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**NEW AMERICAN
HIGH SCHOOLS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

HIGH SCHOOLS AT THE LEADING EDGE OF REFORM

What Are New American High Schools?

New American High Schools are preparing all students to meet the challenges of the 21st century. They are committed to achieving high academic standards for all students, preparing all students for postsecondary education, and providing students opportunities to learn about and explore careers. They have high rates of attendance and high school completion, increased college enrollment and student achievement. They differ from traditional high schools in many ways:

- ✦ **High Standards.** They have clear standards and high expectations for all students.
- ✦ **Small and Safe Environments.** They create small, safe learning environments where students feel connected to the school and are known well and supported by caring adults.
- ✦ **Teachers Working Together.** They have well prepared teachers and provide time for teachers to plan and work together.
- ✦ **Strong Principal Leadership.** They have principals who provide strong, effective leadership, and who work collaboratively with teachers on school improvement.
- ✦ **A Focus on Student Learning.** They focus on learning, not just on earning credits. They make learning relevant. They help students understand how their classroom learning can be used outside the school. They offer internships and community service learning. They provide extra help to students after school, in the summer and on weekends so they can meet higher standards. They have fewer class periods so that students can focus on subjects in depth and have time for projects and experiments.



- ✦ **Technology to Enhance Achievement.** They use technology to expand access to information, enhance instruction, manage schedules and analyze student progress.
- ✦ **Results Oriented.** They use a wide variety of student assessments to ensure that students have mastered their subjects. They use student assessment and evaluation data to continually improve instruction, staff development, management, and organization with the central goal of increasing student achievement.
- ✦ **Strong Partnerships.** They cultivate strong partnerships with parents, middle schools, postsecondary institutions, community leaders, and employers.

Why Do We Need New American High Schools?

Reports from the National Center for Education Statistics show that many students are not receiving the academic preparation needed to succeed in college and the knowledge-based economy of the 21st Century



- ✦ More than 20% of young Americans between the ages of 18-25 do not graduate from high school.
- ✦ Of the high school graduates who go on to college, half drop out by the end of their sophomore year.

To succeed in the Information Age, students need to be:

- ✦ Knowledgeable, with a high level of academic skills
- ✦ Effective communicators, thinkers and problem-solvers

- ✦ Able to apply knowledge and skills effectively in work, family and community
- ✦ Able to reason, understand and analyze information
- ✦ Technologically competent
- ✦ Continuous learners



What Is the New American High School Initiative?

The Department of Education launched the New American High School Initiative in 1996. In coordination with Blue Ribbon Schools, the department recognizes outstanding high schools that are committed to high standards for all students and have achieved excellent results. The initiative showcases schools that represent the broad range of high schools in the country: comprehensive high schools, magnet schools, redesigned vocational-technical schools, charter schools, theme schools, pilot schools and alternative schools serving the needs of at-risk youth.

As part of the initiative, the department provides information and technical assistance, conducts research and evaluations, and promotes standards-based reform efforts.



How Can Your School or a School in Your Community Become a New American High School?

Schools compete to become New American High Schools. Schools must supply compelling evidence indicating that they have undertaken standards-based, locally driven reform efforts that positively affect key indicators of school improvement and student success. Documentation must include:

- ✦ Increases in student achievement
- ✦ Increases in student enrollment at postsecondary institutions
- ✦ Increases in student attendance
- ✦ Reductions in student dropout rates

If you are interested in learning more, you can get the dates of competitions, a copy of the application, case studies of successful schools, research findings on high school reform, or even take a virtual tour through a New American High School. Visit our web site at www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/nahs or call 1-800-USA-LEARN.

What are the Benefits of Becoming A New American High School?

Schools that become New American High Schools receive immediate benefits. Schools, their districts, and communities gain public recognition of their success. Each school receives a small stipend to cover the cost of outreach and information sharing activities, including participating in a network with other New American High Schools. Schools have access to a wide variety of technical assistance, including ways to improve their accountability systems and use data for continuously improving school performance. New American High Schools also inform policy and practice at the federal and state level.

