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Archived by Joshua M. Beck
November 22, 2000

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Secondary Schools in a New Millennium
Errata

Page 5	Five lines from bottom of page should read "--mostly **not** through increased births..."
Page 6	Five lines from bottom of page should read "The fact is that people **'melt'** by marrying others..."
Page 9	The key is omitted. Shaded states are states where at least 20 percent of the population will be over 65.
Page 10	The complete title of the graph's source is ***Postsecondary Education*** *Opportunity*. The **Mortenson** Research Seminar ...
Page 15	The numbers in the table (that continue to page 16) are in thousands.
Page 16	The numbers in the table from *Kids Count 1997* are in millions.

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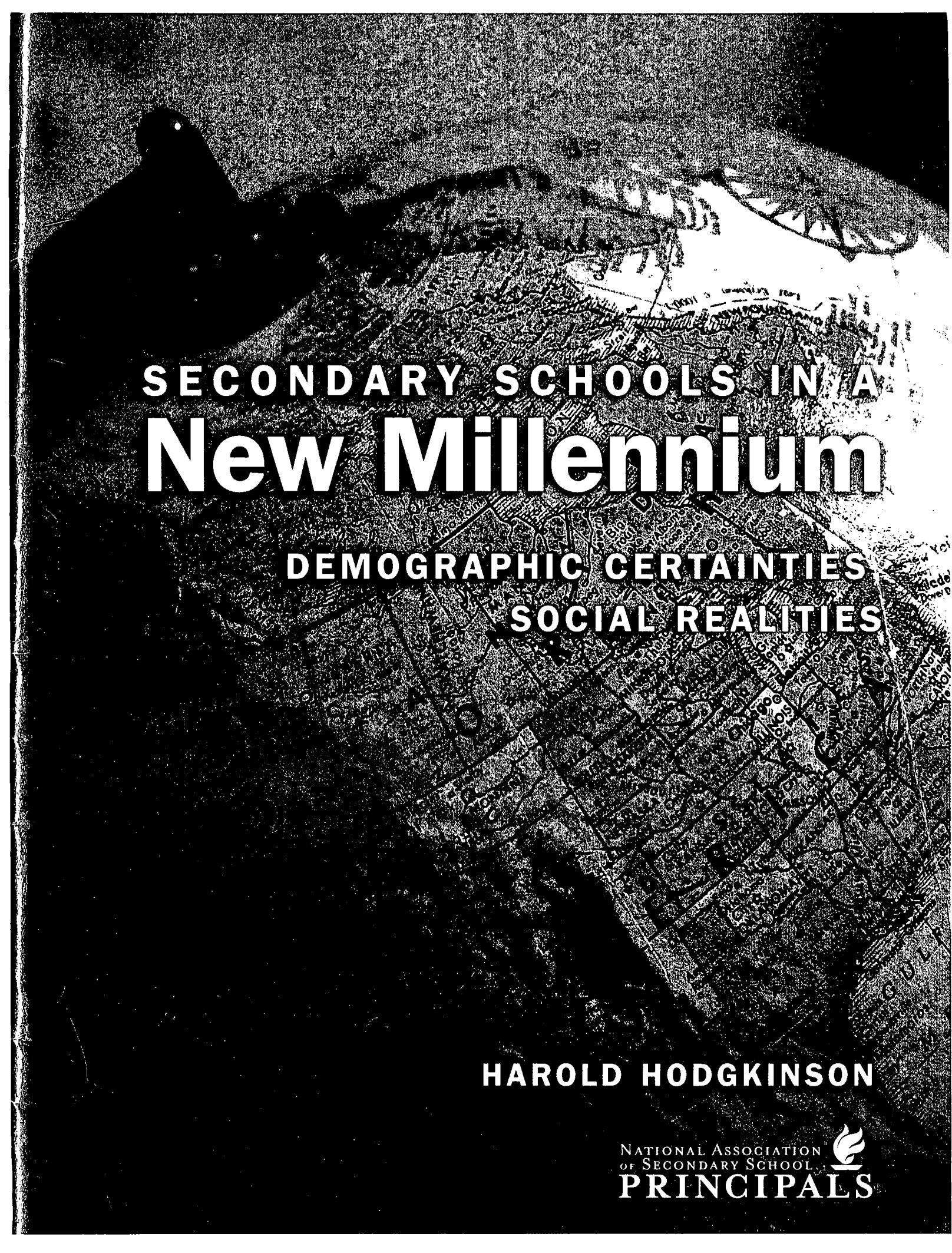

SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN A New Millennium

DEMOGRAPHIC CERTAINTIES SOCIAL REALITIES

HAROLD HODGKINSON

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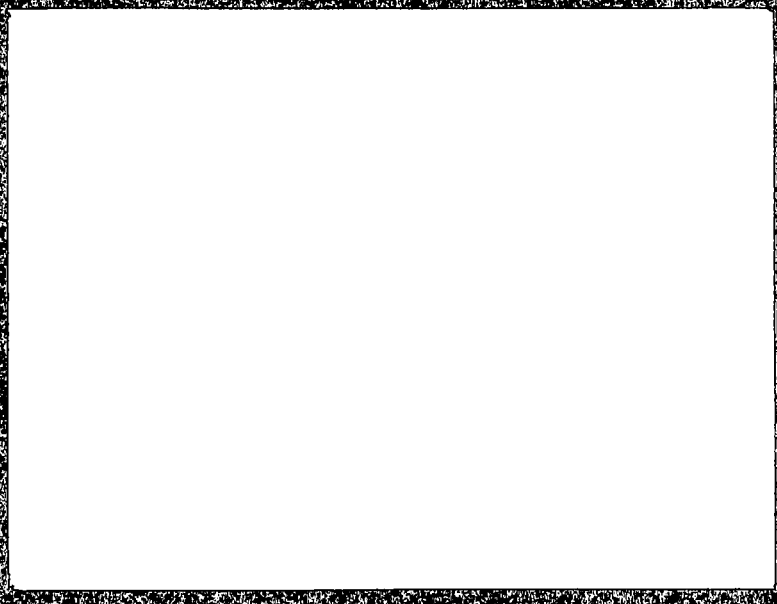

Working Towards Excellence:

Early Indicators From Schools Implementing New American Schools Designs

New American Schools
October 1996

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INTRODUCTION

New American Schools

Working Towards Excellence: Early Indicators From Schools Implementing New American Schools Designs

Introduction

Across America, schools, districts, and states have joined a partnership designed to help teachers and students reach high standards. The partnership was established to create New American Schools, schools that embody the best principles and practices of educational excellence, and to ensure that there are places in this country where good schools are the norm, not the exception.

