

K-12

The Powerful Partnership of K-12 Education and Business

The Baldrige Award
is spurring
schools to take a
business approach
to education and

getting companies
involved early
to prepare their
future workers.

HRD professionals have long been aware of the central role that a good education plays in the work-related development of employees. Employers have also focused attention on the quality of K-12 education as their concerns have grown about the sufficiency of entry-level, basic skills among U.S. high school graduates. Until recently, however, K-12 education has been viewed as essentially separate from the education and learning that come after.

That view has changed as employers and educators have come to agree on the imperative of lifelong learning, in which education and training will operate as a “pipeline” that people move in and out of from kindergarten through post-secondary education through work-related, continuous learning as adults. That perspective is being reinforced by the rapid introduction of technology into all learning environments: The availability of learning anytime, anywhere blurs the lines between the traditional silos of education and workplace learning, and connects the reach of a child with the access of a knowledge worker.

In response to those changes, the American Society for Training & Development is looking more closely at the pipeline of education and training, and is considering how the lessons and experience of workplace learning and performance might be used to help education institutions and educators as they struggle to change, grow, and respond to the demands of the economy. The introduction of the Baldrige Award for education organizations offers a useful access point through which ASTD and its members can consider how to support K-12 education.

ASTD members and all people involved in workplace learning and performance are familiar with the Baldrige Award for Excellence as it relates to business. The success of the award program in focusing attention on the value of a quality perspective in improving business practice and success has encouraged support for establishing award programs for other kinds of organizations, such as education.

In this special section, *T&D* highlights the new Baldrige Award in statements from organizations that have been active in K-12 education for many years. They offer examples from their own experience of working on the state and local levels to support schools, and they provide different perspectives on how the Baldrige Award process might help schools further.

Richard Chang, a member of the Baldrige board of examiners and 1999 chairman of ASTD’s board of directors, has had a lot of opportunity to view the impact of the Baldrige Award on the business community:

“The Baldrige has focused attention on the value of using quality as a lens for assessment in each part of a company’s structure and capacity. Many companies that have not participated in the application process have used the award’s guidelines to improve quality and performance.”

In his work as president and CEO of Richard Chang Associates, Chang has been involved for a number of years with public schools, helping them to develop new perspectives and processes for improving education. “I think that the new Baldrige Award for Education Organizations will accomplish two things,” he says. “One, it will provide schools across the United States with specific guidelines, tailored to the special needs of education, for improving how a school operates effectively to provide a quality education. Two, it demonstrates that the United States places the same value on a high-quality education for our children and young people as it does on high-quality products and services in our companies.”

ASTD has a history of supporting initiatives that have an impact on K-12 education, including school-to-work programs, the development of occupational skill standards, and improving government programs that provide skills training to socioeconomically disadvantaged people. ASTD believes that, as has happened with business, the focus of the Baldrige Award will draw attention to education from a new vantage point: partnerships between businesses, organizations, and communities that will work from a common language and common set of goals.

By Mary McCain, vice president and general manager, Policy and Public Leadership, ASTD

Baldrige Opens Door to Education and Health Care

By Barry Diamondstone
Baldrige Office, NIST

Who hasn’t heard of the Malcolm Baldrige Award? But did you know it was established by law in 1987, not only to recognize U.S. organizations for their quality achievements, but also to promote quality awareness and provide information on successful quality strategies. Over time, the award criteria have evolved to represent a business model for performance excellence.

In 1995, the Baldrige Award program conducted a pilot in education and health care. The pilot involved several key activities, including the development of education and health-care criteria, built on the seven-category framework of the award’s business criteria but adapted to the two new sectors of education and health care. Individual case studies were developed for each sector, and pilot evaluation teams were created. In addition, there was an extensive networking effort with education and health-care professionals across the United States to ensure that their input was included in the molding of the new criteria. Sixty-five organizations submitted applications for the pilot program—19 in education and 46 in health care. Each applicant received written feedback on its performance management system, including strengths and areas for improvement. The results of the pilot included several key findings.

One, there was no statistically significant difference in the average category scores between the health-care and education applicants. Two, the average scores for the two pilot sectors were lower than the average scores for the previously established business applicants. Last, the profiles of the plotted scoring data indicate that it’s reasonable to assume that the health-care and education categories could

be modeled after the service sector, one of the original business sectors eligible for the Baldrige Award.

Despite the success of the pilot, several years went by without the necessary legislation by the U.S. Congress to extend eligibility of the Baldrige Award to health-care and education organizations. They weren't eligible to take full advantage of the award until 1999, with final passage on October 30, 1998. During the interim, many U.S. organizations used the 1995 education and health-care pilot criteria to move forward with their performance improvement efforts. Many U.S. state and local award programs worked with local legislators, providing criteria to education and health-care organizations in their states and creating award categories that recognized their accomplishments.

