

BRIDGEPORT – EXPECT GREAT THINGS

EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL FOR BRIDGEPORT YOUTH

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR BRIDGEPORT

The Report of the Bridgeport Higher Education Alliance

October 2005

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INTRODUCTION

In 2005 the City of Bridgeport announced an economic development vision foreseeing “a better world in Bridgeport...an environment that will result in job growth and tax base growth.” To ensure that bright future, Bridgeport schools need a stronger educational program, one that prepares all students to take advantage of college and university programs. Too few Bridgeport students now have the academic preparation and skills needed to succeed in college and the workplace. Bright futures for students and the city of Bridgeport can only be secured with a strong response from the city’s schools, higher educational institutions, employers, and government officials.

In April 2004, leaders of the Bridgeport Public Schools met with Connecticut higher education administrators and others with experience in urban education. The objective was to create a “Bridgeport Higher Education Alliance (BHEA)” to foster an effective collaboration between Connecticut’s colleges and universities and the city’s public schools. *The main focus was to create a plan to support the goal of having all Bridgeport youth graduate from high school prepared to succeed in some form of higher education.*¹

Mayors play a central role in assigning resources to city schools and in stimulating public support for them. Therefore, school and university leaders were listening in January 2005 when Bridgeport Mayor John Fabrizi asked the Alliance to provide answers to the following four questions:

1. What do higher educational institutions expect of high school graduates in terms of skills and knowledge, and in what academic fields?

¹ One of America’s leading educators, Dr. Piedad F. Robertson, President of the Education Commission of the States, writes in the July 13, 2005 issue of *Education Week* that high schools ought to prepare each and every student for post-secondary education and training.

2. What preparation and professional development do teachers and principals need for their initial and continuing education?
3. How might Bridgeport recruit and coordinate the efforts of tutors, mentors, interns, and volunteers to work effectively with students in the schools?
4. What will Connecticut's colleges and universities do to help Bridgeport youth to prepare for and succeed in higher education?

In preparing to respond to these questions, the Bridgeport Higher Education Alliance continued discussions begun nearly a year earlier. They analyzed the efforts of the Connecticut State University System and Alliance participants who are helping the City of Hartford meet school challenges similar to Bridgeport's. National reports on improving city schools, paving the way to post-high school education, and raising educational productivity appear with increasing frequency. The Bridgeport Higher Education Alliance drew on these sources, and on their own experiences and values, to respond to Mayor Fabrizi's questions. (See list of publications and articles used in preparation of this report on last page.)

When Bridgeport was a major manufacturing and transportation center, most workers could qualify for and hold jobs with an eighth-grade education. However, in the twenty-first century, more and more careers in health services, high technology, professional services, government, and business require education and training beyond high school. Many jobs demand at least a community college associate's degree, and preferably a bachelor's degree or more. Automobile mechanics, HVAC technicians, and electricians now need computer-based skills to perform competitively.

In March 2005, the U.S. Census Bureau released the following information on average annual income of adults in the workforce:

Citizens without a high school diploma earn \$18,734 a year

Workers with a high school diploma earn \$27,915

Those with a bachelor's degree earn \$51,206

Professionals holding advanced degrees (master's or doctorates) earn \$74,602

Over 30 years of working life, those with bachelor's degrees will earn nearly \$1 million more than workers who dropped out of high school. To qualify for and successfully perform jobs that will pay enough to support a family of four, a worker will need as much education as possible. The success of the regional Bridgeport economy, ensuring adequate family incomes for all citizens and promoting a high quality of life throughout the community, depends on a workforce educated above the high school level.

THE BRIDGEPORT CHALLENGE

The State Department of Education reports a 35 percent high school cumulative dropout rate², indicating that a first priority is to retain students in high school through graduation. A second priority is to prepare Bridgeport students for success in study after high school, an education process that must begin when a child enters school and continue through graduation.