The school is the center of student learning, and thus is at the center of the partnership. Research by the RAND Corporation, which evaluates the New American Schools effort, indicates that most schools need help to make the kinds of changes necessary to dramatically raise student achievement. The seven New American Schools Design Teams, and other comprehensive school assistance organizations, can provide that help. They work with teachers and administrators to build and execute a solid plan for strengthening teaching and learning environments and aligning all elements of schooling around a shared vision of excellence. If districts and states commit to supporting the work of schools and Design Teams and dismantling the barriers that inhibit their ability to transform teaching and learning, the results are impressive.

Some New American Schools have been involved in the partnership for three years. Others have joined within the last year or two. So far, the trends are encouraging, and the early evidence is promising. One important early result is the recognition that no one partner can accomplish this mission alone. Schools; Design Teams; districts; states; local partners including teachers' associations, business coalitions, and community groups; and external partners like New American Schools must all take responsibility for making hard decisions, taking bold action, and holding themselves accountable for achieving one shared mission: significantly improved student performance. Without this sense of shared responsibility, no reform can succeed.

New American Schools represents an unprecedented effort to bring together comprehensive, whole-school change with systems-level restructuring to bring excellence to a large proportion of schools in selected districts and states around the country. The information on the following pages reflects the progress made in schools during two years of design demonstration and the first year of bringing the designs to scale within these communities. It focuses on both instructional and organizational strategies for improvement within schools.

New American Schools Designs: Built on Solid Evidence

Each New American Schools design is unique, offering a vision and a blueprint to guide the long and intense process of transformation. However, all of the designs share a commitment to educational practices that research indicates help schools raise student achievement.

A 1995 report by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (CORS), *Successful School Restructuring*, concluded that, while no individual structural reform guarantees student improvement, there are elements of restructuring that contribute to success. Based on data from more than 1500 schools nationwide and field studies of 44 schools in 16 states, CORS concludes that increased student achievement is linked to:

- Shared governance that gives teachers a role in setting school policy and influencing practice;
- Structures such as teaching teams that increase and encourage collaboration among teachers;
- Professional development that puts skills into a context consistent with the overall school mission and restructuring efforts;
- Autonomy that allows schools to develop and implement a process of change tied to high standards;
- Small school size, which contributes to a culture of trust and communication; and
- Parent and community involvement in and support for school programs and restructuring efforts.

All seven New American Schools Design Teams incorporate these components of excellence into their work with schools.

A 1995 report by the General Accounting Office, *Schools and Workplaces: An Overview of Successful and Unsuccessful Practices*, provides further support for comprehensive, design-based assistance:

> "The evidence that we reviewed consistently demonstrated the need to integrate mission and key practices. No one practice, by itself, seems to ensure success. **The missions in schools were focused on student learning**. Work environment practices consistent with this included providing safe and orderly sites, encouraging parents' involvement and collaboration among staff, fostering leadership for instructional improvement, and authorizing school-level problem solving. Human resource practices included school-based control over entry and

exit of staff... and the encouragement of professional development. **In terms of curriculum and instruction, successful schools established academically rigorous and well-focused curricula, provided effective and engaging instruction, exposed all students to challenging curricula and instruction, and ensured that students who needed extra assistance were given opportunities for success"** p.3; (emphasis added).

Schools working with Design Teams have found the practices discussed in these two studies at the core of their work. The designs are built on a proven research base of what works for students. While each Design Team offers a unique vision and creative implementation plans tailored for individual schools, all of the designs reflect the use of practices that have proven effective at helping schools improve student performance.

Demonstrating Progress

There are several ways to observe the progress of New American Schools and how partnerships between schools and Design Teams have helped students and teachers reach high standards.

1. Visit demonstration sites and talk to students, parents, and teachers. They can articulate and demonstrate their experiences with implementation. Schools around the country have been working with each of the Design Teams for several years and offer a chance to see the designs in place and learn first-hand how they have supported the efforts of transforming schools.

2. Investigate the early data. It reflects improved teaching and learning in New American Schools. None of the schools working with Design Teams has requested waivers from state and local tests; all have operated as promised within the accountability systems in place in their states and districts. After two years of implementation, many schools have experienced improvements in attendance and completion rates and a reduction in disciplinary incidents. Schools are also beginning to see glimpses of improvement in student achievement. Testimonials by parents, teachers, and students reinforce this early data.

3. Review the comprehensive data collection, analysis, and reporting plan developed by the RAND Corporation to evaluate improvements in student achievement over the next five years. The plan guarantees consistent, high-quality information about student achievement in New American Schools.

The evidence indicates that the seven New American Schools Design Teams are helping teachers and administrators create teaching and learning environments that aim to support all children in achieving at high levels.

The following pages paint a picture of what is happening in schools implementing New American Schools designs. As each design differs in the approach, pace, and sequence of implementation, the story unfolds differently across designs in the early years of implementation. The trend is clearly positive. Schools are refocusing on student achievement, engaging students and teachers more actively and responsibly in their learning and teaching, building climates conducive to learning, involving parents and community members, and building a vision for improvement that will carry them into the next century.

