



# SREB

## Establishing Benchmarks for New and Maturing *HSTW* Sites

**Updated in  
2008**

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SCHOOL/SITE

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COMMITTEE COMPLETING THE DOCUMENT

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## VISION

Schools that become a part of the *High Schools That Work (HSTW)* network are expected to show progress in changing school and classroom practices in ways that improve student achievement. Schools are expected to focus on practices that have proven most effective in advancing student achievement.

True school reform is not a quick process. It is a continuous effort to make purposeful and planned changes in school and classroom practices that will result in steady progress in student achievement. School leaders must focus on closing gaps in school and classroom practices. By focusing on research-based indicators for all groups of students, gaps will close among subgroups of students leading to a higher percentage of all students meeting the performance goals. **States and SREB expect HSTW sites to show consistent progress until the comprehensive school improvement framework is fully implemented and 85 percent of all groups of students meet the HSTW Goals in reading, mathematics and science.**

Active membership in the *HSTW* network is achieved when a school satisfactorily completes items one through four in the following list of conditions. Until these items are complete, new sites will be classified as “aspiring” *HSTW* schools.

Active membership in the *HSTW* network is maintained by meeting the conditions outlined in items five through nine. Mature sites have been active members of the *HSTW* network for at least five years. They must complete items four through 10.

## Actions *High Schools That Work* Sites Agree to Take

- 1 Get at least 60 percent of the faculty (including administrators) to vote to implement *High Schools That Work* as the school improvement model.
- 2 Organize a school improvement committee composed of key academic and career/technical teachers and administrators, guidance counselors, parents, and representatives of business, industry and postsecondary education. Name subcommittees to address curriculum, transitional instruction, guidance, evaluation and staff development.
- 3 Appoint someone to coordinate *HSTW* continuous planning, staff development and technical assistance; coordinate data collection; monitor progress; foster communication; and integrate the *HSTW* Goals and Key Practices with other school improvement efforts. This person should have sufficient time to carry out these duties.
- 4 Develop a three- to five-year improvement plan. New sites will submit the plan no less than six months after the site development workshop. SREB and the state will review the plan and make recommendations for improvement. This plan should become part of the school's overall improvement plan and should include staff development.
- 5 Follow SREB's assessment guidelines in assessing in even-numbered years or a total of six assessments. This will provide baseline data and progress data for years between the baseline and the 10-year goal as outlined in this document.
- 6 Use this document to demonstrate significant progress toward fully implementing the *HSTW* improvement design and achieving *HSTW* reading, mathematics and science goals.
- 7 Show evidence that the school is raising student achievement on state assessments, retention rates, etc.
- 8 Complete the *HSTW* Annual Site Progress Report showing the strides the school is making to fully implement the *HSTW* Key Practices and Key Conditions.
- 9 Become an active member of the *HSTW* network for sharing information.
- 10 Participate in a refresher site development workshop to assist in the planning process.

## ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

All schools must follow SREB's guidelines in assessing seniors and must use one of the following options for selecting seniors to participate in the assessment:

- Option 1:** Test all seniors completing four units (or their equivalent) in a career/technical area.
- Option 2:** Test a random sample of 60 or more seniors completing four units (or their equivalent) in a career/technical area.
- Option 3:** Test ALL seniors.
- Option 4:** Test a random sample of 60 or more seniors. This sample is intended to be representative of all seniors.
- Option 5:** Contracted schools should use the sampling method specified in their contract.

In selecting students, sites **MUST** follow these guidelines:

- Do not use the completion of academic courses as a criterion for selecting students. Use the provided sampling instructions to select a random sample.
- Include special-needs students in the testing under the conditions stated in their individualized educational plans regarding participation in state standardized tests.
- Ensure all students complete all four test components: the student survey and subject tests in reading, mathematics and science.

## Understanding the Indicators for the Comprehensive *HSTW* Framework

The indicators used for the comprehensive *HSTW* framework are strongly associated with improving academic achievement. They come from *HSTW*'s seven Key Conditions and 10 Key Practices.

### *HSTW* Key Conditions for Accelerating Student Achievement

*High Schools That Work* believes everyone — teacher, school, district, local and state leaders — must work together to align policies, resources, initiatives and accountability efforts to support high schools and middle grades schools as they adopt and implement comprehensive school improvement designs. The *HSTW* Key Conditions include the following:

- **A clear, functional mission statement:** Schools need a clear, functional mission statement to prepare middle grades students for challenging secondary studies and high school students for success in postsecondary education and the workplace.
- **Strong leadership:** Each district and school needs strong and committed leaders to improve, align and benchmark curricula to high standards, to improve the quality of instruction and to raise student achievement in grades six through 12. At each high school and middle grades school, create a leadership team consisting of the principal, assistant principal and teacher leaders. School and district teams participate annually in a series of leadership development workshops aimed at more fully implementing the *HSTW* design.
- **Plan for continuous improvement:** District and school leaders create an organizational structure and process that ensures continuous involvement with faculty on what to teach, how to teach it, what students are expected to learn, how to assess what they have learned, and how they relate to each other, to the students and to the home and community.