For various reasons, not all students will attend college immediately after high school, even if they are academically prepared. Nevertheless, high schools in Bridgeport should prepare all students for the possibility of taking college courses and pursuing college degrees at some point during their working lifetimes. At present, the Bridgeport high school curriculum is not aligned with college admission requirements, limiting the number of high school students who can be recruited or admitted to local institutions of higher education *even if they graduate from high school*. One way that the Bridgeport

² Source: Bridgeport Strategic School Profiles, 2003-2004, Connecticut Department of Education, School and District Data.

schools can equip students to meet college entrance requirements is through curriculum alignment, by becoming partners with higher education institutions. The necessary Bridgeport high school curriculum changes are outlined below.

Recent studies published by the Harvard Educational Publishing Group report that nationally only about two-thirds of ninth-grade students, and only about half of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans, graduated with regular diplomas four years later.³ However, Bridgeport's proportion is even lower. Figures compiled in 2000 indicate that Bridgeport Public Schools enrolled more than 1,800 students in grade 9 but graduated only 838 students after four years, approximately 44 percent. In 2003-2004, school records reveal that 487 Bridgeport students were accepted at two- or four-year colleges and universities.⁴

Extrapolating from the national statistics, if 240 of the 487 Bridgeport students who were accepted by colleges actually graduated, that is only one in seven, or 14 percent of those who had entered ninth grade eight years earlier. Even if all the college-accepted students had graduated from college, such small numbers would not be sufficient to build a strong twenty-first century Bridgeport. Good career choices are not readily available for the almost 2,000 other Bridgeport students in the same cohort who did not complete either high school or college. All Bridgeport students would benefit from post-high school study. Clearly, the number of graduates from high school and college must be increased to ensure the prosperity of Bridgeport individuals and families, and the community at large. One initial task of the

³ Gary Orfield, ed., *Dropouts in America: Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard Educational Publishing Group, 2004).

⁴ Of the 487 students, 207 entered either Housatonic or Norwalk Community College. Ninety-nine Bridgeport graduates chose to attend Southern Connecticut State University, Western Connecticut State University, or the University of Connecticut, at Storrs or Stamford. The remaining 181 attended independent and technical colleges or universities, including Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University, and the University of Bridgeport, as well as colleges in other states. No figures are currently available on the graduation rate of Bridgeport-origin college students.

BHEA is to forge a consensus among educators, public officials, and business leaders on the critical importance of this task.

Measuring the Outcomes: How Do Bridgeport Students Compare?

The Bridgeport Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools invited the National Urban Alliance (NUA) to conduct an Instructional Assessment of the Bridgeport Public Schools during the 2005-06 year. The NUA Instructional Assessment includes the following elements:

- identification of district, school and classroom practices that are affecting student performance;
- recommendations for research-based strategies and professional development activities that address identified practices to accelerate student learning; and
- suggestions for aligning district procedures and organizational arrangements that will also accelerate student learning.

Assessment strategies include administrative interviews, instructional policy reviews, teacher surveys, student performance data reviews, and visits to classrooms. The information gathered from these sources is then analyzed using current educational research. From this analysis, NUA generates a recommendation for improving professional practice of district staff for accelerating achievement of all students, particularly those who are underperforming, so that they demonstrate high intellectual performance in school and ultimately meet or exceed district, state, and federal requirements.

SAT scores are the most widely used indicators of college readiness. Although the SAT test scoring system has just changed, in 2004 a combined score (math and verbal) of 1000 was the state and national average. The following table lists SAT score averages for Bridgeport high schools:

Scholastic Achievement Test Results, 2003-04

<u>SAT Scores</u>	<u>Bassick</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Harding</u>	<u>State-wide</u>
Mathematics	360	431	368	508
Verbal	321	421	385	504
Totals	685	852	753	1012

Source: College Entrance Examination Board and State of Connecticut

The following table displays the “at or above goal” (levels 4 and 5) results of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test given to grade 10 students at Bridgeport high schools in the 2003-04 school year:

Connecticut Academic Performance Test Results, 2003-04

	<u>Bassick</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Harding</u>	<u>State-wide</u>
Reading	7.9	24.8	10.4	48
Writing	13.2	31.4	13.7	53.7
Math	2.9	15.6	4.5	46.1
Science	5.0	16.4	5.0	47.4
All four tests	1.2	7.5	1.1	27.7
Participant Rate	80.6	92.5	79.5	96.9

The low scores of Bridgeport high school students on the SAT and Connecticut Academic Performance Tests indicate that, without a major shift in philosophy and pedagogy, Bridgeport students will be denied access to higher education. This shift must include the passionate belief that “all students can be taught to use the higher order processes and engage in the advanced learning tasks demanded by a changing global community, and that race and poverty must not be used to erect insurmountable social barriers to academic success and life-long learning.”⁵

HOW CAN BRIDGEPORT DO BETTER?