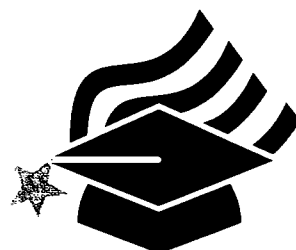
Access Our Resources and Products:

Call 1-800-USA-LEARN to receive:

- ✦ Applications (package also available on our web site)
- ✦ New American High Schools: Schools at the Leading Edge of Reform
- ✦ Aiming High: Strategies to Promote High Standards
- ✦ In Their Own Words: Students and Educators Talk about What Matters
- ✦ Key High School Reform Strategies: An Overview of Research Findings
- ✦ New American High Schools Video
- ✦ A list of New American High Schools that you can contact directly to discuss strategies that work.

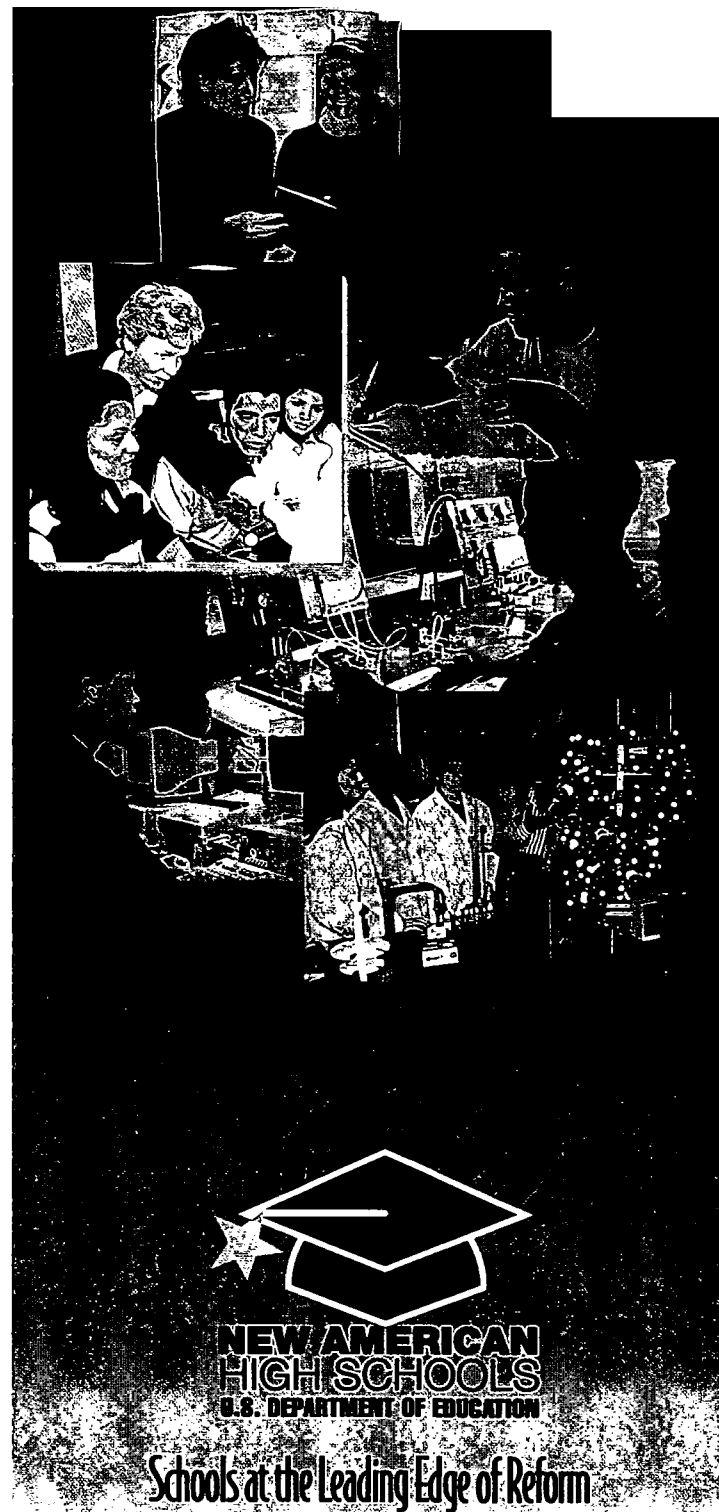
Visit Our Website

- ✦ Web Site: www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/nahs
- ✦ Virtual Tours: New American High Schools Up Close - CD-ROM video on the Department of Education's home page at www.ed.gov.



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1-800-USA-LEARN





How Does My School Become a New American High School...

Why is this important to my school...