In May 1997, the private foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award announced a \$15 million fund drive to raise an endowment to help establish an award program for organizations in the education and health-care sectors. The cre-

ation of that endowment was contingent on the passage of federal legislation to demonstrate the public sector commitment to this public-private partnership. The purpose of the endowment was to help fund such activities as printing and distributing criteria, training private sector examiners who review applications, and supporting the efforts of winning organizations to share their best practices at the annual Quest for Excellence Conference. The foundation is actively engaged in fundraising efforts and expects to meet its goals.

Last year, for the first time, not-for-profit education and health-care organizations were eligible to compete for the Baldrige Award: 16 health-care and nine education organizations submitted applications. At the completion of the two-stage

screening process used by the Baldrige panel of judges, one health-care and two education organizations were selected to receive site visits, which are to verify information in the applications and clarify questions raised during application review. Every applicant receives an extensive feedback report, highlighting key strengths and opportunities for improvement. The panel of judges reviews the results of the site visits and makes recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce regarding final award recipients.

The Baldrige judges were pleased with the enthusiastic acceptance of the new categories of education and health care and look forward to future applicants. □

Contact nist.gov; diamonds@nist.gov

1999 Education Criteria for Performance Excellence

Here are the seven categories adapted for educational organizations.

1. Leadership: leadership system, public responsibility, and citizenship
2. Strategic Planning: strategy development and school strategy
3. Student and Stakeholder Focus: knowledge of student needs and expectations, student and stakeholder satisfaction and relationship enhancement
4. Information and Analysis: selection and use of information and data, selection and use of comparative information and data, analysis and review of school performance
5. Faculty and Staff Focus: work systems; faculty and staff education, training, and development; faculty and staff well-being and satisfaction
6. Educational and Support Process Management: education design and delivery, education support processes
7. School Performance Results: student performance results, student and stakeholder satisfaction results, faculty and staff results, school-specific results.

The Baldrige Criteria

Here are the seven categories of the business performance excellence criteria:

1. Leadership: A company's leadership system, values, expectations, and public responsibilities.
2. Strategic Planning: The effectiveness of strategic and business planning and deployment of plans, with a strong focus on customer and operational performance requirements.
3. Customer and Market Focus: How a company determines its customer and market requirements and expectations, enhances relationships with customers, and determines their satisfaction.
4. Information and Analysis: The effectiveness of information collection and analysis to support customer-driven performance excellence and marketplace success.
5. Human Resource Focus: The success of efforts to realize the full potential of the workforce to create a high-performance organization.
6. Process Management: The effectiveness of systems and processes for assuring the quality of products and services.
7. Business Results: Performance results, trends, and comparison to competitors in key business areas—customer satisfaction, financial and marketplace, human resources, suppliers and partners, and operations.

1999 Baldrige Quality Award Winners

- STMicroelectronics, Carrollton, Texas (manufacturing)
- BI, Minneapolis (service)
- the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Atlanta (service)
- Sunny Fresh Foods, Monticello, Minnesota (small business)

For more information and photos, visit www.nist.gov/public_affairs/releases/g99-210.htm.

Colgate Cares About Quality Education

By Donna McNamara, vice president, Global Education and Training

Pals Around the World. A collaborative project between Colgate and the Rutgers University Center for Mathematics, Science, and Computer Education, Pals Around the World was developed to create a global learning community composed of young people, teachers, content area experts, parents, and industry.

PAW uses technological tools such as videoconferencing, email, and the Internet

to connect children to the global community, while improving their communication and mathematical skills. Such skills will be critical to success in the 21st century.

In the pilot program, elementary school children from Perth Amboy, New Jersey, and Juncos, Puerto Rico, participated. The students, who exchanged stories about themselves and their communities by mail, email, and fax for several months, “met” each other via several videoconferences. They went to Colgate facilities near each of their schools, and during those meetings, teachers and Colgate professionals taught interactive lessons about oral hygiene. Colgate plans to include other sites and educational institutions as the program expands.

Everybody Wins! This private, not-for-profit organization is devoted to promoting children’s literacy and increasing their prospects for success in school and in life. Colgate is one of the foundation’s corporate partners, and its employees are volunteer readers in the Power Lunch program.

Once a week, participating Colgate employees from world headquarters in New York go to a local school to read, talk, and share lunch with a student. Over the course of the school year, each volunteer forms a relationship with his or her student, acting as an informal mentor and positive role model.

Shadow Day. Pioneered by Colgate in 1990, Shadow Day partners children from inner-city schools with Colgate employees for a day. At Colgate, a student observes his or her adult partner going about everyday work activities. Shadowing gives the students an opportunity to get the feel of a particular workplace culture, and acquaints them with the level of formality and informality, dress codes, employee interaction, and social and educational skills necessary to do a job well.