Bridgeport is the largest city in Connecticut but faces limited financial resources and great challenges, including an unacceptable high-school dropout rate and too few students going on to higher education. When the Bridgeport Higher Education Alliance, including representatives of many institutions of higher education,⁶ came together with leaders from the city’s public schools to assess what they could do to support the Bridgeport school system, they focused on improving the proportion of students that enter institutions of higher education and enhancing the probability of Bridgeport students’ success in college. All local institutions have a profound interest in helping Bridgeport students achieve these goals.

The Bridgeport public school system is dangerously under-funded and has facilities so constrained that certain obvious measures that would improve student performance – such as smaller class sizes and new buildings – will only be achieved over time. The BHEA recognizes that these issues are outside its mandate, although it may be useful to add its voice at times in advocating for increased public financial support for school needs. However, the local institutions of higher education and the community organizations currently involved have resources to use in support of the schools. As the BHEA

⁵ National Urban Alliance, *Briefing Notebook* (New York: Columbia University Teachers College, 1999)

⁶ See list of Alliance members in Appendix.

participants take the following steps, student performance can be expected to improve, even under current school budget constraints, ensuring that many more will graduate from high school and go on to college.

- **Keeping students in school.** More tutors and mentors can be recruited and trained to help students stay in high school, *with the vision of going to college*. The business and professional community can be asked to provide internships to high school students, so that their work experience will reinforce their understanding of the need to graduate and to continue their education after high school. The marginal expense of increasing and expanding efforts already in operation should not be great. One task of the BHEA must be to raise funds from the private sector as needed to support these efforts.
- **Upgrading the high school curriculum.** BHEA recommends that the Board of Education adopt as official policy the intention to prepare *all* Bridgeport students for post-high school education. University faculty are available to work with the school system staff to align its curriculum so that students will be equipped for college study at the end of high school, reducing the enormous amount of academic preparation that local institutions, particularly Housatonic Community College (HCC), must provide before students can begin college courses. Good college preparation should also increase the college completion rate. It is hoped that the participant institutions could absorb the cost of the resources required to do this, at least initially.
- **Enhancing professional development.** High quality, research-based, sustained professional development is the key to improved student achievement. The Bridgeport Public School system, working in partnership with local universities and the NUA, has the ability to craft a professional development program that targets teachers' command of content and their pedagogical skills. The universities possess the resources to enhance, deepen, and expand teachers' knowledge of the subject matter they teach. The NUA possesses the resources to increase teachers' understanding

of the learning process, particularly the way in which culture and language affect cognition. The NUA also has the expertise to demonstrate learning strategies that mediate and accelerate learning for low achievers. Both the universities and the NUA can offer programs that improve administrators' understanding of and competence in leading change.

- **Providing early college experience.** Local colleges and universities can offer more advanced placement courses to be taught in high schools, for joint high school and college credit. Students' experience in such classes will not only make college seem a more realistic and desirable goal, but these programs may also be promoted to increase the prestige of students who stay in school and pursue the goal of college. The BHEA commends the new middle college pilot program Housatonic Community College is launching with Bassick and Harding High Schools, whereby twenty students in each school will take math or English courses at HCC, team-taught by faculty from the college and the high schools.

I. WHAT DO HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS EXPECT OF BRIDGEPORT STUDENTS?

What skills, concepts, and knowledge do high school students require? If the goal is for all Bridgeport students to be prepared to attend college at some point, what should the common curriculum be?