The nation is working to reform K-12 education and build School-to-Work Opportunities systems in order to prepare all students with the high level academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century. The New American High Schools initiative is focused on high schools that are committed to ensuring that all students meet challenging academic standards and are prepared for colleges and careers.

At the national, state and local levels much attention is being paid to the lack of academic preparation being exhibited by high school students. Data from the National Center for Education Progress clearly show that students are not receiving the academic preparation needed to succeed or compete in the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century. Further, almost half of the students graduating from the nation's high schools today do not possess even the basic skills needed to successfully complete a college education or to move up a career ladder in an entry level job. While the research seems to indicate a compelling need for whole school reform, a nationwide search by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) in 1996 uncovered only 31 high schools that had undertaken comprehensive whole school reform efforts. The Consortia for Policy Research in Education has estimated that at the current rate of reform only 20 percent of high schools will have incorporated reforms by the year 2000.

The Department of Education has embarked on an aggressive strategy to address these challenges and those further highlighted by the recently released results of the Third International Math and Science Study through the New American High Schools initiative. Nationally, this initiative aspires to transform high schools into institutions, which fully prepare students to meet the challenges of a changing technological and increasingly competitive global economy. New American High Schools are places where innovative instructional techniques, leading edge technology, enhanced and targeted professional development, community service and integrated work based experiences and community based partnerships are utilized to transform the high school experience, resulting in increases in student achievement and performance. Towards the promotion of such whole school reform efforts, the Department feels it is critically important to recognize and applaud schools striving to prepare students to meet high academic standards and realizes the potential these and future New American High Schools have to offer communities across the nation.

Where we have been and where we are going...

In 1996, the Department chose Ten New American High Schools with assistance from the National Center for Research in Vocational Education for their innovation and commitment to academic excellence. These schools were also awarded the Seventh Annual *Business Week* Awards for Instructional Innovation at a national conference sponsored by the Department of Education and co-sponsored by more than 60 education, business and community partners. Throughout 1998, 1999 and into 2000, the Department intends to expand the New American High Schools initiative through a three pronged solicitation-based approach:

1. **Collaboration with the Blue Ribbon Schools Program.** Schools identified as 1998 Blue Ribbon Secondary Schools had the sole opportunity to apply for New American High School recognition during the summer of 1998. Thirty-five of the one hundred twenty 1998 Blue Ribbon Secondary School award winners applied for this recognition and seven schools were competitively selected as the 1998 New American High Schools showcase sites. The seven showcase sites received formal acknowledgement at the Blue Ribbon Schools recognition ceremony held on November 12, 1998. The 1999-2000 Blue Ribbon Secondary Schools competition will fully integrate the New American High Schools initiative through its inclusion as a permanent special emphasis area category. The 1999-2000 Blue Ribbon application requirements were published in October 1998.
2. **Open solicitation for "at-large" schools.** The Department intends to solicit nomination packages for 1999 New American High School recognition. The 1999 recognition process will be co-sponsored by a national school reform organization and expects to identify as many as 80 new national showcase sites. The application requirements will likely be published by the Spring of 1999. Formal school selections will be announced during the Fall of 1999. This solicitation will be open to any high school engaged in comprehensive school reform efforts and committed to implementing strategies reflected by the New American High School initiative.
3. **Schools nominated by partner high school reform networks.** In September 1998, the Department awarded contracts to Jobs for the Future, the Southern Regional Education Board, and Sonoma State University with the intention of linking the New American High School initiative to activities and reform strategies supported by these education reform networks. The discrete purpose of the project is to infuse New American High Schools strategies into network philosophies, technical assistance themes and products, and support and establish a nomination pool of schools for future New American High School recognition. Partner networks will nominate network schools for recognition throughout late 1999 and 2000.

What are the expectations and the benefits...

A core philosophy of the New American High Schools initiative is that the responsibility of public service accompanies the reward of public recognition. This initiative spotlights educational successes and offers meritorious schools the opportunity for public praise and validation for their accomplishments. As models of excellence and equity, New American High

Schools have much to share among themselves and with other schools that aspire to similar success. To facilitate outreach and information sharing activities, scaled to the level expected under a nationally recognized program, the Department intends to provide each recognized New American High School with a small stipend to offset the financial burden of such activities on the schools.