Outward Bound. Colgate’s New York City Outward Bound Urban Exploration pairs volunteers from Colgate with inner-city youths for a weekend of “roughing it” through the streets of Manhattan. As Colgate people and young adults cooperate to face Outward Bound challenges, both groups learn the value of diversity, responsibility, and, above all, trust.

The challenges include canoeing up the Hudson River, hiking blindfolded

through the streets of lower Manhattan, sleeping under the stars on the deck of a ship, and scaling a rock face at the Cloisters. The program uses Outward Bound’s curriculum of adventure, service, and experience-based learning to help participants develop the skills they need to succeed in life’s endeavors.

As those successful Colgate programs demonstrate, we can all learn something valuable when we get involved in a child’s education.

The expansion of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award to educational institutions is an important initiative to help educators improve their schools. Well-educated children are the foundation of a promising future for communities, the



School children in Mount Vernon, New York, learn about oral hygiene through the Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures Global Oral Health Education Program.

United States, and the world. In addition to the family, the source of a quality education is quality schools.

The Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence are intended to help schools continuously improve, facilitate the sharing of best practices, foster partnerships with businesses and other organizations, and provide a set of working tools. Colgate-Palmolive salutes this initiative.

In fact, employers are increasingly partnering with educators, parents, government, and the community to improve the quality of education. Colgate has learned firsthand that there are significant benefits to all parties when businesses get involved, and Colgate emphasizes both corporate and personal participation in the educational programs it supports. Throughout the world, Colgate aspires to these core values: caring, global teamwork, and continuous improvement. All are evident in Colgate’s support for the

education of youth in these programs: Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures: Global Oral Health Education Program. For 40 years, Colgate has provided oral-health education programs to children in schools around the world. The commitment continues through the Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures Global Oral-Health Education Program—a multitiered effort that emphasizes education and prevention, with a variety of materials for use in a classroom and at home. Since 1994, the program has reached more than 46 million children in more than 80 countries.

By forging partnerships between governments, dental professionals, education professionals, schools, and communities, the Bright Smiles, Bright Futures oral-health initiative enables millions of children each year to receive the benefits of oral-health education and preventive treatment.

Colgate Women’s Games. Now in its 26th year, this is the largest U.S. track and field meet for girls and young women. Colgate created the games as a positive solution to a problem-plagued education system with few after-school activities for girls. In the 1998 to 1999 season, 11,000 athletes participated in weekly events at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, competing for spots to run in the Madison Square Garden finals in February. In addition to ribbons and medals awarded weekly to all participants, trophies and educational grants-in-aid are awarded to finalists.

Though the games count 17 former Olympians and U.S. record holders, they’re about more than athletics. Competitors leave the games with increased self-esteem and new friendships. Many alumnae have used their participation and scholarship money to become educators, lawyers, businesswomen, and, more importantly, responsible mothers, mentors, and involved members of their communities.

The inclusion of educational organizations in the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award will increase public attention to the importance of improving U.S. schools and the difference we can make if we do it together. □

Contact colpal.com; donna_mcnamara@colpal.com

IBM: Student Achievement With Baldrige Concepts and Tools

By Kathy Walsh, education strategist,
IBM Institute for Electronic Government

U.S. school districts contend with some of the most complex customer, revenue, and operational requirements of any public or private enterprise. Their customers are not just the students who receive direct services, but also parents, the school board, the community, businesses, and the state and local funding apparatus; all have vested interests in student development.

Revenues come from the key product, student learning, and from a maze of criteria-based factors influenced by the news press and politics at multiple levels of government. The operational structure isn't a traditional hierarchical one, in which managers lead employees to focus solely on the critical goal of student learning. They must also manage programs, strategies, and public opinion.

Despite facing that complexity, schools have been late to see the value of using business strategies aimed at organizational improvement. But as more communities require all children to reach high standards, that's starting to change. Some systems bent on effective reform are investigating the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program for Education as a transformation tool. The appeal is the Baldrige's comprehensive focus on the steps for achieving results: leadership, careful planning, and reorientation of resources to satisfy customer needs in a high-quality manner, as well as the provision of a self-assessment framework to guide improvement.

The key to achieving results is the Baldrige's call to rethink everything that's done and how it's done, in the light of customer-centered quality. Just as businesses

that rethink their customer service use sophisticated technology to change what they do and how they do it, schools are adopting a similar practice. Leading educators, determined to solve long-standing problems, are addressing educational challenges through an integrated strategy that includes revamped policies, new processes, and enabling technologies.