The ideal preparation program begins with Head Start or other educational childcare programs before kindergarten and builds on successful early learning. The BHEA commends the United Way for its new "Success By 6" program, which should be made available city wide. But even if early education is successful, Bridgeport educators point out that the high school curriculum has not changed much in many years, despite the technology and knowledge revolutions occurring in the world outside the schools. The

high school curriculum, the gateway to higher education, must be modernized and aligned with college admission standards.

In collaboration with the principals of all three Bridgeport high schools, the BHEA has determined that the basic ingredients of a modern high school college-oriented curriculum for all are the following:

- **English** (four units, four years) – courses emphasizing literature, reading comprehension, writing skills, and public speaking.
- **Mathematics** (three units) – including algebra (basic), algebra II, and geometry. Additional units in trigonometry, analytic geometry, and pre-calculus are desirable in junior or senior year.
- **Science** (three units) – biology, chemistry, and physics, with at least one being a laboratory course.
- **Social Sciences** (two or three units) – including United States history, world history, civics/government, and a course covering economics concepts (banking, consumer economics, interest rates).
- **Foreign Language** (two units in the same language, preferably more) – achieving level three proficiency.

The modern high school college-oriented curriculum must also include technology literacy and skills, embedded in many courses.

Recommendations for Success

The Bridgeport Higher Education Alliance, in consultation with Bridgeport's high school principals, recommends offering the courses listed above to all Bridgeport students. In preparing each academic course (e.g., English, algebra, biology) teachers must agree on the skills and outcomes, with consideration for special needs students. Their evaluation should be done in collaboration with college and university faculty in each field. All participants need to understand both the high expectations and the constraints.

1. The Bridgeport Board of Education should adopt a policy that all Bridgeport students graduate from high school prepared to succeed in further education and training.
2. To fulfill the school board's policy, high schools will need to set higher goals for high school completion and for post-high school education. The Higher Education Alliance could assist the schools to have the academic and college readiness outcomes measured and reported each year.
3. All Bridgeport high school students should take the academic courses required by colleges and universities so that they might, either immediately upon graduation or later in their lives, continue their studies towards at least a two-year associate's degree or a four-year bachelor's degree. The grades 7-12 curriculum must be modernized. Universities can help provide teachers with the advanced training they need to make the new curriculum work. Curriculum changes will require close collaboration with teachers in grades 7 and 8 and strengthening of the program of studies in each high school.
4. Individual colleges and the state university system should provide data to the Bridgeport school system, or to BHEA, on applicants, acceptances, enrollments, and continuation status each year, and the graduation numbers by high school of origin. Bridgeport's public schools staff needs to

know from colleges and universities the number of students completing freshman year, and how many achieve the associate's or bachelor's degree.

5. The Bridgeport school system should develop an information system allowing the principals and other school leaders to report results and respond to questions each year about school improvement plans designed to improve student achievement, graduation rates, test scores, and other outcome measures related to student proficiency.
6. Enrollment in advanced placement courses within each high school should be increased, and students and faculty who take these assignments should be celebrated and rewarded.
7. English as a Second Language, literacy, and math programs may be expanded or established and offered to parents of Bridgeport students. These programs may already be available in the local universities.
8. All Bridgeport students should be encouraged to take the PSAT and the SAT, expected by most colleges. (In Boston the Burke High School required all students to apply to several colleges, with the result that many more attended college.)
9. College and corporate volunteers could be recruited to help families fill out the complicated admissions and financial aid forms.

II. WHAT PREPARATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DO TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS NEED FOR THEIR CONTINUING EFFECTIVENESS?

Mission

The Bridgeport schools' mission traditionally has been to equip students to become productive citizens in the world of work as well as to go on to higher education. As the world of work has changed in the twenty-first century, the schools' mission must also change: The city schools should prepare all students to graduate and to pursue post-high school education.

Differentiated Instruction

To engage more students and keep them in school, teachers can employ a variety of instructional strategies and techniques, such as the use of laboratories, portfolios of student work, group work, individual research projects, and other innovative teaching methods.