For more information on specific results or implementation, please contact the individual Design Teams. Contact information is provided at the end of this booklet.

ATLAS COMMUNITIES

New American Schools

ATLAS COMMUNITIES

The ATLAS Communities design is a dynamic model for the vision and daily operation of school communities. Implementation of the design revolves around pathways, which are feeder patterns of schools from kindergarten to grade 12. Teams of teachers from across each pathway work together to design curriculum and assessment strategies based on locally-defined standards and, in collaboration with parents and administrators, to implement sound policies and management structures that support improved teaching and learning. ATLAS is a coalition of education reform projects initiated by Ted Sizer of Brown University, James Comer of Yale University, Howard Gardner of Harvard University, and Janet Whitla of the Education Development Center.

Where is the Design in Place?

Eleven pathways or partial pathways in both urban and rural areas across the country are ATLAS Communities. Some are in high-performing, achievement-oriented communities; others are in districts with histories of low academic performance and low family involvement. Student populations are generally diverse, both culturally and economically. In all cases, schools in these pathways have made significant progress towards their improvement goals within as little as two years of working with the design. The ATLAS pathways are located in Gorham (Maine), Norfolk (Virginia), Prince George's County (Maryland), Memphis (Tennessee), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), and several districts in the greater Seattle (Washington) area.

Early Indicators of Progress

Recognition

- Redbook magazine named Norview High School, an urban school in Norfolk, Virginia, one of the best schools in the nation; Norview was the only Virginia high school recognized in the "innovation" category.

Student Achievement

- The Prince George's County pathway elementary school reported that reading test scores have increased by up to 30 percent since 1992, while the middle school reported increases in test scores in math, language usage, science, and social studies over that same period. The proportion of students scoring "satisfactory" or "excellent" on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program increased from nine to 28 percent in these areas from 1992 to 1995.

- In the Norfolk pathway, seventh-grade composite scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills increased in reading, writing, and mathematics. Eleventh-grade scores on the Test of Achievement Proficiency rose 15% in research, writing, and science.

- Last year, fourth graders at the Village School received the highest recorded scores for the district on the Maine Educational Assessment.

- Results of the 1995-1996 Maine Educational Assessment for eighth-grade students at Shaw Middle School are well above the state average and have shown steady improvement since 1992.

- 1995-1996 SAT scores, particularly in mathematics, were higher than scores of recent years at Gorham High. The number of students taking the test has also increased.

- The number of students at Norview High School scoring above 1000 on combined SAT scores increased over 300% since the school began work with the design.

Student and Teacher Engagement

- At Rosemont Middle School, part of the Norfolk pathway, the dropout rate declined by 24 percent from 1994 to 1995. The number of discipline infractions fell by 15 percent from 1995 to 1996, during which time the school experienced a 46 percent increase in enrollment.

- In all schools, teachers have been successful in using the ATLAS Curriculum Planner to develop interdisciplinary units driven by students' questions. Both experienced and novice teachers have reported that this way of teaching has improved student participation and energized their work as teachers.

- In the Memphis pathway, 100 percent of teachers participated in year-long study groups.

- Across all ATLAS schools, teachers and students report a higher level of student engagement.

Changes in Curriculum, Instruction, and Organization

- In addition to established state and local assessments, schools in all pathways use performance assessments and portfolios as part of their assessment systems.

- In two pathways, students are demonstrating understanding of locally-defined standards in public exhibitions at the end of fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades. The nature of the exhibition tasks (requiring critical thinking, content knowledge, and articulate presentation of ideas) has begun to shape both instruction and curriculum.

- Requests by teachers for staff positions at High Point High School in Prince George's County increased by 100% after two years of working with the ATLAS Communities design.

- ATLAS Communities management teams guide the work of all veteran pathways and schools by evaluating and refining policy to better support teaching and learning.

- Many veteran schools have made significant changes in scheduling to boost the capacity of staff to teach effectively. Some have adopted block schedules to lengthen classes, while others have reorganized to ensure that grade level teachers have common planning time. Some schools have revamped schedules to increase professional development time for teachers.

- The Gorham pathway has seen significant gains in student achievement and community participation while reducing per-pupil operating costs to 8% less than the state average.

Family and Community Involvement

- Family participation in the work of schools has increased in all established pathways. At Norview High School, parent involvement increased almost 100 percent from 1994 to 1995. Areas in which parent involvement has increased include participation in student-led conferences and enrollment in literacy training at Parent Centers.

- The Norfolk pathway established a Learning While Serving program that encourages students to spend a pre-defined amount of time each year in community service. Participating students receive special recognition on their diplomas. The program began with 30 students in 1994; in 1996, there was a 300% increase in participation, with many students on a waiting list.

Ongoing Evaluation

An integral part of the ATLAS Communities design is a self-evaluation process that includes planning, action, and reflection. The effectiveness of the design is measured by both improvement in student achievement and each community's reflective evaluation of progress toward its goals. Student achievement is measured by tests, anecdotal records, portfolios, performances, and exhibitions as determined by the individual pathways. Other indicators of progress and of the design's effectiveness include change in school climate as measured by the School Climate Survey, improved student attendance and staff morale, changes in school policies, increased family participation in pathway activities, and the extent to which other schools in the district consider or adopt pathway policies and practices.

AUDREY COHEN COLLEGE

New American Schools

AUDREY COHEN COLLEGE

The Audrey Cohen College System of Education® focuses all student learning on a complex and meaningful Purpose. The Purpose provides an organizing structure through which students master content and skills in core academic areas. Students achieve each semester's Purpose by planning, carrying out, and evaluating a Constructive Action® in which they use their knowledge and skills to benefit their community and the larger world. In the early grades, each class addresses its Purpose as a group; older students plan and implement individual Constructive Actions® with teacher involvement.

