
**HAZLETON AREA CENTRAL SCHOOL
DISTRICT
SITE REPORT**

**Results of the 1998
SREB *High Schools That Work*
Secondary Teacher Survey**

MPR Associates, Inc.

for the

Southern Regional Education Board

The *High Schools That Work* program
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Major staff development needs

Tables 7, 8, 9, and 10 display the top staff development needs and preferences for Hazleton Area Central School District. Table 7 focuses on the needs of vocational teachers in particular, stemming from a questionnaire item asked only of vocational teachers, while table 8 presents the stated needs of all responding teachers from Hazleton Area. Table 9 reflects preferred formats for staff development; table 10 presents more specific topics of interest for staff development activities. State *High Schools That Work* coordinators suggest that staff development activities be structured in a sequential loop that would include preparation time, an opportunity to apply the lessons learned from the activity in the classroom, and a follow up in which teachers could review their own reactions, successes, and limitations, as well as make suggestions for improvement.

Table 7 – Staff development topics rated as the top four greatest needs by vocational teachers at Hazleton Area.

Activities named as greatest needs*

- Completing a teacher internship in a business or industry
- Planning and developing curriculum, based on workplace experiences outside of school, to use back in the classroom
- Aligning course standards to national academic and skills standards
- Teaching methods that motivate students to do a variety of demanding projects, reports and presentations related to my field

*Top four needs determined by the proportions of vocational teachers responding, “Yes, I need staff development” to the areas listed in item 23. If more than four are listed, several needs were tied.

Source: TEACHER by Q23a through Q23k.

Table 8 – Staff development topics rated as the top four greatest needs by teachers at Hazleton Area.

Activities named as greatest needs*

- [Academic teachers only] Visiting vocational classes to develop ideas for specific projects or problems that you can use to motivate your students to learn complex content and to develop complicated skills in your area
- Doing collaborative planning with other teachers
- [Vocational teachers only] Visiting academic classes to develop ideas for specific projects or problems that you can use to motivate your students to learn complex academic content
- Raising expectations and getting students to achieve higher standards through using extra help, applied learning and team teaching

*Top four topic chosen on the basis of the percentage of teachers responding, “Yes, I need staff development” to the areas listed in item 24. If more than four are listed, several needs were tied.

Source: Answers to Q24a through Q24n.

Table 9 – Surveyed *HSTW* teachers’ top five* self-reported preferences for staff development activity formats

Top five staff development activity formats

- Visiting the workplace to see how employees use academic skills in their daily work
- Having common planning time to work with a team of academic and vocational teachers to develop an integrated program of study
- Observing outstanding practices in another classroom or school
- Viewing professional videotapes
- Workshops
- Working with other teachers who are successful in having students master high- level content
- Networking with others

*Top five chosen on the basis of the percentage of teachers responding, “I would like to participate in this” to the formats presented in item 25. If more than five, several activities were tied.

Source: Answers to Q25a through Q25o.

Table 10 – Surveyed *HSTW* teachers’ top five* self-reported preferences for staff development activity topics

Top five staff development activity topics*

- Having students observe academic concepts and ideas being used in the real world through job shadowing, field studies, internships, etc.
- Students evaluating their own work and redoing it until it meets standards
- Team teaching
- Project-based learning
- Cooperative group work for high-performance learning
- Helping students select and succeed in more challenging academic and vocational courses

*Top five chosen on the basis of the percentage of teachers responding, “I would like to participate in this” to the formats presented in item 26. If more than five, several activities were tied.

Source: Answers to Q26a through Q26r.

For further information regarding the survey results, please contact:
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Workplace Success Skills Assessment

Area educators have been meeting with local business and industry representatives in an effort to ensure that high school students are prepared for the workplace. Partners in Education, a Greater Hazleton Business and Student Alliance has focused on Workplace Success Skills (SCANS Skills) and assessed 46 college prep seniors and 73 career and tech prep seniors using Accu Vision Workplace Success Skills (WSS) assessment. The assessment measures the skills identified by 22 industry groups throughout the nation as “skills necessary for workplace success.” WSS assesses students’ competency levels in five key modules:

- ❑ **Interacting with Others** – Behaviors associated with facilitation, influencing others, commitment to quality, customer service orientation, and problem solving.
- ❑ **Listening** – Understanding factual information and implied meanings presented orally.
- ❑ **Trainability** – Absorbing and applying new information.
- ❑ **Structuring Work Activities** – Organizing work activities for self and others to facilitate task accomplishments.
- ❑ **Graphs & Charts** – Extracting and interpreting information presented in a graph or chart form.