Teachers and parents know that not all children learn in the same way. Many students learn best from working on projects or conducting experiments, building exhibits or preparing a portfolio of their accomplishments. The challenge is in helping teachers to provide "differentiated" instruction rather than hoping that one way of teaching suits all children. High school teachers must not only teach their subjects well but must teach each student appropriately.

Colleges and universities can work with teachers to provide professional development opportunities geared to meeting the goals of eliminating dropouts and providing a post-high school education for all of Bridgeport's youth.

All K-12 teachers should be able to teach reading and writing skills in all courses. Teachers can also increase their effectiveness in advising students on the importance of graduating from high school and continuing their education after high school.

Preparation of New Principals

Principals and supervisors are instructional leaders, experts in helping teachers improve student performance, and good analysts of test results and other performance indicators. They also reach out to parents and provide emotional support to students and staff who are coping with turbulence in families and neighborhoods. Principals must be crisis specialists and adept at finding resources. One very high priority for Bridgeport must be preparing more Hispanic and African-American educators to become leaders in the Bridgeport schools. The 23,000 children in the Bridgeport Schools (about 45% Hispanic, 45% African-American) ought to be exposed to teachers and principals of all ethnic backgrounds who can serve as models. Area universities should expand their principal preparation and other school leadership programs to meet the needs of the Bridgeport city schools. Bridgeport schools need university partners to provide a six-year urban school leadership program for principals and supervisors, possibly leading to a doctoral degree.

Recommendations for Success

1. Each higher educational institution should identify faculty members willing to team up with Bridgeport teachers to facilitate professional development. University faculty can work closely with Bridgeport teachers and principals on curriculum alignment and redesigning the pre-college courses in English, mathematics, science, languages, history, and technology.

2. Building upon the findings in the NUA Instructional Assessment, a comprehensive professional development program can be crafted, one that can make use of the differing expertise of the organizations prepared to partner with the school district, the universities, and the NUA. The universities are best equipped to handle training related to content knowledge, including mathematics, science, English, and social studies workshops, among others. The NUA is best equipped to address the learning and teaching process, especially in the area of accelerating literacy development. Through a series of large group sessions and site visits, NUA consultants introduce and extend teacher knowledge of brain-based and culturally responsive pedagogy. Site visits include demonstration lessons, coaching, and mentoring.
3. Universities should expand their educational leadership programs for preparing school principals and supervisors to serve the Bridgeport schools.

III. HOW CAN BRIDGEPORT RECRUIT AND COORDINATE THE EFFORTS OF TUTORS, MENTORS, INTERNS, AND VOLUNTEERS?

While Bridgeport currently enjoys the services of hundreds of college tutors, mentors, interns, and other volunteers working daily in the public schools, even more of the 6,000 Bridgeport secondary school students in grades 9 through 12 would benefit from the mentoring of college students or Bridgeport adults who have attended college. There is a need to coordinate the various kinds of volunteers and provide them where most needed and where their particular talents could best be used.

In recent years Bridgeport has been well served by the mentoring program of MAACS (Mentoring for Academic Achievement and College Success) sponsored by the Bridgeport Public Education Fund. As many as thirty other local and regional agencies and organizations are willing to help provide mentors and friendly advice.

Intense outreach and support systems are provided by the Upward Bound and Talent Search programs, designed to provide strong academic support to hundreds of students who will most likely attend college if they are given extra encouragement. One important objective would be to serve thousands rather than hundreds of the 6,000 Bridgeport students of high school age.

An issue for the high schools is keeping track of all the “helpers” and assigning them to the students who would benefit most. Not all students need tutors or mentors, but many do. An adult with college experience can be helpful in advising and encouraging those students whose parents never attended college. The computerized student academic information system (SAIS) proposed and implemented in BHEA’s 2004-05 discussions can be used to keep a record of who was tutored or helped, and by whom. Such resources must be allocated where needed.

Recommendations for Success

1. A central coordinating body, perhaps the Bridgeport Public Education Fund, which is already heavily involved in recruiting volunteers to work in the schools, should be asked to coordinate these efforts and attract more participants.
2. A clearinghouse should be established for tutoring needs and volunteer resources available, including those provided by business and professional firms who might help the schools. All high school counselors should know how tutors and mentors are assigned and how to access resources.
3. Volunteers and tutors need training, orientation, and a handbook on policy and procedures to guide their work, make the best use of their talents, and help them plan accountability.