Where is the Design in Place?

There are 21 Audrey Cohen College Schools, located in five states: San Diego (California), Phoenix (Arizona), Memphis (Tennessee), Dade County (Florida), and Hollandale (Mississippi). Seventeen of the schools are elementary schools, one is a middle school, one is a junior-senior high school, and two are senior high schools.

Early Indicators of Progress

Student Achievement

- In Audrey Cohen College Schools, student performance on standardized achievement and local criterion-referenced tests met or exceeded school and district expectations. For example, Stanford Achievement Test scores of students in one San Diego elementary school improved in math, reading, and language from 1993 to 1995. The fourth-grade students at the school improved by eleven points from spring 1994 to spring 1995. Most students in a Phoenix elementary school averaged a 35 percent increase from pre-test to post-test on the district-wide criterion-referenced assessment instrument in reading, math, writing, social studies, and science across most grades. Elementary students in one Dade County school demonstrated an average increase across all grades of four points in reading comprehension, six points in math computation, and four points in math applications as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test. Fourth-grade students at another Dade County elementary school surpassed district and state results on the Florida State Writing Assessment in 1995.

- Students are also performing well on Audrey Cohen College Purpose Abilities℠ which measure students' use of complex skills and knowledge in a variety of ways, such as achieving a meaningful and realistic goal.

Student Engagement

- In all participating schools, student attendance improved and discipline problems (as measured by decreases in the number of students referred to the principal as well as by reports from teachers and school resource specialists) decreased; these trends have been consistent since implementation began.

Family and Community Involvement

- Over 100 community members per district, including business, non-profit, and service personnel, participated in Constructive Actions® initiated by students. The number of new businesses and institutions involved during the 1994-1995 school year increased by 50 percent over prior years.

Ongoing Evaluation

Students in all Audrey Cohen College Schools meet--and go beyond--local standards. The schools expect students to achieve a much more comprehensive set of standards that includes knowledge and skills as well as the ability to apply them to major challenges.

Beginning in the early grades, students are involved in self-assessment. They learn how to monitor their progress as they increasingly assume responsibility for their own learning. Students are assessed on how well they understand academic content and their ability to use knowledge and skills with increasing sophistication to achieve their Purposes. Teachers, community members, and students participate in the assessment process, which examines a range of specific abilities that students are asked to demonstrate. Audrey Cohen College has identified the abilities a student must develop to achieve the Purposes and has developed methods for measuring these abilities.

CO-NECT SCHOOLS

New American Schools

CO-NECT SCHOOLS

The Co-NECT design provides a comprehensive, technology-supported framework for school-wide and district-wide restructuring. Schools are organized around small clusters of students taught by a cross-disciplinary teaching team. Most students stay in the same cluster, with the same teachers, for at least two years. Teaching and learning revolve around authentic, interdisciplinary projects that give students an opportunity to acquire critical skills and academic understanding, as defined by the school's performance standards. A school design team, including teachers, administrators, and parents, sets goals and monitors results. The Co-NECT Design Team also assists with district-wide technology planning and the development and implementation of performance-based school accountability models.

Where is the Design in Place?

Co-NECT has been working with schools and school districts since 1992. The design has been tested and refined with the help of schools in Boston (Massachusetts), Worcester (Massachusetts), Juneau (Alaska), and Hammond (Indiana). Schools in Dade County (Florida), Memphis (Tennessee), and Cincinnati (Ohio) have begun implementation more recently. Schools implementing the design include two high schools, five middle schools, eight elementary schools, and a kindergarten through ninth grade school.

Early Indicators of Progress

Recognition

- The New England League of Middle Schools designated the Accelerated Learning Laboratory (ALL) School, a Co-NECT demonstration site, as one of six exemplary middle schools in New England for 1994.

Student Achievement

- The CSTEEP (Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation, and Educational Policy at Boston College) test battery, which includes items taken from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Urban District Assessment Consortium, was administered to a sample of students at the ALL School in the fall and spring of the first year of implementation (1993) and again in spring 1995. At the intermediate level (grades 3 to 5), there was a significant increase in all curriculum areas in scores on the group performance items, which require students to work either in pairs or groups of three or four. On the NAEP reading items, scores rose from 32 percent correct in fall 1993 to 45 percent correct in spring 1994 to 47 percent in spring 1995.

- The results for the advanced level (grades 6 to 8) at the ALL School were mixed, but were superior to comparable schools on the group performance items. The median percentage correct on performance math tasks increased from 31 percent in fall 1993 to 49 percent in spring 1994 to 80 percent in spring 1995. For performance reading tasks, scores went from 63 percent correct in fall 1993 to 65 percent in spring 1994 to 82 percent in spring 1995.

- The four Co-NECT middle schools in Dade County, which started implementation in 1995, showed significant gains on the statewide writing assessment in their first year. An average of 78 percent of students in these schools scored "3" or higher, compared to 65 percent in 1995. Gains ranged from 8 to 17 percentage points.

- At the Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School, baseline performance was strong in comparison to national and/or urban comparative data, especially in the area of science. Additionally, unlike most schools that show poor performance on items requiring students to work together, baseline performance at the Dzantik'i Heeni Middle School on cooperative items was relatively strong. Given this strong baseline performance, performance in the spring on open-ended items showed noticeable improvement, particularly in the areas of mathematical problem solving and abstract thinking skills. However, a slight decrease in performance on reading items occurred.

- Student scores on open-ended reading items rose at Scott Middle School. Whereas only 31 percent of the students who participated in the baseline assessment were able to construct meaning based on a passage they had read, 41 percent of participating students performed adequately on these items during the follow-up assessment. On items that asked students to extend meaning, performance rose from 32 percent on the baseline assessment to 46 percent on the follow-up assessment. Teachers at Scott Middle School achieved their goal of improving students' abilities to work cooperatively. On a majority of math and science performance items, the percentage of students who successfully completed the task rose by at least 10 points from the baseline assessment in the fall of 1994 to the follow-up in the spring.

