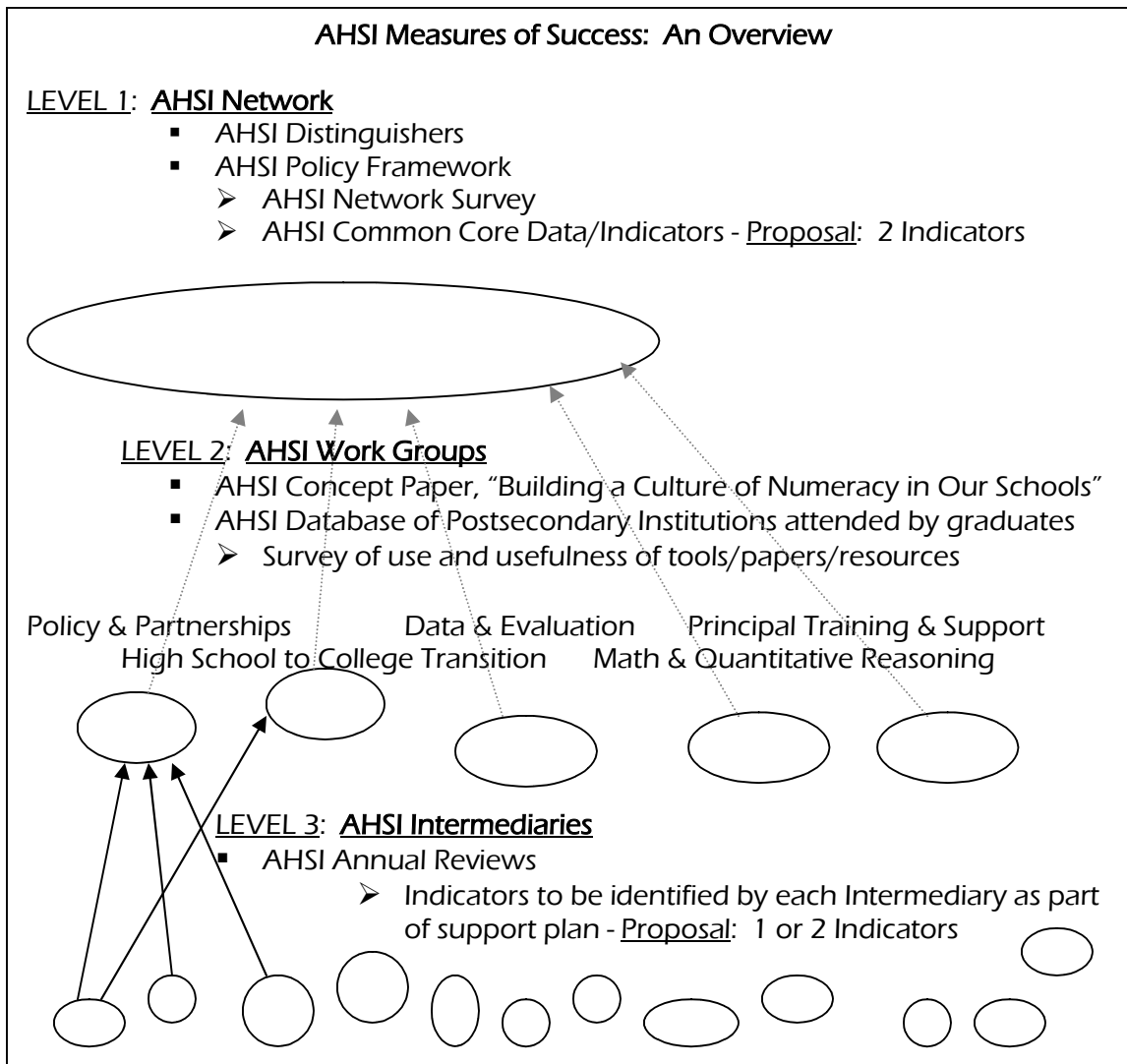


The Alternative High School Initiative is able to measure success based on activities at three levels – **AHSI Network** projects and events, **AHSI Work Group** activities, and **AHSI Intermediary** support. Below is a visual overview of these three levels of AHSI activity. The purpose of this overview is to frame the emerging effort to define AHSI Indicators and Measures. This work builds upon prior AHSI Data & Evaluation strategies and attempts to more concisely focus our efforts on a simple yet compelling set of indicators and measures which document evidence of the AHSI network’s success.



I. AHSI Network

At the AHSI Network level, members have collaborated to create a forum of great trust and mutual high regard for exchanging ideas, sharing information, and developing materials and initiatives that reflect a collective perspective. As a network, our organizations constitute a range of effective practices which taken together offer multiple pathways for young people to succeed in high school and continue on to college and careers. Independently, each organization has its own highly regarded “brand” which reflects a unique vision, mission, and evidence of success.