- **Qualified teachers:** Middle grades and high school teachers have in-depth knowledge of their subject areas and of teaching strategies appropriate to students' grade levels. Middle grades teachers lacking majors in their subject areas are supported by the district to acquire them. The school and district employ teachers who have depth in their teaching fields and support them in learning how to teach well.
- **Commitment to goals:** School leaders and teachers are committed to achieving the *HSTW* Goals and implementing the Key Practices. School boards are committed to having all students complete a demanding academic core and either an academic or career/technical concentration. Continuous review of local policies and practices ensures that a strong message of high expectations is sent to both the high schools and the middle grades.
- **Flexible scheduling:** School superintendents and school boards permit high schools to adopt flexible schedules enabling students to earn more credits.
- **Support for professional development:** District and school leaders provide teachers with instructional materials, planning time and professional development for implementing new curricula and research-based instructional methods.

## *HSTW* Key Practices for Improving Student Achievement

*HSTW* has identified a set of Key Practices that impact student achievement. Following are the *HSTW* Key Practices that provide direction and meaning to comprehensive school improvement and student learning.

- **High expectations:** Motivate more students to meet high expectations by integrating high expectations into classroom practices and giving students frequent feedback.
- **Program of study:** Require each student to complete an upgraded academic core and a concentration.
- **Academic studies:** Teach more students the essential concepts of the college-preparatory curriculum by encouraging them to apply academic content and skills to real-world problems and projects. School leaders need to
  - Align core academic courses to essential state and national standards that prepare youth for postsecondary studies and careers.
  - Align student assignments, student work and classroom assessments to at least the Proficient-level standards as measured by a NAEP-referenced exam and state assessments.
- **Career/technical studies:** Provide more students access to intellectually challenging career/technical studies in high-demand fields that emphasize the higher-level mathematics, science, literacy and problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and in further education. School leaders need to
  - Develop standards, conditions and agreements for awarding postsecondary credit in high-demand career/technical fields to high school students.
  - Require senior projects with academic, technical and performance standards.
  - Provide students opportunities to work toward a recognized employer certification.
- **Work-based learning:** Enable students and their parents to choose from programs that integrate challenging high school studies and work-based learning and are planned by educators, employers and students.
- **Teachers working together:** Provide teams of teachers from several disciplines the time and support to work together to help students succeed in challenging academic and career/technical studies. Integrate reading, writing and speaking as strategies for learning into all parts of the curriculum and integrate mathematics into science and career/technical classrooms. School leaders need to support
  - academic and career/technical teachers in engaging students regularly in reading, books and articles, writing, making presentations, and using high-level reasoning and thinking skills.
  - mathematics, science and career/technical teachers working together to better align and integrate mathematics concepts and skills into assignments in science and career/technical classrooms.
- **Students actively engaged:** Engage students in academic and career/technical classrooms in rigorous and challenging proficient-level assignments using research-based instructional strategies and technology.

- **Guidance:** Involve students and their parents in a guidance and advisement system that develops positive relationships and ensures completion of an accelerated program of study with an academic or career/technical concentration. Provide each student with the same mentor throughout high school to assist with setting goals, selecting courses, reviewing the student's progress and suggesting appropriate interventions as necessary. School leaders need to:
  - Involve parents in annual meetings with students and their mentors to review progress and develop plans for the next year.
  - Develop efforts to educate middle grades parents, school and teacher leaders and students about the achievement level needed for challenging high school studies and to educate high school parents, students and teachers about the achievement level needed for postsecondary study and high-demand, high-income jobs.
- **Extra help:** Provide a structured system of extra help to assist students in completing accelerated programs of study with high-level academic and technical content. School leaders need to:
  - Support all students to become independent learners by building into their learning experiences opportunities to practice habits of successful learners such as study and literacy skills, time management and learning with others.
  - Give students easy access to opportunities to meet course standards and graduate with their peers.
  - Support teachers in forming nurturing academic relationships with students aimed at improving students' work and achievement.
  - Plan catch-up learning experiences for entering ninth-graders who are not prepared to succeed in college-preparatory courses.
  - Work with postsecondary institutions to identify 11th-graders not ready for postsecondary study. Develop special courses for the senior year to get these students prepared.
- **Culture of continuous improvement:** Use student assessment and program evaluation data to continuously improve school culture, organization, management, curriculum and instruction to advance student learning.

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Schools should begin by developing leadership teams as outlined in the SREB site development guide publication *Developing Effective Leadership Teams — Implementing the High Schools That Work Improvement Design*. Refer to this document for more information on developing leadership teams. One overall leadership team, the School Improvement Leadership team, coordinates the site action plan and the activities of the individual leadership teams: curriculum, professional development, guidance and public information, transition, and evaluation.