Student Engagement

- All Co-NECT sites have experienced increased student engagement in learning activities, as evidenced by fewer student behavior problems and disciplinary incidents, student enjoyment of and adeptness with the design's emphasis on technology, and greater student ownership over their project work.

Family and Community Involvement

- All demonstration sites have reported a marked increase in parent involvement and support for the schools' programs. At the ALL School, about 95 percent of parents regularly attend parent-teacher conferences; a subset of this group participates in school governance and management and classroom management training to equip them to support teachers' participation in professional development activities. A survey taken in 1995 indicated that parents are particularly happy with the increased opportunities for students to use technology, the school's project-based curriculum, and the new multi-age grouping policy.

Ongoing Evaluation

In addition to ongoing tracking of performance on state and local assessments, Co-NECT has two primary strategies for measuring and tracking progress in Phase 3. First, the Design Team plans to continue to work with CSTEEP to track student performance in reading, writing, science, and mathematics at all Co-NECT Schools. Plans call for approximately 1,200 students to be tested in the spring of 1996.

In addition, teams of Co-NECT teachers will visit new sites in Memphis and Dade County as part of the Critical Friends program, through which teachers in Co-NECT Schools provide support, advice, and guidance to one another. On these visits, team members attend classes, interview principals and teachers, "shadow" students, study samples of student work, and speak with parents and other members of the community. At the end of each visit, the Critical Friends team presents a confidential consensus report to the district and the participating schools, identifying areas of progress as well as remaining challenges.

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING OUTWARD BOUND

New American Schools

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING OUTWARD BOUND

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) offers a curriculum centered on "learning expeditions" developed by the teachers in each school, with the support of the Expeditionary Learning staff and teachers in other Expeditionary Learning schools. Consistent with state and district standards, learning expeditions explore topics in depth inside and outside of the classroom. Usually interdisciplinary, they involve challenge, teamwork, and learning by doing. They aim to develop not only intellectual ability, including mastery of core academic content and skills, but physical fitness, craftsmanship, and character. The design requires deep and focused instruction, flexible block scheduling, heterogenous grouping, and multi-year student-teacher assignments.

Where is the Design in Place?

The 9 pilot schools that implemented Expeditionary Learning beginning in 1993 include three elementary schools and one high school in Dubuque (Iowa), an elementary school and a middle school in Portland (Maine), a kindergarten through twelfth grade school in Denver (Colorado), a middle/high school in New York City, and a two-way bilingual school serving kindergarten through eighth grade in Boston (Massachusetts). Three additional elementary schools in Dubuque began implementing Expeditionary Learning in 1995. In addition, eight schools in San Antonio (Texas), five in Memphis (Tennessee), five in Cincinnati (Ohio), two in Baltimore (Maryland), and two in Seattle (Washington) have begun implementation within the last year.

Early Indicators of Progress

Recognition

- *The New York Times* recently profiled the School for the Physical City, an ELOB demonstration site, noting its successes with a traditionally low-achieving school population.

Student Achievement

- An independent three-year evaluation of Expeditionary Learning in the 10 pilot schools, conducted by the Academy for Educational Development (AED), and a smaller study by a team from the University of Colorado School of Education have provided data on all aspects of implementation and results of the design. The information in this section comes primarily from these two studies.
- In Boston, the Raphael Hernandez School ranked 11th in math out of 76 elementary schools and 17th in reading on the Stanford 9 Test in having the lowest percentage of fifth-graders whose proficiency was below grade level.

- In Dubuque, three-year longitudinal comparisons of grade six mean scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills show a significant increase in reading in two schools and a significant increase in mathematics in two schools.

- At King Middle School in Portland, Maine, a school with a high level of poverty and many recent immigrant children, eighth-grade scores on the Maine Tests of Educational Achievement rose significantly in 1996 in all seven curriculum areas tested. Scores went from below the state average in all seven areas to above the state average in six of the seven. The rate of improvement at King far exceeded that for the state in every curriculum area. The school also went from performing below the range of demographically similar schools in six curriculum areas to performing above the top of the range in six.

- In New York City, where the Degrees of Reading Power test is used, three-year longitudinal comparisons show significant increases in grades seven and eight. Test results from 1996 indicate that 75 percent of students at the School for the Physical City were reading at or above grade level, compared to 47.5 percent for the whole city. The school was ranked 29th of 226 junior high schools in the city.

- McKinley Elementary School's fourth graders improved their scores on Cincinnati's Fourth-Grade Proficiency Test by 26 percentage points in math, 23 in citizenship, and six in reading from 1995 to 1996. These increases occurred in the first year of design implementation. In all five areas tested, McKinley's fourth graders achieved a higher rate of proficiency than the district and state average. Sixth graders at McKinley scored higher than the district and state average in reading (89 percent proficiency) and science (46 percent proficiency).

- Two-thirds of King Middle students scored above the 50th percentile in reading and math on a state mandated test; a substantial percentage (38.9%) scored in the upper quartile.

- Scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills improved over the three-year period since Table Mound Elementary School began work with the design. Fourth graders increased their scores from 39% to 80% (national percentile rank). Mean math scores for sixth graders rose from 47% to 58%, and mean reading scores rose from 45% to 51%. The percentage of students scoring in the highest quartile increased dramatically, from none to 30%.

Student and Teacher Engagement

- The AED study finds students are more motivated to achieve, and two-thirds of both sixth-grade and high-school students said expeditions helped them learn. Students have taken responsibility for their learning. The majority of students and teachers reported that students are actively engaged in learning, work hard both to plan and carry out expeditions, and have benefitted from working collaboratively.