NOTE: The *Interacting with Others module* is directly related to SCANS skills and abilities measuring five sub-skill areas: facilitation, influencing others, commitment to quality, customer service orientation and problem solving. The *Listening module* is also considered a critical SCAN skill needed for workplace success.

Partners in Education will continue to work closely with area educators and the business community to strengthen those skills identified in WSS assessment.

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Continuous School Improvement Through Benchmarking

Hazleton Area School District



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Hazleton Area School District

Class of 1998 Graduate Transcript Analysis

What follows are summary tables of the results from a longitudinal follow-up study of the Hazleton Area School graduating class of 1998. The purpose of this study was to provide benchmarking data for the district's ongoing strategic planning process and continuous quality improvement efforts. Data was first collected from academic transcripts included academic courses taken, grade point averages, absences, test scores, etc. A follow-up questionnaire was then mailed to all graduates of the class of 1998.

Follow-up Study Design and Analysis

A unique feature of the follow-up study design was the linking of individual high school academic records with post-secondary experiences after graduation. As a result it is possible to evaluate a student's post-secondary experiences in light of their high school academic records. To facilitate this type of analysis for the total class of 1998, selected academic variables (SAT scores, GPA, selected college prep courses) were used to divide all 540 graduates into three groups. Whereas the majority of graduates from Hazleton Area School go on to post-secondary education, the criteria used for creating these groups was based on a combination of academic courses taken, cumulative grades, and SAT scores. The criteria listed in figure 1A (page 2) were used to divide the 1998 graduating class into three groups: academically competitive, semi competitive and non-competitive. Most data from the study were reported for the entire class and for each of three groups.

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Hazleton Area Training Needs

Market Survey

Executive Summary

In December 1998, the Northeast Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (NEPIRC) and CAN DO engaged Wilkes University to undertake an assessment and survey of training needs of manufacturers and some other businesses in the Hazleton area. The survey and assessment intended to provide information to be able to create and implement training plans and programs for industry in the Hazleton area. These plans and programs were hoped to initiate the beginning of a process whereby the Hazleton area would continue to produce a well-trained, highly skilled workforce. In addition, it was hoped that the survey would provide sufficient market information for organizations (such as those in higher education) to meet the workforce development needs of the Hazleton market area.

NEPIRC/CAN DO defined two major tasks as part of the survey. The first was to undertake a mail survey of manufacturers and the other businesses selected as part of the study group. The survey was to ask employers what skills did their employees need with respect to training. A minimum 20% response rate was established for the survey to have validity. In addition, Wilkes University was to conduct on-site interviews of employees from companies who responded to the survey. These interviews would request directly from the employee a listing of those skills they needed to properly perform their job. Finally, based on the interview findings, Wilkes University was to prepare a Matrix of skills required by individual jobs from the employee's perspective.

Of 165 mail surveys sent, 66 were returned representing 40% of all surveys sent. This amount exceeded the anticipated 20% return rate. A total of 47 on-site interviews were completed in eleven (11) different manufacturers/businesses.

Mail survey results indicated that most (95%) businesses responding to the survey believed employee training to be important to the success of their organization. The mail skill survey was broken up into eleven (11) major skill areas (Communication, Technology, Mathematics, Computers, Quality Assurance, Interpersonal Skills, Critical Thinking, Customer Service Skills, Teamwork, Applied Technology and Specific Technologies). In addition, fifty-six *sub-skill* areas were identified within these categories. Results seemed to suggest that most needs fall in many of the "soft" skill areas. This finding cut through all of the job areas. The high performance workplace skills of Communication, Critical Thinking, Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork and Computer Skills are the most popular training needs indicated. These skills represented 24,468 potential individual employee training opportunities in the Hazleton market area. These categories represent 80% of the total 30,425 employee training opportunities uncovered in the survey.

Among responses to the Specific Technologies section, most interest in employee training was evident in business (sales and management) and in Electro-Mechanical (applications, hydraulics and pneumatics). Printing Press Operations and Plastics Extrusion training also rated high.