The School Improvement Leadership Team should assign the Evaluation Leadership Team ultimate responsibility for the completion and use of the following challenge containing indicators for the comprehensive *HSTW* framework. This document should be used to assist in verifying if student achievement has improved and if goals have been met. The Evaluation Leadership Team should begin by compiling baseline data for this report. This team should then involve other school improvement teams in establishing benchmark goals for each two-year interval based on their area of concentration. **The teams should work together to update the school improvement plan for accomplishing those goals and then share the results with the whole faculty.** The Evaluation Leadership Team will continually update this document and initiate review processes in which the other school improvement teams review the school's progress and evaluate and modify goals as necessary.

While the majority of the following indicators are based on information presented in the benchmark section of the *HSTW* Assessment Report, additional data will come from the following sources: the *HSTW* Assessment Report (student and teacher survey data), the Ninth-grade Student Survey Report, the *HSTW* Annual Progress Report and school-based data (SBD). SBD includes items such as dropout reports, retention rates, attendance information, disciplinary action reports, college placement exam results, classroom observation data and state assessment results.

## Determining Interim Benchmarks in Your Effort to Meet the 10-Year Goal

To achieve the 10-year goal, schools should establish benchmarks on key indicators regarding changes to be made in school and classroom practices in even years. **While this document has been laid out as a 10-year plan, schools are encouraged to use a six-year benchmark. The goals set for 10 years would then become the goals set for six years.**

The important point is to not only set goals but to also determine what actions must be taken by school leaders and teachers to meet those target goals. To determine certain benchmarks:

- Subtract your school's baseline percentage from the 10-year (or six-year) goal.
- Divide that total by five (or three) to get the change needed each year.
- Determine the goal for your next assessment year by adding one-fifth of the difference between the baseline and the target 10-year goal, or by adding one-third of the difference between the baseline and the target six-year goal.
- Repeat the process for the remaining three intermediate years.

The following example uses 2004 as the baseline year with 2014 as the 10-year goal.

### Example:

Students Actively Engaged	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
Students say they read 10 or more books (or their equivalent) for language arts courses.						85%

- Difference between Baseline (2004) and 10-year (2014) Goal:  $85\% - 35\% = 50\%$
- Change needed every two years:  $50\% \div 5 = 10\%$
- Benchmark for 2006: (Baseline % + Growth %)  $35\% + 10\% = 45\%$
- Benchmark for 2008: (2006 Benchmark % + Growth %)  $45\% + 10\% = 55\%$
- Benchmark for 2010: (2008 Benchmark % + Growth %)  $55\% + 10\% = 65\%$
- Benchmark for 2012: (2010 Benchmark % + Growth %)  $65\% + 10\% = 75\%$
- Benchmark for 2014: (2012 Benchmark % + Growth %)  $75\% + 10\% = 85\%$

## Indicators for the Comprehensive *HSTW* Framework

### Meeting *HSTW* Readiness Goals

- Raise the reading, mathematics, science, communication, problem-solving and technical achievement of more students to be at or above the national average.

Indicators — Meeting <i>HSTW</i> Readiness Goals	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
1. The percentage of students <b>meeting</b> the reading goal of 250						85%
2. The percentage of students <b>meeting</b> the mathematics goal of 257						85%
3. The percentage of students <b>meeting</b> the science goal of 258						85%

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

**Note:** New subject tests were administered in 2008. As a result, 2008 mean scores and readiness goals are not directly comparable to previous years. 2008 data should be used as the baseline.

### Setting a Clear Mission and Vision for Success

- The school sends a consistent message to students, families and the community about what is expected of students, teachers and administrators.

Indicators — Setting a Clear Mission and Vision for Success	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
4. Teachers report that preparing almost all students with the academic knowledge and skills needed to enter college and be successful without taking remedial courses or to enter and advance in a career is the <b>most important</b> goal of their high school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ For all students</li> <li>■ For career-bound students</li> </ul>						50% 50%
5. Teachers <b>strongly agree</b> that the goals and priorities for their school are clear.						60%
6. Teachers <b>strongly agree</b> that the surrounding community actively supports their school's instructional goals.						60%

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

## Emphasis on High Expectations, Perceived Importance of High School Studies, Extra Help and Habits of Success

- **High Expectations** — Set higher expectations and getting more students to meet them.
- **Perceived Importance of High School Studies** — Help students understand the importance of using high school to prepare for the future.
- **Extra Help** — Provide a structured system of extra help to enable career-bound students to successfully complete an accelerated program of study that includes high-level academic content and a major.
- **Habits of Success** — Help all students develop and utilize the basic organizational and study skills they need for success in all subjects.