4. Bridgeport's Mayor, City Council, Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, and local college and university leaders should use public occasions to acknowledge volunteers and encourage more citizens to become involved.
5. The universities should actively encourage participation by their students in mentoring and tutoring in the Bridgeport Public Schools. Each university might appoint an urban school coordinator whose assignment would include tracking students who serve as interns, volunteers, tutors, or mentors, and the high school students with whom they are working.

IV. WHAT WILL CONNECTICUT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES DO TO HELP BRIDGEPORT YOUTH TO PREPARE FOR AND SUCCEED IN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Recommendations for Success

The colleges and universities should

1. Identify faculty members who are willing to work with Bridgeport teachers to promote student success by strengthening the academic content of each course and sequence of courses, PreK – Grade 16. Some will agree to advise and work in the schools or teach and demonstrate their skills in preschool through upper grades.
2. Select faculty members to partner with Bridgeport teachers, to mentor students as a team. Universities and colleges could also hire Bridgeport teachers part-time (as several do now) to help prepare future teachers.

3. Track the numbers successfully recruited from each high school and determine how they can be increased. For example, universities could recruit and admit a cohort of fifteen to twenty-five qualified students who would first attend summer school, receiving intensive instruction in writing and technology, prior to becoming college freshmen in the fall. This is a logical expansion of Upward Bound and other proven fast-track outreach programs. The new pilot program at Housatonic Community College is an excellent model for other colleges and universities to consider for modification and/or adoption.
4. Develop more dual enrollment programs (high school students taking college courses), reaching down to tenth- and eleventh-grade students who can benefit from advanced courses.
5. Work to develop a culture on college campuses that will encourage and support Bridgeport students, especially for their first two years. Each new student might be assigned an “academic buddy,” a peer counselor who can help him or her through the major challenges of attending college alongside students who have many more resources. Bridgeport students may need structured help with academic issues, finances, and the complex financial aid system.
6. Partner with entire high schools, moving beyond the special magnet and career preparation partnerships and offering summer, after-school, and vacation programs, some with Bridgeport employers. High school students who have been engaged in this way will be much more likely to attend college.
7. Find ways to encourage their faculty and students to serve with Bridgeport teachers on the Superintendent’s professional development committee and to assume mentoring and tutoring roles.

8. Take steps to encourage more students to move naturally from their second year at a public community college to a four-year college or university, public or independent.

In addition, funds should be sought to enable area colleges and universities to work with the Bridgeport Public Schools to develop small (400 students) early-college high schools, reaching out to able but struggling (or talented but bored) tenth graders and providing them with a more demanding and exciting program of challenging academic studies.

IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

The ideas presented for action here will require several years of hard work. The BHEA offers the following suggestions to support the implementation of the recommendations:

1. The Superintendent of Schools and the Bridgeport Board of Education should consider holding public hearings leading to approval of the revised policy on school mission,

that all Bridgeport students should graduate from high school prepared to succeed in further education and training.

The Mayor of Bridgeport, the City Council, and business leaders should be urged to attend the public hearings to support the new policy.

2. Using the results of the instructional assessment being carried out by the National Urban Alliance, the Superintendent and high school principals should work with teachers and professors to redesign the curriculum to provide rigorous college preparation classes for all students, in English, mathematics, science, languages, history, and technology. The school system's staff

should set a specific, realistic two-year goal for raising Bridgeport's high school graduation rate (e.g., by 25 percent) and increasing the number of college applications (e.g., by 50 percent), using the resources proposed in this report. Teachers should set a goal to raise the students' SAT scores and the CAPT scores to the state average.