Of fifteen *WorkKeys* questions embedded in the survey respondents indicated almost 8,000 potential training opportunities exist. *WorkKeys* is an assessment tool, which is able to measure levels of skill and knowledge needed to perform specific jobs. The fact that many respondents were interested in their employees having training in skill areas measured by *WorkKeys* appears to represent an opportunity to implement this particular assessment process. The result represented over 25% of all training opportunities identified in the Hazleton market area.

Other questions were asked in the survey. One dealt with the use of computers by employees within the organization. 47% of all firms have over half of their employees using computers at least one half of the time. This represents an opportunity for computer training. However, 53% of these companies indicate their employees utilize computers less than half of the time. There may also be an opportunity herein for assistance to help these companies become computer literate.

School-to-Work programs appear popular as 47% of all respondents indicated they would be interested in a work based learning experience situation and another 26% would welcome a job shadowing experience. Unskilled workers represent the bulk (63%) of planned new hires for next year. Most companies indicated they would pay for training (a 55% positive response to a question regarding tuition reimbursement). However, only 31% of companies were aware of workforce development programs such as Customized Job Training and surprisingly, even though a high percentage of respondents indicated they believe their employees need training in the “soft skills” areas, only 25% indicated they would be interested in a basic skills program.

NEPIRC was a partner in the survey. It is NEPIRC’s mission to assist manufacturers to become more productive and improve their bottom line. NEPIRC is keenly aware that a well-trained workforce is important to manufacturing excellence especially in today’s high performance manufacturing workplace. NEPIRC accomplishes its mission by providing certain services to manufacturers. These services are most often provided through the brokering of a consultant for the manufacturer and providing a cash subsidy to pay for this work. As part of the survey NEPIRC services were listed and respondents were asked if they had any interest in utilizing those listed services. NEPIRC received 100 requests for service. Curiously, the majority of those requests centered on workforce development and human resource concerns (54% of all requests). The workforce development and human resource training concerns resulting from these results help to support the fact that companies in the Hazleton market area reflect a strong interest and need for work force training.

The means to the end of a well-trained area workforce is long and difficult. Many partners must come together at the table and begin to talk about and undertake workforce development training programs around the job skills, which are necessary to local industry and business. The partners in the process must include industry, education and development organizations such as CAN DO and NEPIRC. The findings uncovered in this study represent only the beginning, only the definition of what is required by industry in the Hazleton market area. Now interested partners must agree to implement programs that will meet many of the basic “soft-skill” needs and also the more technical needs outlined.

CAN DO in conjunction with the Hazleton Career Center, NEPIRC, Partners in Education and local industry have begun to address some of the many basic skill needs uncovered in this study. The READY Program represents a very aggressive effort of local industry to help itself through by providing its own basic skill training. It would appear that the partners in the READY experiment pass along their knowledge and experience to other interested industries in the local labor market. State initiatives for new workforce development programs should be made aware of the READY experiment. There may be possible outside funding for activities undertaken as part of the READY program.

The Local manufacturers and businesses should also begin to invest in a *WorkKeys* type of assessment effort. *WorkKeys* may also be a program appropriate for high schools whereby sophomores are introduced to *WorkKeys* testing after local industry define the skills they require.

The fact that few respondents knew about CJT and other workforce development programs is disturbing. The workforce development effort and initiative must look to these funding opportunities and help to make them work in conjunction with local industry. This could also apply to Welfare to Work funding and programs now being developed at the state level.

The results from the Computer skill area offers a lot of incentive for undertaking computer-training initiatives. Post secondary providers should be attracted to the Hazleton area in terms of program offerings when so many respondents desire computer training. In addition, these providers need to look at all the skill needs identified and partner with this workforce development initiative by offering an aggressive selection of training programs.

However, the most important result of this survey may be the fact that while many basic skill needs were indicated by business and industry, the corresponding desire to participate in basic skill programs was not evident among respondents. A dichotomy exists in that respondents have indicated a need but seem unwilling to participate in programs to meet this need. An overall “buy in” by manufacturers in the Hazleton area to participate in basic skills training and work with the secondary and post-secondary educational systems in delivering basic skill programs must occur.

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