Indicators — High Expectations	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
7. The percentage of student responses on five indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on high expectations (four to five indicators)						60%
8. Students report that their teachers <b>often</b> clearly indicated the amount and quality of work that are necessary to earn a grade of an A or a B at the beginning of a project or unit.						85%
9. Students report that their teachers were <b>frequently</b> available before, during or after school to help them with their studies.						80%
10. Students report that they usually spent <b>one or more hours</b> on homework each day.						80%
11. Students report that they <b>often</b> revised their essays or other written work several times to improve their quality.						80%
12. Students report that they <b>often</b> worked hard to meet high standards on assignments.						60%
13. Students report that their teachers <b>often</b> set high standards and were willing to help them meet them.*						75%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

\* This item is not included in the *HSTW* Selected Indices of Curriculum and Instructional Practices Associated with Student Achievement as reported beginning on page 25 of the 2008 *HSTW* Assessment Report but has been included here as it adds value to documenting school improvement efforts. This symbol will be used throughout this document to indicate such items.

Indicators — Perceived Importance of High School Studies	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
14. The percentage of student responses on nine indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on helping students understand the importance of high school studies to their future (seven to nine indicators)						75%
15. Students report that their courses are <b>sometimes or often</b> exciting and challenging.						80%
16. Students report that they <b>often</b> try to do their best work in school.						80%
17. Students report that they <b>never or seldom</b> fail to complete or turn in their assignments.						80%
18. Students report that most of their teachers <b>often</b> encourage them to do well in school.						80%
19. Students report that their teachers <b>often</b> care about them enough that they will not let them get by without doing the work.						80%
20. Students report that it is <b>very important</b> to study hard to get good grades.						85%
21. Students report that it is <b>very important</b> to participate actively in class.						85%
22. Students report that it is <b>very important</b> to attend all of their classes.						95%
23. Students report that it is <b>very important</b> to take a lot of college-preparatory classes.						80%

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

Indicators — Providing Quality Extra Help	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
24. The percentage of student responses on four indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on providing quality extra help (three to four indicators)						60%
25. Students report that they <b>often</b> were able to get extra help from their teachers when they needed it without much difficulty.						75%
26. Students report that their teachers were <b>frequently</b> available before, during or after school to help them with their studies.						75%
27. Students report that extra help they received at school <b>often</b> helped them to understand their schoolwork better.						75%
28. Students report that extra help they received at school <b>often</b> helped them to get better grades.						75%
29. Students report that they received the extra help they needed in mathematics from teachers at their school <b>a few times a week</b> .*						75%
30. Students report that they received the extra help they needed in reading from teachers at their school <b>a few times a week</b> .*						75%

Source: Benchmark Section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

Indicators — Habits of Success	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
31. Ninth-grade students report <b>often</b> outlining and taking notes from the textbook.						85%
32. Ninth-grade students report <b>often</b> reviewing the notes they take in class at home, rewriting sections if necessary.						85%
33. Ninth-grade students report <b>often</b> studying for tests with a study partner.						85%
34. Ninth-grade students report <b>often</b> studying for tests over several days.						85%
35. Ninth-grade students report <b>often</b> using a daily planner or agenda book..*						85%

Source: Ninth-Grade Student Survey Report<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not all *HSTW* sites participate in the Ninth-Grade Student Survey and may not have this data available.

## Emphasis on Rigorous and Challenging Academic and Career/Technical Content and Work-Based Learning

- **Program of Study** — Ensure that 85 percent of all high school graduates complete an upgraded academic core and a concentration. An upgraded academic core includes at least four years of college-preparatory English/language arts and mathematics and three years of laboratory-based science (four credits if the school has adopted a block schedule) and a concentration in an academic area (i.e., mathematics and science or the humanities) or a career/technical area. *A humanities concentration* consists of four or more credits each in college-preparatory/honors English/language arts and in college-preparatory/honors social studies, with at least one credit at the Advanced Placement level, and four additional credits in one or more of the humanities, such as foreign language, fine arts or additional literature or social studies courses. *A concentration in mathematics and science* consists of four credits each in college-preparatory/honors mathematics and science, including at least one credit at the Advanced Placement level. *A career/technical concentration* consists of four credits in a broad technical or career field or major.
- **Career/Technical Studies** — Increase access to challenging academic and career/technical studies, with a major emphasis on using high-level mathematics, science, language arts and problem-solving skills in the context of modern workplace practices and in preparation for continued learning.
- **Work-Based Learning** — Provide students access to a structured system of work-based and high-status school-based learning — high school and postsecondary — collaboratively planned by educators, employers and employees and resulting in an industry-recognized credential and employment in a career pathway.