Beyond public recognition, designation as a New American High School will provide several key benefits for a school community. Schools will have access to technical assistance and support through network partners and apprised of cutting edge research findings and grant opportunities throughout the Department. Future activities include initiatives designed to develop a learning community of existing sites and further technical assistance and information sharing ventures.

Your questions or comments are always welcome. Feel free to direct them to the Department of Education via 1-800-USA-LEARN or contact the Office of Vocational and Adult Education at (202) 205-5451 or via email at ovae@inet.ed.gov.

The New American High Schools Initiative:
Supporting High School Improvement Through Reform Networks

The U.S. Department of Education is spending \$ 4.6 million to assist high schools with their school reform efforts. By collaborating with existing national and regional reform networks, the Department gains access to hundreds of schools already in the process of change. To support its New American High School (NAHS) initiative, the Department is contracting with three networks:

- Southern Regional Education Board, (SREB), Atlanta, Georgia
- Jobs for the Future (JFF), Boston, Massachusetts
- California Institute on Human Services/Sonoma State University in collaboration with the California Department of Education

These networks have strong working relationships with their member high schools. The network have the ability to assist high schools to implement whole-school reform strategies resulting in all students meeting both challenging academic standards and acquiring the communication, problem solving, computer, and technical skills necessary to pursue college and careers.

By funding SREB we will be able to reach their 800 plus schools in 22 states. The *High Schools That Work* initiative is a whole-school, assessment-based school improvement effort that ensures a rigorous academic curriculum for all students. Through our contact, SREB will work intensively with 25 schools relative new to their network to assist them to become NAHS. In addition, SREB staff will share the elements of the NAHS with the rest of their schools and school districts.

The Jobs for the Future (JFF) *Benchmark Communities Network* activities will serve to strengthen each participating school and district's capacity to create and sustain a district-wide reform network. Forty lead schools and up to 30 participating school districts will implement whole school reform principles that mirror the NAHS elements. By assisting fellow districts, the Department will add numerous schools to the list of practicing NAHS.

The collaboration of the California State Department of Education and Sonoma State University provides a unique opportunity for reform in California on a large scale. The focus of the New California High Schools Network will be to address technical assistance needs and increase the capacity of all 193 Network schools to institute whole school reform reflecting the NAHS strategies. The *California High School Network* was founded to follow the principles of *Second to None: A Vision of the New California High School*. With the support and funding from the State Department and expert technical assistance from Sonoma State University, this effort should result in many schools becoming New American High Schools.

ABSTRACT: NEW AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL NETWORKS AWARD
One of Three

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), Atlanta, GA
Subcontractor: MPR Associates, Berkeley, CA

- Total Award : \$1,537,000
- Award Dates : October 1, 1998 to March 31, 2000
- Network : High Schools That Work (HSTW) includes over 800 schools
- No. of Schools : 25 HSTW schools with at least 15 urban areas
- School Grants : \$10,000 for additional specialized assistance
- Evaluation : Baseline and follow-up data will help guide schools in their reform efforts. Data to be collected even after federal funding ends.
- Goal : To provide targeted technical assistance to these schools at an accelerated rate to move them toward the "ideal vision of a New American High School"
- Conference : The New American High Schools That Work will be featured at SREB's yearly summer conference
- Products : Mentor and Facilitator Guides, Final and Evaluation Reports
- Strategies : SREB and MPR will enlist mentors from the top HSTH to help these sites with school-wide improvements. In addition, each school will be provided their own School Improvement Facilitator to work with staff so all students can meet challenging academic standards, master technical knowledge and skills, and expand their understanding of career and post-secondary options.

Contact: Ione Phillips
Southern Regional Education Board
592 10th Street NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Phone: (404) 875-9211 ext. 248

ABSTRACT: NEW AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL NETWORKS AWARD
One of Three

Jobs for the Future (JFF), Boston, MA

- Total Award : \$1,534,000
- Award Dates : October 1, 1998 to March 31, 2000
- Network : JFF's Benchmark Communities Initiative
- No. of Schools : 40 "lead" schools in year one; 30 in year two
- School Districts : Seattle, Philadelphia, Rhode Island Cluster, North Clackamas, Oregon, and Boston are Phase I Districts. Phase II will add New York, Minneapolis, Kansas City, Oakland, and Fresno.
- School Grants : 5,000 for targeted professional development
- Evaluation : Benchmark Communities evaluation and assessment
- Goal : To accelerate whole school reform in high schools with the close cooperation and guidance of their school district, and to create and sustain a district-wide reform network
- Conference : High Schools in Transition Conference co-sponsored by JFF and the Coalition of Essential Schools in 1999
- Products : Whole School Change Toolkits; High Schools in Transition: Six Case Studies; Design Studios; Partners in Change: Districts, Schools, Communities
- Strategies : Several schools will serve as "Whole-School Change Design Studios." These Studios along with a Peer Learning Network will accelerate Transfer of skills and experience among participating schools. In addition, National Professional Development Institutes will be designed for Educational leaders and Coaching Institutes for teachers.

