

July 1, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is with a heavy heart that I communicate to you that the AHSI Advisory Board has made the reluctant decision not to further pursue a formal continuation of the Association for High School Innovation due to the insufficiency of funds needed to provide an adequate base for network activities. All official operations ended as of June 30, 2011.

For the last three years AHSI has pursued a couple of business models that would allow us to continue as a formal network advancing models of effective, innovative education for students who have not done well in the traditional school system. The economic downturn and the shifting of national focus to other initiatives have prevented building the assets needed to establish an ongoing organizational structure for AHSI.

We will continue to have the AHSI website posted until the end of the year, including the names and contact information for each of the organizations that are currently active members of AHSI.

And here is the good news: that the relationships that the people and organizations have established and nourished since being brought together in 2003, under the funding of the Bill and Melinda Gates Educational Foundation as the Alternative High School Initiative, will still exist, just without the formal organization.

It was the unusually high degree of respect, common focus, and creative collaboration among these leaders that motivated them to pursue working together beyond the life of the grant. With a range of proven, innovative educational models that really meet the needs of underserved students, this was a powerful group who could bring real solutions and hope to students trapped in failing schools across the country.

It is a mystery to me why adequate funding was not forthcoming. The Silent Epidemic – Our Dropout Crisis – is no longer so silent. Low performing schools (read low performing students) need dramatic, student-centered changes. AHSI is loaded with organizations that have programs and schools that are effective answers to these urgent needs. Fortunately, these organizations are still viable and available individually to carry out these efforts as part of our informal network.

We can't step off the stage without acknowledging the tremendous contribution of Elliot Washor, of Big Picture Learning, Audrey Hutchinson, of National League of Cities, Talmira Hill, AHSI Director and

Transition Coordinator, and Lauren Smock-Randall, Network Support Coordinator, all of whom devoted endless hours and boundless creativity to AHSI and the students that each organization has served.

Sincerely,

Todd W. Goble

Todd W. Goble
Interim Executive Director
Association for High School Innovation

AHSI Advisory Board

Elliot Washor, Co-Director & Co-Founder, Big Picture Learning

Neil Shorthouse, President & Founder, Communities In Schools of Georgia

Arleen N. Peterson, Director of Education Initiatives, Communities In Schools National Network

Akili Moses Israel, Executive Director, Diploma Plus, Inc.

Doug Thomas, Executive Director, EdVisions Schools

Nick Mathern, Associate Vice President, Policy & Partnership Development, Gateway to College National Network

Audrey M. Hutchinson, Director of Education & Afterschool, National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families

Bob Rath, President/CEO, Our Piece of the Pie®

Todd W. Goble, Vice President, StreetSchool Network & Senior Fellow, Sagamore Institute for Policy and Research

Sangeeta Tyagi, Chief Program Officer, YouthBuild USA