Indicators — Program of Study	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
36. The percentage of students who <b>fully</b> completed the <i>HSTW</i> -recommended curriculum (all three subjects)						85%
37. The percentage of students who completed <b>at least four credits</b> in college-preparatory-level English/language arts classes						85%
38. The percentage of students who completed <b>at least four credits</b> in college-preparatory mathematics, including Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II and a higher-level course such as trigonometry, statistics, pre-calculus, calculus, Advanced Placement mathematics						85%
39. The percentage of students who completed <b>at least three credits</b> in science, including at least two credits in college-preparatory biology, chemistry, anatomy/physiology or physics/ applied physics						85%
40. The percentage of students who completed <b>at least one</b> of the concentrations below:* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ career/technical concentration</li> <li>■ mathematics/science concentration</li> <li>■ humanities concentration</li> </ul>						85%
41. The percentage of students who received the <i>HSTW</i> Award of Educational Achievement <sup>2*</sup>						75%
42. The school has a computer technology course aimed at helping students use database management, word processing, PowerPoint, the Internet and e-mail as tools for project-based learning.*						Yes

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report and School-based Data

<sup>2</sup> To earn the *HSTW* Award of Educational Achievement, students must score at or above SREB's readiness goals in reading, mathematics and science on the *HSTW* Assessment and complete a college-preparatory curriculum that meets at least two of the following requirements: four credits in college-preparatory English/language arts, four credits in college-preparatory mathematics and three credits in science, of which at least two are at the college-preparatory level. They must also complete a career/technical concentration or a concentration in mathematics/science or the humanities.

Indicators — Career/Technical Studies	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
43. The percentage of career/technical student responses on 11 indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on quality career/technical studies (seven to 11 indicators)						60%
44. CT students report that they read non-school-related materials outside of class for <b>one or more</b> hours in a typical week. <sup>1</sup>						65%
45. CT students report that they used mathematics to complete challenging assignments in their career/technical classes <b>at least weekly</b> .						75%
46. CT students report that they read and interpreted technical books and manuals to complete assignments in their career/technical classes <b>at least weekly</b> .						80%
47. CT students report that they read a career-related article and demonstrated understanding of the content <b>at least monthly</b> .						85%
48. CT students report that they used computer skills to complete an assignment or project in their career/technical classes <b>at least monthly</b> .						80%
49. CT students report that they had challenging assignments in their career/technical classes <b>at least monthly</b> .						85%
50. CT students report that they completed a project that first requires some research and a written plan before completing the task.						85%
51. CT students report that they had to meet certain standards on a written exam to pass a career/technical course.						85%
52. CT students report that they completed a senior project that included researching a topic, creating a product or performing a service and presenting it to the class or others.						75%
53. CT students report that they spoke with or visited someone in a career they aspire to.						80%
54. CT students report that they spent time on homework assigned by career/technical teachers each day.						85%
55. CT students report that they completed short writing assignments of one to three pages for which they received a grade in their career/technical classes <b>at least weekly</b> .*						65%
56. CT students report that they were required to keep a folder, portfolio or verifiable record of their accomplishments.* <sup>1</sup>						65%
57. CT students report that they used database or spreadsheet software to complete an assignment or project <b>at least once a semester</b> .*						75%
58. CT students report that they had to take a performance test containing industry standards they had to meet to pass the test.*						75%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

<sup>1</sup> Due to a change in the survey, 2008 results for this item are not comparable to previous years.

Indicators — Work-Based Learning <sup>1</sup>	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
59. The percentage of student responses on four indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on providing quality work-based learning experiences (three to four indicators)						65%
60. Students report that they observed veteran workers performing certain jobs.						75%
61. Students report that they had someone teach them how to do the work.						80%
62. Students report that their employers encouraged them to develop good work habits <b>at least monthly</b> .						85%
63. Students report that their employers encouraged them to develop good customer relations skills <b>at least monthly</b> .						80%
64. Students report that they rotated through several departments or jobs.*						75%

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

<sup>1</sup> Percentages reported in the 2008 *HSTW* Assessment report are based on all students who reported having a job as part of a formal work or training program (co-op, apprenticeship or internship) in the past 12 months. Due to a change in the survey, 2008 results for work-based learning items are not comparable to previous years.

## Emphasis on Engaging Students in Completing Challenging Content

- **Students Actively Engaged** — Have each student actively engaged in the learning process.

Indicators — English Curriculum/Literacy Across Curriculum	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
65. The percentage of student responses on 10 indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on literacy across the curriculum (seven to 10 indicators)						60%
66. Students report that they <b>often</b> used word-processing software to complete an assignment or project.						85%
67. Students report that they <b>often</b> revised their essays or other written work several times to improve their quality.						80%
68. Students report that they <b>sometimes or often</b> were asked to write in-depth explanations about a class project or activity.						85%
69. Students report that they discussed or debated topics with other students about what they read in English/language arts classes <b>at least monthly</b> .						75%
70. CT students report that they read and interpreted technical books or manuals to complete challenging assignments in their career/technical classes <b>at least monthly</b> .						75%
71. Students report that they read an assigned book and demonstrated understanding of the significance of the main ideas <b>at least monthly</b> .						75%
72. Students report that they read non-school-related materials outside of class for <b>two or more hours</b> in a typical week. <sup>1</sup>						65%
73. Students report that they completed short writing assignments of one to three pages for which they received a grade <b>at least monthly</b> in their English classes.						60%
74. Students report that they completed short writing assignments of one to three pages for which they received a grade <b>at least monthly</b> in their science classes.						60%
75. Students report that they completed short writing assignments of one to three pages for which they received a grade <b>at least monthly</b> in their social studies classes.						60%
76. Students report that they read <b>eight or more</b> books this year for English class.*						85%
77. Students report that they have drafted, rewritten and edited writing assignments before receiving a grade <b>at least monthly</b> .*						85%
78. Students report that they have written a major research paper (with footnotes and a bibliography) in their English classes <b>at least once a year</b> .*						85%
79. Students report reading <b>eight or more</b> books this year in classes other than English.* <sup>1</sup>						75%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

<sup>1</sup> Due to changes in the survey, 2008 results for this item are not comparable to previous years.