- Teachers clearly believe Expeditionary Learning's program of staff development has improved their ability to teach students of different ability levels in the same class; be more of a guide or facilitator in helping students discover what they are supposed to learn rather than an expert providing the "right information;" assess students academically and socially; learn from their colleagues; use parents and outside experts in the classroom; be more confident as teachers; and renew and rediscover themselves as learners.

- Attendance at all grade levels in all Expeditionary Learning schools is high, with an average of well over 90 percent of all possible days. The School for the Physical City in New York City reported the second highest attendance of all of New York City's 1000 schools. In addition, rates of detention are extremely low, and suspensions and other indicators of disciplinary problems are down in all Expeditionary Learning schools.

Changes in Curriculum, Instruction, and Organization

- The majority of teachers in every ELOB school has developed and implemented "learning expeditions" at every grade level. Teachers in all Expeditionary Learning schools reported in AED surveys that students attained a high quality of student work in learning expeditions--often higher than they had ever attained in the past. Fifteen schools that decided to become Expeditionary Learning schools in 1995 made their decisions primarily because of the quality of student work they saw being produced in the pilot schools.

- In every ELOB school, there have been significant changes in standards and assessment practices, particularly at the classroom level. Teachers have begun to develop portfolio systems and are initiating practices such as student self-assessment and reflection and the development of strong criteria for project work.

- Schools have made significant changes to their structure and organization; they are creating new schedules to allow for long periods of uninterrupted work and teacher planning time, developing multi-year connections between teachers and students, and implementing inclusion and heterogeneous grouping.

Ongoing Evaluation

ELOB is working with all schools to collect, report, and analyze regular information on student performance and to establish quality review protocols and practices in each school and between schools. School review panels may include teachers, administrators, parents, personnel from the central office or state education department, school board members, and city council members.

To begin a quality review visit, teachers, parents, and administrators discuss with the panel what they see as the strengths of the school, areas in which progress is being made, and their strongest concerns. The panel does classroom observations; conducts interviews with teachers, students, and parents; and reads a sample of portfolios. Panel members present their overall findings, including areas of strength and challenge, to the whole faculty. The faculty then uses the results to select major issues to work on during the ensuing months or year. Through this process, the school is given an opportunity to demonstrate its accountability while drawing the public into its core.

MODERN RED SCHOOLHOUSE

New American Schools

MODERN RED SCHOOLHOUSE

The Modern Red Schoolhouse (MRSh) design encourages teachers to use teaching methods tailored to identify and nurture the potential that exists in every child. Like its nineteenth-century namesake, the Modern Red Schoolhouse is based on the belief that mastery of subject matter and basic skills is the only acceptable goal for all children. Unlike the little red schoolhouse, however, the design incorporates advanced technology as a critical tool to restructure and strengthen both instruction and management in schools. The Design Team has also developed a set of high standards and helps schools create individualized plans to help all students achieve them, at whatever pace they can.

Where is the Design in Place?

Fifteen schools are implementing the MRSh design. Memphis (Tennessee) has one elementary school, one middle school, one junior high school, and one high school. Three elementary schools in Dade County (Florida) are implementing the design. In Indiana, two elementary schools in Indianapolis, two elementary schools and a middle school in Beech Grove, an elementary school in Taylorsville, and a middle and high school in Columbus are working with MRSh. One elementary school in The Bronx (New York) is also implementing the design. Another 20 schools have voted to join the initiative and are in negotiations with district and state offices.

In the original implementation sites, teachers now report (and site visits confirm) full implementation of the curriculum, technology, community involvement, organization, and professional development elements of the design. All sites will finish implementing the assessment component of the design in 1996, and will use capstone units, subject examinations, and National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) examinations to measure the achievement of their students.

Early Indicators of Progress

Student Achievement

- Consistently, elementary sites are showing an increase in average student achievement scores (normal curve equivalents) in the early grades. The largest increases in student achievement have occurred at urban sites. The most striking changes in student achievement occurred at Hansberry Elementary School in The Bronx, New York, an urban school where virtually all students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. The percentage of students who passed New York State's essential skills test rose from 22 to 50 percent in reading, and from 47 to 82 percent in mathematics from 1993 to 1995.

- In Indiana, three of four schools showed significant increases from 1993 to 1995 in the percentage of second-graders meeting state essential skill levels. The percentage at Emerson Elementary rose from 12 to 37 percent; at Central Elementary, from 64 to 73 percent; and at Taylorsville Elementary, from 68 to 74 percent.

Student Engagement

- The majority of teachers surveyed at elementary school sites reported that: the design had "a lot" of impact on student engagement (66 percent); the curriculum had a positive impact on student achievement (90 percent); the parent involvement component of the design had a positive impact on student achievement (79 percent); the use of computers for instruction and classroom management had a positive impact on achievement (90 percent); and they are strongly satisfied with their role as professionals (100 percent).

- Absenteeism fell in urban sites and disciplinary problems declined in all sites.

Ongoing Evaluation

In the spring of 1996, a more exhaustive assessment of student learning will occur. Fourth-grade students at all sites will take a national comparison examination which will allow comparisons of student achievement at MRSh sites with national data. Baseline data from 1994 will allow comparisons of changes in each school's performance over time.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION

New American Schools

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR RESTRUCTURING EDUCATION

The National Alliance for Restructuring Education--a partnership of states, school districts, and leading national organizations--has as the hallmark of its effort the Certificate of Initial Mastery, a high standard of accomplishment. The Alliance partners are committed to ensuring that all students attain a Certificate by the time they leave high school. To help all students reach that goal, the Alliance and its partners are developing high standards of student performance in core academic subjects; building better ways to measure that performance; redesigning curriculum and instruction so they are linked to standards; integrating technology into instruction to enhance the ability of students to learn at high levels; redesigning the transition from school to work; organizing health and social services to improve support for children and families, restructuring the organization and management of schools and school systems for high performance; and engaging parents and the public in the reform effort. The Alliance design is results-driven; contribution to student achievement is the only criterion for any activity in the system.

