

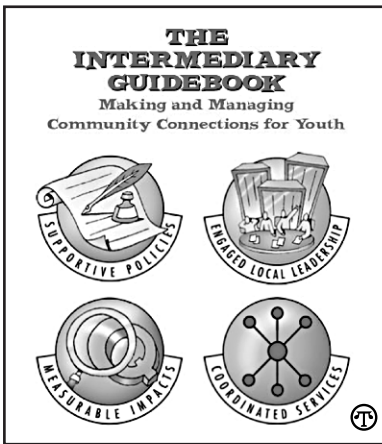
# Connecting Schools and Communities

(NAPSA)—The workforce of tomorrow will get the training it needs today, thanks to an exciting effort that brings together educators, businesspeople, workers, parents and others to support high school youth as they plan for college and career futures.

At a time when a high school diploma isn't sufficient education for economic success, too many young people leave high school unprepared for either college or the workplace—a crisis for students, families and their communities. Fortunately, innovative organizations are building and strengthening school-community connections to help school systems nationwide improve young people's opportunities to succeed after high school.

In Greater New Orleans, for example, the MetroVision School-to-Career Partnership has organized groups of employers that support high school academies in a number of industries, such as culinary arts, health care, information technology and financial services. MetroVision makes it easier for schools to identify internships and jobs, connect young people to college and create other opportunities for local youth.

MetroVision is one of the 50 organizations that have formed the Intermediary Network. Coordinated by two national groups, Jobs for the Future in Boston and the San Francisco-based New Ways to Work, Intermediary Network members



**Connecting school to the workplace may help schools better spark young people to achieve and succeed, educators agree.**

believe their organization promotes young people's self-confidence about their abilities, increases their connections to adults and opportunities and fosters the academic and work-related skills they need to succeed.

By making it easier for the very separate worlds of school and the workplace to interact and collaborate, schools can better spark young people to achieve and succeed. The task: to help teachers and administrators impart greater understanding to high school students about the options for further education and good employment.

Chambers of Commerce, Workforce Investment Boards, non-profit Business-Education Alliances—a

range of different local institutions are taking on important "intermediary" roles, reducing administrative burdens on both schools and their community partners. These organizations troubleshoot the day-to-day operations of student or teacher internship programs, encourage high quality and efficiency in programs and build support among businesses and the public for efforts to improve young people's sense of their options for the future. Successful examples of their work include:

- In Austin, Texas, the Capital Area Training Foundation (CATF) has created "Hire the Future," a summer employment initiative. This past summer CATF worked with city and county governments, 11 school districts and over 500 employers to support young people in over 2,300 jobs and internships.
- In Los Angeles, UNITE-LA serves about 40,000 students and educators, with strong support from local employers, large and small.
- The Philadelphia Youth Network, in collaboration with the city and the United Way, developed a set of "core standards" to guide the city's many youth programs toward effective learning and career-planning activities.

For more information and a free copy of "The Intermediary Guidebook," a primer on building strong ties among schools, workplaces and other community institutions for the benefit of local youth, go to [www.intermediarynetwork.org](http://www.intermediarynetwork.org).