Indicators — Mathematics Curriculum/Numeracy Across Curriculum	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
80. The percentage of student responses on 11 indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on numeracy across the curriculum (eight to 11 indicators)						60%
81. Students report that they took a mathematics class during their senior year.						95%
82. Students report that they took <b>at least four</b> full-year courses in mathematics in grades nine through 12.						95%
83. Students report that their mathematics teachers <b>sometimes or often</b> showed them how mathematics concepts are used to solve problems in real-life situations.						95%
84. Students report that they use a graphing calculator to complete mathematics assignments <b>at least monthly</b> .						85%
85. Students report that they completed a project that used mathematics in ways that most people would use it in a work setting <b>at least monthly</b> .						75%
86. Students report that they orally defended a process used to solve a mathematics problem <b>at least monthly</b> .						75%
87. Students report that they worked with other students in their class on a challenging mathematics assignment and received a group and individual grade <b>at least monthly</b> .						75%
88. Students report that they worked in a group to brainstorm how to solve a mathematics problem <b>at least monthly</b> .						85%
89. Students report that they solved mathematics problems with more than one possible answer <b>at least monthly</b> .						85%
90. Students report that they solved mathematics problems other than those found in the textbook <b>at least monthly</b> .						85%
91. CT students report that they used mathematics to complete challenging assignments in their career/technical classes <b>at least monthly</b> .						75%
92. Students report that they completed a written report for a major mathematics project <b>at least once a semester</b> .*						65%
93. Students report that they were assigned word problems in mathematics <b>at least weekly</b> .*						85%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

Indicators — Science Curriculum/Engaging Science Experiences	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
94. The percentage of student responses on eight indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on science across the curriculum (six to eight indicators)						60%
95. Students report that they completed any three of the following science courses: college-preparatory physical science, college-preparatory biology/Biology 2, anatomy, college-preparatory chemistry, physics or Advanced Placement science.						85%
96. Students report that their science teachers <b>often</b> showed them how scientific concepts are used to solve problems in real-life situations.						75%
97. Students report taking a science course during their senior year.						95%
98. Students report that they have used science equipment to do science activities in a laboratory with tables and sinks <b>at least weekly</b> .						85%
99. Students report that they read an assigned article or book (other than a textbook) dealing with science <b>at least monthly</b> .						75%
100. Students report that they used science equipment to do science activities in a classroom <b>at least monthly</b> .						95%
101. Students report that they worked with other students in their class on a challenging science assignment or project <b>at least monthly</b> .						95%
102. Students report that they prepared a written report of their lab results <b>at least monthly</b> .						85%
103. Students report that they designed and conducted a major experiment on a question they chose and stood before the class and made an oral presentation about their results <b>at least once a semester</b> . <sup>*1</sup>						75%
104. Students report that they completed a laboratory assignment in which they used science to address a problem found in their community <b>at least once a semester</b> .*						75%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

<sup>1</sup> Due to changes in the survey, 2008 results for this item are not comparable to previous years.

Indicators — Engaging Strategies for All Teachers	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
105. Teachers report requiring students to work on open-ended problems for which there is no immediately obvious method of solution <b>at least monthly</b> .						70%
106. Teachers report requiring students to work in cooperative groups to deepen understanding of content <b>at least weekly</b> .						60%
107. Teachers report requiring students to work on an extended, major project that lasts a week or more <b>at least once a semester</b> .						60%
108. Teachers report requiring students to complete computer-assisted research/assignments <b>at least once a semester</b> .						60%
110. Teachers report requiring students to use word processing to complete an assignment or project <b>at least weekly</b> .						85%
111. Teachers report meeting with a group of teachers to examine students' work to determine if it meets state or national standards in their content area <b>at least monthly</b> .						100%
112. Teachers report that they include all of the following forms of assessment in students' course grades: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ teacher-made open-ended tests;</li> <li>■ projects or practical/laboratory exercises;</li> <li>■ portfolios of students' work; and</li> <li>■ end-of-course exam in their content area that is used schoolwide.</li> </ul>						100%

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

**Note:** The question referenced in item 109 in previous benchmarks reports was removed from the 2008 Teacher Survey.

## Emphasis on Integrating Academic and Career/Technical Content

- **Teachers Working Together** — Have an organization, structure and schedule giving academic and career/technical teachers the time to plan and provide integrated instruction aimed at teaching high-status academic and career/technical content.
- **Integrating Academic Content and Skills into Career/Technical Courses** — Engage students in activities that integrate academic content and skills into their career/technical courses.