3. Bridgeport area universities should encourage their faculty members to work as partners with Bridgeport's teachers to align the grades 7-12 academic courses with state, national, and university expectations, and to provide classroom teachers with rigorous advanced courses to strengthen their content base and pedagogy. In addition to seeking outside funding, the universities and city schools could build this service into faculty and teacher workload and recognize such work accordingly.
4. Higher education institutions should seek and commit resources to provide principal preparation programs (6th year or doctoral).
5. Community organizations and area universities should expand the number of tutors, mentors, and volunteer advisors so that each student can develop a plan for college, get advice, and find extra help. These efforts can build on the MAACS program, on high school advisory periods, faculty teams, and other existing models.
6. The city should make GEARUP a continuing federal, state, and city commitment, for all grades 7-12 students, to promote visits to colleges, parent awareness, financial aid advice, and other support. The Bridgeport Higher Education Alliance and Bridgeport school officials together should review the annual evaluation and outcomes of GEARUP and make useful changes.

7. School and university leaders should develop a plan to increase the number of students accepted by state universities and the major independent universities in the greater Bridgeport area. To raise the retention rate of Bridgeport students, these institutions should provide entering students with academic, financial, and peer counseling support for the first two years.
8. The Mayor of Bridgeport and the City Council should support the Board of Education's policy of expecting all high school students to be prepared for post-secondary education when they graduate. These partners in supporting the schools' mission should be publicly acknowledged.
9. The Bridgeport Higher Education Alliance should meet often enough to monitor educational progress and suggest next steps, reporting to the Bridgeport Board of Education and to universities and colleges at regular intervals, with a public summary of findings and recommendations, building on this report and then raising expectations in future years. The Superintendent of Schools and the president of one of the area higher educational institutions should co-chair the Alliance.

The Bridgeport Board of Education received a progress report on the work of the Alliance on May 23, 2005, from Acting Superintendent Clarence Tolbert, high school principals Ronald Remy and Dudley Orr, and NESDEC consultants Joseph Cronin and Richard Goodman. Following discussion, the board voted unanimously "strong appreciation for the work of the Alliance to date, and our intention to support them in every way possible going forward."

Through grants to the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and Newman's Own Foundation supported this effort to find ways to improve the academic achievement of all students in Bridgeport so they are prepared to succeed in higher education.

THE BRIDGEPORT HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCE

Chairman, Neil Albert Salonen, President, University of Bridgeport

Albertus Magnus College: Sister Helen Kieran, Richard Lolatte, Joan Venditto

Bridgeport Public Education Fund: Marge Hiller, Emery Sykes

Bridgeport Public Schools: Ruth Garth, Nancy Geter, Henry Kelly, Dudley Orr, John Ramos,
Ronald Remy, Hector Sanchez, Clarence Tolbert

Central Connecticut State University: James Jost

Connecticut Charts-A-Course: Darlene Ragozzine

Connecticut State University System: German Bermudez, Estela Lopez

Cooperative Educational Services: Nancy Cetorelli

Fairfield University: Sandra Billings, Karen Creecy, Georgia Day, Wendy Kohli, Melissa Reardon Quan,
Emily Smith, Cynthia Swift

Housatonic Community College: President Janis Hadley, Marianne Tecun

Sacred Heart University: Edward Malin, Patricia Walker

Southern Connecticut State University: James Barber, Marvis Brown-Arnold, Sasha Gay-Benjamin

University of Bridgeport: Allen Cook, James Ritchie

Bose Corporation: Jason Brisbois

Bridgeport Regional Business Council: President Paul Timpanelli

Others who attended at least one meeting:

Bridgeport Mayor: John Fabrizi

Bridgeport Board of Education: Maximino Medina, Alice Nealon, and Jack O'Connell

Carnegie Corporation: Barbara Gombach

Connecticut College: Paula Ladd, Dena Wallerson

Connecticut State Department of Education: Dudley Williams

Eastern Connecticut State University: Tuesday Cooper

Trinity College: Anthony Berry, Janice Jones, Shayla Titley

United States Coast Guard Academy: Howard Dunn, Jr.

University of Connecticut: Joseph Renzulli, Richard Schwab

University of New Haven: Shirley Wakin

Wesleyan University: Nancy Hargrave-Meislahn

Yale University: Joseph Mahoney

Resource staff: Joseph Cronin and Richard Goodman, New England School Development Council

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