Where is the Design in Place?

The Alliance partners represent a diverse group of schools and sites--urban, suburban, and rural. Within these diverse jurisdictions, the Alliance has worked with a range of schools. Originally, the Alliance included 12 schools in three jurisdictions: three in Kentucky, three in Vermont, and six in Rochester (New York).

In 1993-94, the Alliance added an additional 44 schools: three in Arkansas, 12 more in Kentucky, four in Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), six more in Rochester, five in San Diego (California), nine more in Vermont, eight in Washington State, and two in White Plains (New York).

In 1995-96, the Alliance is operating in more than 100 schools in eight jurisdictions: the states of Arkansas, Kentucky, and Washington; the districts of Chicago, Pittsburgh, San Diego, and Rochester and White Plains, New York; and the Milton Hershey School in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Several Alliance districts, including Pittsburgh, PA and the Everett and Northshore School Districts in Washington State, are restructuring their district operations to provide substantially more flexibility and autonomy to local schools while holding them accountable for meeting student performance targets. States in the Alliance have adopted comprehensive legislation, focusing on high standards for student performance, that provides support for schools in achieving the standards.

Early Indicators of Progress

Student Achievement

- To provide its sites with a method of gauging the kind of student results the Alliance believes are important, the Alliance's partner, New Standards, is building a system that will measure student performance against challenging standards for what students should know and be able to do. The system includes performance standards, which indicate the level of performance students should demonstrate in English language arts, mathematics, science, and applied learning; reference examinations, which assess student performance in core subjects; and a portfolio system, which enables classroom instruction to be driven by the standards. Much of the system is in place. New Standards has drafted the performance standards and has administered reference examinations in English language arts and mathematics. All Alliance sites took part in the reference exams and have baseline data on student performance in those subjects. In the future, the Alliance will be able to report on progress based on those baseline assessments. The Alliance sites also took part in the field test of the portfolio system.
- The best available data on student performance in the National Alliance comes from Kentucky, where the state assessment system is, in fact, tied to high standards and where the state annually reports results from individual schools. Moreover, the Kentucky Education Reform Act includes a strong incentive system that rewards significant improvement. The Kentucky results suggest that the Alliance work is paying off by helping schools change to improve student performance. Of the 15 Alliance schools in Kentucky, 13--or 87 percent--earned cash awards in 1995, the first year of the program, compared with 38 percent of schools statewide.
- Kennedy Elementary School has seen a 25% increase on recent KIRIS scores (a state mandated test) across all grades.

Student Engagement

- Teachers using Alliance standards-driven units of study report that their students are much more engaged in their studies and are producing higher quality work than ever before.

Ongoing Evaluation

As part of the Alliance strategic planning for results process, schools are collecting data on student performance and analyzing it to plan for the coming year. The data will include results from the New Standards reference examinations, which provide a measure of student performance against high standards. Schools are also using Alliance diagnostic tools to assess their current practices and plans to achieve their desired performance results.

ROOTS AND WINGS

New American Schools

ROOTS AND WINGS

Roots and Wings is a comprehensive restructuring program for elementary schools. The program provides innovative curricula, instructional methods, and professional development in reading, writing/language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. The curricula emphasize cooperative learning, simulations, experiments, and frequent assessments. Other elements of the design include reading tutors for primary-grade children who are struggling and a family support team to address non-academic problems. The "roots" of Roots and Wings are derived from the widely-used Success For All program, which focuses on reading, writing, and language arts for elementary grades, along with tutoring, family support, and other programmatic elements. The "wings" focus on a constructivist math program and an integrated social studies/science program.

Where is the Design in Place?

Roots and Wings was piloted first in four schools in rural St. Mary's County, Maryland. There are more than 450 schools nationwide implementing Success for All, and 60 of these currently are adding the math, science, and social studies curricula that, together with Success for All, constitute the new Roots and Wings program.

Early Indicators of Progress

Student Achievement

- The assessment of Roots and Wings involves measuring changes over time on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), Maryland's state-of-the-art performance assessment in which third and fifth graders are asked to design and carry out experiments, write compositions in various genres, read and respond to extended passages, use mathematics to solve complex problems, and so on. Student responses are rated by state contractors against well-validated rubrics on a five-point scale.

- The four Roots and Wings pilot schools in St. Mary's County showed extraordinary gains on the 1995 MSPAP. Data from these schools show gains over three years in MSPAP scores for third and fifth graders and substantial gains over that time period in the percentage of students scoring at or above "satisfactory" on all six MSPAP scales. The average for all Maryland students also increased over this time period, but far less than those in Roots and Wings schools.

- At Crest Hills Elementary School in Cincinnati, fourth-grade scores on the district's proficiency test increased by 15 percentage points in math and 13 in citizenship from 1995 to 1996. In writing, students tested at a proficiency rate of 71 percent, higher than the district average.

- After one year in MathWings, total math scores on the CTBS have increased by 2.5 points among third graders, 6.2 points among fourth graders, and 8.6 points among fifth graders at El Vista Elementary School.

- Reading scores are up on state mandated tests at Hawthorne Elementary. For example, 75% of second graders were performing at grade level after only one year of using the design as measured in the fall of 1995.

- During the two year period between 1993 and 1995, Green Holly made outstanding progress on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program in every curriculum area. For example, the percentage of third graders achieving satisfactory performance increased by an average of 22% in language, math, writing, social studies, and science. The percentage of fifth graders achieving satisfactory performance increased by an average of 13 points.

- In five grade levels that were tested and compared in the district, Crest Hills Elementary School students showed equal or greater NCE gains than other schools in the district in 17 of 18 categories.

- A study by the University of Memphis recently showed substantial gains in reading across all grades at Dunn Avenue Elementary School as compared to a control group of schools not using the Roots and Wings design.