Indicators — Teachers Working Together	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
113. Teachers <b>strongly agree</b> that they are familiar with the content and specific goals of courses taught by other teachers in the school.						65%
114. Teachers report meeting as a member of a team of academic and career/technical teachers to plan joint instructional activities and to take collective responsibility for student learning <b>at least monthly</b> .						65%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

Indicators — Integrating Academic Content	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
115. The percentage of student responses on six indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on integrating academic content and skills into career/technical courses (four to six indicators)						60%
116. Students report that their career/technical teachers <b>often</b> stressed reading.						60%
117. Students report that their career/technical teachers <b>often</b> stressed writing.						60%
118. Students report that their career/technical teachers <b>often</b> stressed mathematics.						60%
119. Students report that they used mathematics to complete challenging assignments in their career/technical classes <b>at least weekly</b> .						60%
120. Students report that they read and interpreted technical books and manuals to complete an assignment or project in their career/technical classes <b>at least weekly</b> .						60%
121. Students report that they used computer skills to complete assignment or project in their career/technical classes <b>at least weekly</b> .						
122. Students report that they completed integrated projects under the direction of both an academic and a career/technical teacher <b>at least once a year</b> that require the following: <sup>*</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ reading</li> <li>■ writing</li> <li>■ mathematics</li> <li>■ science</li> </ul>						60% 60% 60% 60%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

## Emphasis on Guidance and Support

- **Guidance** — Involve each student and his or her parents in a career guidance and individualized advisement system aimed at ensuring the completion of an accelerated program of study with a career/technical or academic concentration.

Indicators — Guidance	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
123. The percentage of student responses on eight indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on providing timely guidance to all students (six to eight indicators)						85%
124. Students report that they reviewed the sequence of courses they planned to take throughout high school <b>at least once a year</b> .						85%
125. Students report that they received the most help in planning a high school education plan of studies <b>by the end of ninth grade</b> .						85%
126. Students report that, when planning and reviewing their high school four-year education plan of studies, they talked with their parents, step-parents or other adults they live with <b>at least once a year</b> .						95%
127. Students report that, during high school, a teacher or counselor has talked to them individually about their plans for a career or further education after high school.						85%
128. Students report that they spoke with or visited someone in a career they aspire to.						85%
129. Students report that someone from a college talked to them about going to college.						95%
130. Students report that they and/or their parents, step-parents or guardians received information or assistance from someone at school in selecting or applying to college.						90%
131. Students report that they had an adult mentor or adviser who worked with them all four years of high school. <sup>1</sup>						90%
132. Students report that they took part in a parent-teacher-student conference to plan and review their high school four-year education plan <b>at least once a year</b> .*						85%
133. Students report that they were <b>often</b> encouraged by teachers or counselors to take more challenging mathematics courses.*						85%
134. Students report that they were <b>often</b> encouraged by teachers or counselors to take more challenging science courses.*						85%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

<sup>1</sup> Due to changes in the survey, 2008 results for this item are not comparable to previous years.

## Emphasis on Transitions

- **Middle Grades/High School Transition** — Build a strong bridge from the middle grades to high school to raise student achievement and learning.
- **High School/Postsecondary Studies and Careers Transition** — Prepare students for postsecondary studies and careers.

Indicators — Middle Grades/High School Transition	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
135. Teachers report that they meet with teachers from feeder middle grades or junior high schools to discuss expectations, content knowledge and performance standards for students entering their high school <b>at least annually</b> .						70%
136. Teachers report that their school effectively uses a required parent-student-school conference to plan or review the high school program of study for every entering ninth-grader.						90%
137. Teachers report that their school effectively uses a summer bridge program in reading and mathematics to help selected eighth-graders get ready for high school.						60%
138. Teachers report that their school effectively uses a schedule that allows double periods in reading and mathematics for students who need extra help.						85%
139. Teachers report that a caring adult is assigned to mentor each entering ninth-grader.						60%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

Indicators — High School/Post-High School Transition	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
140. Students report that they earned or attempted to earn college credit in high school by at least one of the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ taking classes at a local four-year college.</li> <li>■ taking Advanced Placement courses at their high school.</li> <li>■ taking classes at a community or technical college.</li> <li>■ taking a joint-enrollment class at their high school.</li> <li>■ taking a Web-based course.</li> </ul>						80%
141. The school has a working relationship with postsecondary partners (local community colleges and other receiving institutions).						Yes
142. The school works with a postsecondary institution to give most juniors their placement exams to determine which students are not ready for postsecondary study.						Yes
143. The school offers catch-up courses and other opportunities to get students ready for postsecondary study during the senior year.						Yes
144. The school is decreasing the percentage of students needing to take remedial or developmental courses in reading, language arts, writing or mathematics at the postsecondary level.						Evidence of Decline

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report and school-based data

## Focusing on Continuous Improvement and Demonstrating Strong Leadership

- **Strong Leadership** — A school principal with strong, effective leadership supports, encourages and actively participates with the faculty in implementing the Key Practices.
- **Keeping Score** — Use student assessment and program evaluation data to continually improve the school climate, organization, management, curricula and instruction to advance student learning and to recognize students who meet both curriculum and performance goals.

