planning and goals

Focus on curriculum
traditions and content

Curriculum and instruction
the exclusive purview of
certified educators

Most instruction focused
on individual textbook work
in classroom settings

From annual to seven-year
curriculum review cycles
focused on accreditation compliance

Permanent age-grouping
and scheduling patterns

Subject structured, content-
segmented curriculum

Constrained access, hierarchical
curriculum tracks

Teacher centered, assignment-
focused instruction

Comparative-competitive/
win-lose learning environment

Teachers in self-contained/
self-constrained classrooms

Paper-pencil testing/
grading/record-keeping

Time-based/bell-curve standards,
grading, reporting, and credit

TO
HS School Patterns

Emphasis on continual
Future Focused Planning

Extensive Community
Involvement in determining
system Performance Standards

Focus on significant life
challenges and opportunities

Extensive Community
Involvement in providing
expert instruction

Instruction extensively
focused on group projects
connected to real-life contexts

Continuous review of learning
and instructional effectiveness
focused on Performance Standards

Data-driven/flexible grouping
and scheduling patterns

Life-role structured, concept-
integrated curriculum

Expanded access, continuous
challenge Learning Experiences

Learner centered, performance
ability-focused instruction

Collaborative-challenging/
win-win learning environment

Teachers in collaborative
instructional teams

Real-Life Learning
Assessments and portfolios

Criterion-defined standards,
assessment, reporting, and credit

How to Get Started Implementing a *High Success School*

Making the changes just described requires a deliberate decision to take the first step. Each school or district seeking to implement a *HS School* will have its own unique starting point. But each path will have four similar way stations -- essential bases for assuring that successful implementation and change can, and will, take place.

These four critical sources of staff and community "**Empowerment**" are the responsibilities of *HS School* leaders and are shown in the third accompanying graphic. They provide staff and community members with the resources needed to meet the challenge of transforming conventional schools into *High Success Schools*. These factors are:

VISION -- the personal and collective recognition by the School's staff and community of the need to change, the defined reason to make the change, and the picture of what the new *HS School* will be like once it is functioning effectively. Without **Vision** there is no clear direction or "picture of the possible" to pursue.

OWNERSHIP -- the personal and collective commitment of staff and community to make needed changes described above and to internalize the substance and intent of those changes as being part of oneself. This is key in being able to identify with the changes and in seeing one's values and higher self reflected in those changes.

CAPACITY -- includes the tangible technical skills, abilities, tools, and resources needed to make the desired changes, above and beyond the willingness and desire to do so. Because the shift from time-honored, conventional expectations and practices to a *High Success* pattern is so great, developing new orientations, acquiring new knowledge and tools, and learning new skills are essential to successful implementation.

SUPPORT -- is reflected in the tangible organizational structures, procedures, and opportunities that encourage and make the needed changes possible. These support structures and procedures directly affect each of the other three factors: 1) Support that makes the Vision clear and keeps it alive; 2) Support that engenders and sustains the emotional desire to make the change and continue to refine its implementation; and 3) Support that provides the training and tools needed to operate in new and more effective ways.

These four empowerment resources are integrated into all of the technical assistance provided to *HS School* implementers. Listed below are some of the individual workshops, organized around each system component.

that are available to staff and communities as they follow their path of successful implementation.

High Success Schools Implementation

- * Defining the Components of *HS Schools*
- * Communicating the Philosophy of *HS Schools*
- * Mapping the Fundamentals of Systemic Change
- * Developing the Leadership Performances Essential for Successful Systemic Change

Quality Performance Standards

- * Defining the Fundamentals of "Performances of Significance"
- * Climbing the Performance Mountain
- * Developing a Powerful Framework of Quality Performance Standards

Future Focused Planning

- * Developing Compelling System Purposes, Beliefs, and Principles
- * Implementing a Rigorous Strategic Design Process
- * Deriving a Powerful Framework of Quality Performance Standards
- * Comprehensive Action Planning for Successful Implementation

Extensive Community Involvement

- * Developing Parent Involvement Policies and Practices
- * Developing Community Guarantees
- * Facilitating Community Meetings
- * Establishing the Principles of Effective Conflict Resolution
- * Building Effective School-Based Management Teams
- * Involving Parents, Service Agencies, Business, and the Community as Teachers, Audiences, and Assessors

Continuous Improvement Strategies

- * Using On-Going Performance Data to Inform System Change
- * Strategies for Recording and Reporting Performance Assessments
- * Developing School-Based Management of Continuous Improvement Practices
- * Personnel Selection and Performance Improvement
- * Culture Building around System Mission, Vision, and Purpose
- * Transformational Leadership for Administrators and Teachers

Challenging Learning Experiences

- * Designing, Managing, and Achieving Real-World Performances
- * Developing and Customizing Performance-Based Curriculum
- * Implementing Problem-Based Learning
- * Implementing Student-Generated Instructional Strategies
- * Service-Learning and Research Project Planning for Students
- * Restructuring High Schools: Intensive Scheduling, Interdisciplinary Teaming, Blocks, and Apprenticeships

Advanced Instructional Processes

- * Accessing the World through Technology
- * Teaming for Teachers and Students
- * Developing and Applying the Principles of Learner-Centered Instruction
- * Applying the Performance Actions Framework in the Classroom
- * Instructional Strategies for Tapping Multiple Intelligences
- * Leadership Skills for Young Learners

Real-Life Learning Assessments

- * Designing Powerful Scoring, Coaching, and Learning Rubrics
- * Developing Accountable Self-Directed Learners
- * Performance Portfolios for Students and Staff:
Design, Management, Assessment, and Reporting
- * Promotion and Graduation by Demonstration
- * Using Outside Experts to Validate Student Performance
- * Student-Led Parent Conferencing: Design and Implementation

When you contact us about any of these services, we will help you plan a variety of possible starting points and customize how we work together based on where you are right now and where you would like to be. All of these services can be provided to develop teams and facilitators within your school or district. If you have your own training staff, we can help you develop a **High Success Performance Team** of local trainers. All of our services include continuous support and technical assistance from our team of highly acclaimed practitioners and trainers.

We're . . . High Success Schools, and you can reach us at . . .

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