To assist AHSI in communicating with broader audiences about the network as a whole and the contributions our organizations are making to enable young people to achieve their aspirations, each organization will collect data on **two (2) common indicators**. These indicators are (1) **high school graduation rates** (by ninth grade cohort if appropriate and feasible), and (2) **post-high school success** as defined by rates of student acceptance to 2- or 4-year colleges, other postsecondary institutions, or the workforce.

While these indicators are simple to state, we realize that they are not necessarily simple to track and collect. These indicators will vary widely by organization, and they can not be used to compare organizations. Instead, establishing a network-wide set of data on these two indicators will enable AHSI to demonstrate that our distinctive, individual efforts are making a collective impact in the fields of education and youth development. As a result of each organization's unique contributions, a larger number of students who were struggling in or had dropped out of traditional high schools are able to earn a high school diploma and are ready for college and careers. These high quality alternative high schools are making a difference nationwide, and we have evidence of success to demonstrate progress, particularly if each organization provides data from two prior years to examine trends.

We anticipate using these indicators to make a case, for example, that students who graduate from alternative high schools are overcoming tremendous odds. We hope to do this by showing the #/% of students who graduate from AHSI high schools as compared with regular high schools whose student populations are similar. As a network, AHSI will be able to use these data points to raise awareness and inform public discourse about college preparation and entry requirements, as well as make the case for financial aid and other supports for graduates of our schools who are pursuing postsecondary education. AHSI will be able to respond to requests for data which demonstrate evidence that these models are effective. With these data, as challenging as it may seem, we'll hopefully strengthen our capacity to measure and report on success.

II. AHSI Work Groups

AHSI has formed several work groups which are evolving into "communities of practice" (Wheatley and Frieze, 2006). These work groups are generating new information and materials which offer an AHSI perspective on issues in education/youth development. As learning communities, we would like to measure the **quality** and **effectiveness** of work which supports capacity in the following areas:

- High School to Careers and College;
- Math/Quantitative Reasoning;
- Policy & Place-based Partnerships;
- Principal Training & Support; and
- Data (formerly Common Core Data, Data & Evaluation)

It will be our aim to measure these two indicators for each work group so that information gained will enable AHSI to strengthen its own capacity building infrastructure, leading to higher quality work internally and a stronger voice externally.

III. AHSI Intermediary Support

In 2008, the AHSI network engaged in a new level of activity aimed at supporting each intermediary organization to achieve its own goals. In February 2008, AHSI hosted the first-ever Mini-Convening series, which assembled members of each organization to exchange expertise on capacity-building topics. Inaugural AHSI Annual Reviews were conducted in April and May 2008, generating a wealth of information and introspection about each organization's progress as well as the role and contributions of the AHSI network. As of June 2008, newly hired AHSI Coaches launched a new process to consider how AHSI might support each organization in addressing areas they identify as priorities for enhancing success. As the summer progressed, members of the AHSI team attended and in some instances contributed to summer professional development institutes and conferences hosted by intermediary organizations.

At the intermediary level, the AHSI network has invited each organization to prioritize areas for enhancing capacity. Along with these priorities, each organization is asked to determine **two (2) indicators** that would enable them **to measure progress toward enhancing capacity in its areas of choice**. These two indicators would align with priorities outlined in a narrative Intermediary Support Plan which is jointly drafted by the intermediary and AHSI team members. These indicators are unique to each organization and may reflect types of data already collected or lead to new data collection. Unlike the two indicators that will be commonly tracked across the AHSI network, these indicators will serve an exclusive purpose – enabling each organization to measure progress toward achieving a desired result the organization has prioritized. These two indicators are primarily for an internal audience, though the organization may find ways of using these data points to communicate with others about its effectiveness.

In sum, AHSI as a network is committed to measuring success in ways that reflect the unique attributes of each organization and enable us to tell a collective story about rigor, relevance, and relationships in the lives of young people whose lives we touch. We are using a brief shorthand term to refer to this concept – **AHSI's 2x2 framework** for data collection. By the end of this grant period, we aim to have established a set of reliable data on **two network-wide indicators** – high school graduation rates, and post-high school success rates – as well as **two intermediary-level indicators** that can be used to measure progress toward addressing a priority identified by each organization. At the work group level, AHSI will examine the quality and effectiveness of this part of the network's infrastructure. In this way, the network will be able to describe success at all three levels of interaction and intervention.

By June 2009, we anticipate that the AHSI network will be in a position to produce a report on the full set of indicators and measures proposed in this overview.

We look forward to working with you to refine this 2x2 framework and to advance data collection as soon as possible.