Indicators — Continuous School Improvement	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
145. The percentage of teacher responses on six indicators that suggest the school has an <b>intensive</b> emphasis on continuous school improvement (four to six indicators)						85%
146. Teachers <b>strongly agree</b> that the goals and priorities for their school are clear.						60%
147. Teachers <b>strongly agree</b> that teachers in their school maintain a demanding yet supportive environment that pushes students to do their best.						70%
148. Teachers report that the principal stresses that they should teach all students to the same high standards <b>monthly</b> .						65%
149. Teachers <b>strongly agree</b> that teachers in their school are continually learning and seeking new ideas on how to improve student achievement.						70%
150. Teachers <b>strongly agree</b> that teachers and school administrators work as a team to improve student achievement in their school.						70%
151. Teachers <b>strongly agree</b> that teachers in their school use data to continuously evaluate the school's academic and technical programs and activities.						70%
152. Teachers report that their school or district offers a teacher mentoring or induction program.*						60%
153. Teachers report believing <b>a great deal</b> that staff development programs are sustained over time with ample follow-up activities.*						75%
154. Teachers report believing <b>a great deal</b> that staff development experiences have resulted in holding their students to the current national standards developed by teachers in their fields.*						70%
155. Teachers report believing <b>a great deal</b> that they are expected to reflect on what they learn in staff development programs and apply it in the classroom.*						75%

Source: Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report

Indicators — Strong Leadership	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
156. Teachers report that the principal uses data to continually evaluate the school's academic and technical programs and activities <b>at least annually</b> .						85%
157. Teachers report that the principal consults with staff members before making decisions that affect them <b>at least annually</b> .						60%
158. Teachers report that the principal talks with them to make sure that the teaching content in their class is within the established scope and sequence for the curriculum <b>at least annually</b> .						60%
159. Teachers report that the principal encourages them to experiment with instructional strategies <b>at least every semester</b> .						75%
160. Teachers report that the principal organizes study team meetings to address how to implement the individual components of the school improvement plan <b>at least annually</b> .						Yes
161. The school improvement plan is revised <b>at least once a year</b> to reflect changing priorities.						Yes
162. There is evidence of improved student achievement.						Yes
163. There is evidence of improved high school completion rates.						Yes

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report, *HSTW* Annual Site Progress Report and school-based data

## Supporting the Staff with Professional Development

- Professional Development** — The system superintendent and school board members support school administrators and teachers in carrying out the Key Practices. This commitment includes financial support for instructional materials, time for teachers to meet and plan together and six to eight days per year of staff development on using the Key Practices to improve student learning.

Indicators — Professional Development Provided	Baseline	+2 Years	+4 Years	+6 Years	+8 Years	10-Year Goal
164. Teachers and administrators report participating in the <i>HSTW</i> Summer Staff Development Conference.						Yes
165. Teachers and administrators report participating in <i>HSTW</i> national workshops.						Yes
166. Teachers and administrators report participating in <i>HSTW</i> local/site-specific staff development.						Yes
167. Members of the leadership team report participating in SREB Leadership Module Training.						Yes
<b>Teachers report receiving more than 40 hours of staff development during the past three years on</b>						
168. Raising expectations for student achievement						75%
169. Additional study to gain greater depth in content areas						75%
170. Using reading and writing for learning in the content area and across the curriculum						75%
171. Teaching students to interact and cooperate with each other during the learning process						75%
172. Studying samples of student work						75%
173. Using project-based learning to deepen understanding of content						75%
174. Using performance assessment (such as presentations, writing and projects)						75%
175. Having students design and conduct research investigations						75%
176. Using applied learning strategies to teach higher-level academic content to all students						75%
<b>Teachers report participating in professional development activities that</b>						
177. Required reading professional literature and viewing professional videotapes with a study group						85%
178. Required them to do research based on their own classrooms						85%
179. Required being observed and receiving feedback from other educators						85%
180. Required working with other teachers who are successful in having students master high-level content						85%

**Source:** Benchmark section of *HSTW* Assessment Report, *HSTW* Annual Site Progress Report and school-based data

## SCHOOL-BASED DATA

In addition to the *High Schools That Work* Benchmarks, schools will want to collect, analyze and develop goals and establish benchmarks for school- and state-specific data. Schools can create their own charts to monitor progress.

Schools should monitor

- SAT/ACT scores
- Course failure rates
- Dropout data
- Ninth-grade success rates
- Disciplinary actions
- State assessment data

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