Contacts: Lili Allen
Jobs for the Future
88 Broad Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

Phone: (617) 728-4446

ABSTRACT: NEW AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL NETWORKS AWARD
One of Three

California Institute on Human Services
Sonoma State University, CA
In Collaboration with
California Department of Education

- Total Award : \$1,519,000
- Award Dates : October 1, 1998 to March 31, 2000
- Network : California High School Network—over 193 schools
- No. of Schools : 20 schools will receive intensive assistance, 173 schools will also
Benefit directly
- School Grants : \$27,000 each for 20 schools
- Evaluation : Third party evaluation will include assessment of progress toward
toward reaching NAHS goals
- Goal : To use the 20 model schools as learning centers for the remaining 193
schools in this California Network and finally as models for the
remaining 1,000 plus high schools in California.
- Strategies : The augmented network services include a series of targeted
Workshops; on-site, on-line, and on-phone technical assistance
by learning coaches; web-site support providing promising practice
descriptions; and school to school site visits.

Contact: **Dr. Eileen Warren**
California Institute on Human Services
Sonoma State University
P.O. Box 51724
Riverside, California 92517

Phone: (909) 686-4296

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In Their OWN Words

STUDENTS AND
EDUCATORS
TALK ABOUT
WHAT MATTERS



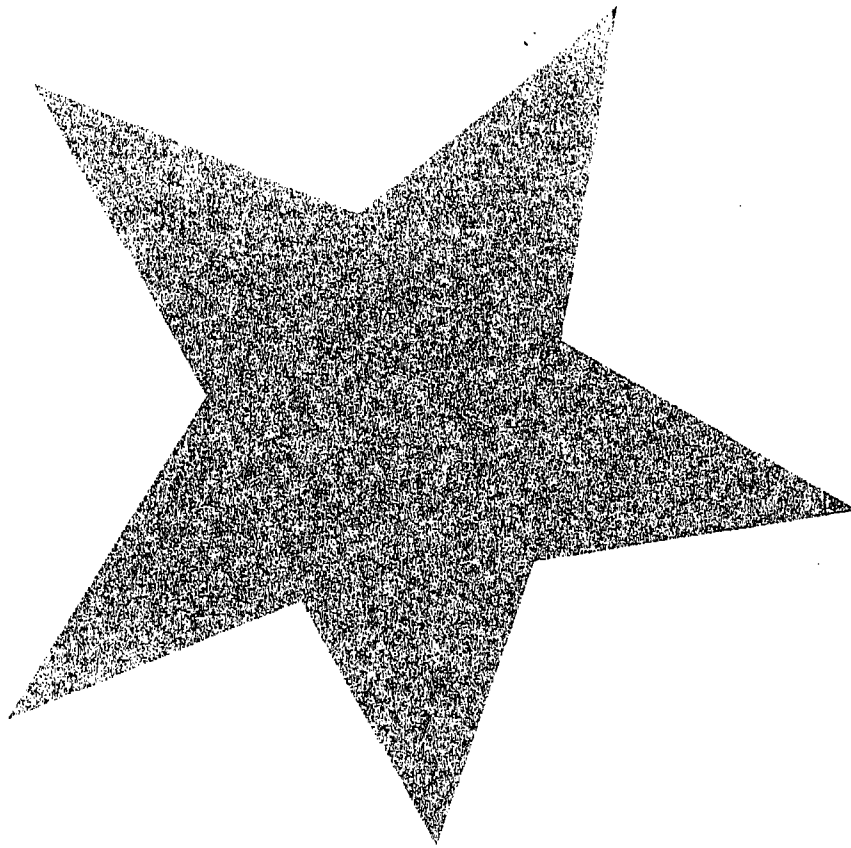
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