- Florida City Elementary School has seen significant increases in test scores since implementing the design; for example, first graders increased from the 12th percentile to the 28th percentile in two years on a state-mandated reading test. In 1995, third graders increased their scores in reading comprehension 13 points over the previous year.

- 85% of students at Lackland City Elementary School passed the grade level objectives in mathematics on TAAS. This represents an increase of 35 points over the previous year when the school began implementation of MathWings.

- Averaging across the six scales, the percentage of Maryland third graders scoring satisfactory or better increased by 8.6 percentage points, in comparison to a gain of 18.9 for third graders in Roots and Wings schools from 1993 to 1995. For fifth graders, students across the state gained an average of 6.4 percentage points, while those in Roots and Wings schools gained 13.0. This was true despite the fact that the Roots and Wings schools served many more children in poverty, had three times as many Title I students, and had mobility rates twice the state average.

Ongoing Evaluation

A rigorous evaluation of Roots and Wings, comparing student achievement outcomes in Roots and Wings and control schools, is under way in three schools in Dade County, Florida, and in four schools in Memphis, Tennessee. These evaluations will use individually-administered reading measures, writing samples, and performance assessments. In these and several other districts, scores on district-administered standardized tests and performance assessments also will be collected to assess student progress over time.

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New American Schools

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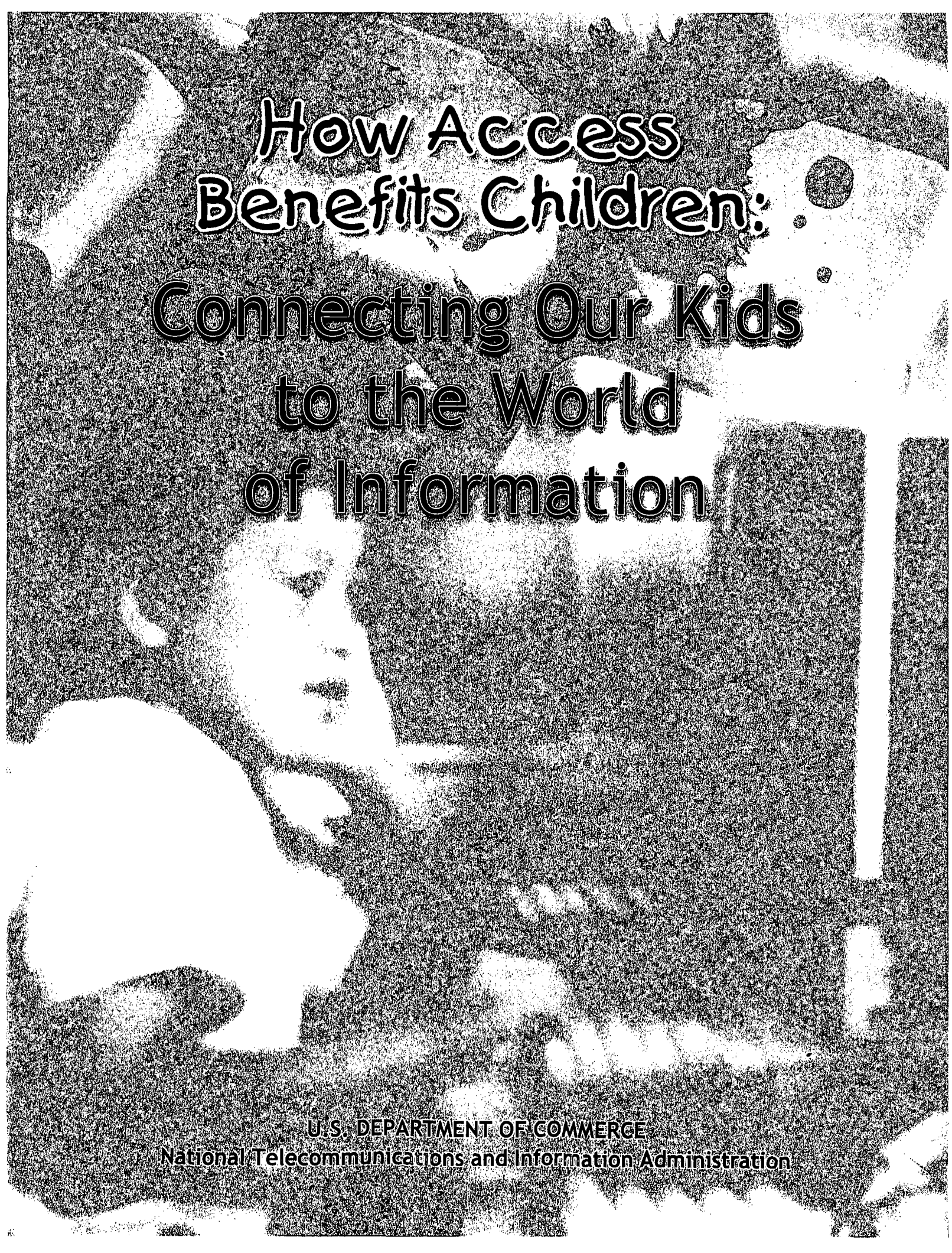

How Access Benefits Children:

Connecting Our Kids to the World of Information

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How Access Benefits Children

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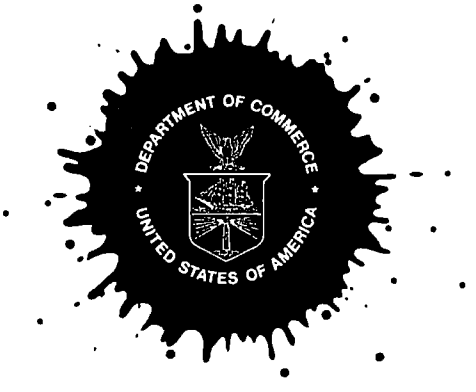

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