Innovative examples abound:

□ Florida wants to meet the needs of its burgeoning student population and overcome the effects of slow construction and a shortage of skilled teachers. It's determined to share the expertise of effective teachers across the state and to make available a high-quality, performance-based curriculum that will help students meet academic standards.

To overcome barriers of time and distance in achieving those goals, a virtual Florida High School has evolved. School districts partner with FHS to serve students in a rigorous and flexible manner. A student can attend regular high school in the morning, work in the afternoon, and finish schoolwork in the evening over the Internet. Or a student can take all courses online at home, at school, at a library, or wherever there's access to the Internet.

FHS has attracted high-quality teachers from across the state interested in participating in the new education frontier. Courses are engaging and geared toward helping students achieve academic standards and develop teamwork and investigative skills. The students often work with others in their classes and can participate in student activities through the district.

In preliminary reports, FHS students have proven to be meeting high academic goals and have found college an easy

transition.

□ West Virginia educators, alarmed by the poor results of U.S. students on the Third International Mathematics and Science Study, have focused on raising student achievement in math. To effect that, they designed a plan that capitalizes on the expertise that already exists in the state.

The plan brought highly skilled teachers from different districts together and equipped them with computers, Internet access, and a collaborative software tool. The teachers were asked to create a math curriculum that takes advantage of online tools. They came up with a wealth of innovative lesson plans, which were juried by subject specialists to ensure their effectiveness before being made available to all teachers over the Internet, reaching even the most remote parts of the state. Early results show that the plans are improving the students' math skills.

□ Educators recognize that teachers can facilitate student learning by using performance-based assessments instead of traditional standardized tests, but they haven't used them primarily because evaluation consistency ranges widely when different teachers grade the same essay, dance, speech, or experiment.

In Vermont, a pioneer in performance-based assessment, a new technology tool is helping address the consistency challenge. With the technology, teachers receive training in portfolio assessment by practicing with pre-scored student work. When judging their own students' work, teachers have reference materials at their fingertips. With the click of a mouse, they can view the evaluation framework for a particular assignment and the benchmarks that demonstrate high-quality performance for comparison. Those scoring anchors promote uniform assessment. Teachers can also see summary profiles of student performance to understand the strengths and weaknesses of an individual student, as well as those of an entire class. With that feedback, the teachers can improve their instruction to respond to student needs—a powerful form of professional development.

□ In Broward County, Florida, educators wanted to make good use of data that resides on disparate computer systems. For years, there was no automated way to

**Progressive companies go
outside of industry boundaries
and compare themselves with the
most successful companies
regardless of industry.
Benchmarking is a good
starting point, but it might
not be enough.**

correlate data from one system with data from another, making it almost impossible to make timely and effective use of information for key decisions.

Now, data-warehouse technology collects and integrates school-based data. By being given quick and easy access to information from any computer, including those in the classrooms, teachers and school-district and state administrators can make informed decisions on a wide range of subjects, including curricula, instructional resources, budgets, and personnel.

Administrators analyze trends, enabling them to avoid potential problems and make good long-range plans. The data warehouse also enhances accountability with better information for internal evaluation and public reporting.

□ In San Francisco, district educators—saddled with onerous case-management paperwork and communication requirements—were looking for more effective ways to provide special-needs students with the services they require to stay in a regular classroom, while preventing inappropriate placements in special education.

Using online case-management technology, educators can now quickly respond to a particular student's need—matching specific services, developing an individual development plan, and notifying involved parties of the student's status. This technology not only provides students with better services, but also protects the school district's special-needs funding, which can be denied when students are late being evaluated and assigned plans.

Relentless pursuit of customer-focused quality is the hallmark of the Baldrige program. In this spirit, the school districts and states described here, and many more across the United States, are making progress toward high academic achievement for all students by implementing innovative ideas and powerful tools. It's critical that as effective solutions are created in separate districts and states that educators, using another important Baldrige criterion, share promising strategies, programs, and technologies. □

Contact ibm.com; kwalsh@us.ibm.com

AFT and the Baldrige

In her keynote speech to more than 12,000 attendees of the American Federation of Teachers 1999 QuEST conference, AFT president Sandra Feldman issued a challenge. She called for AFT unions to negotiate contracts that would give professionals in individual schools flexibility on decisions affecting instruction in a standards-based system, while continuing to define the parameters of salaries, benefits, and conditions at the district level. Feldman urged the bargaining of new contracts at the district level, which would “ensure fidelity to high academic standards and provide the means and resources for kids to meet them and also give professionals at the school level the authority and flexibility to adopt programs, strategies, and schedules that work for their students.”

Specifically she suggested that such contracts would

□ set standards for workload (the number of students and class-contact times for effective education). Professionals at the school level would have the autonomy and flexibility to work out the details of class size, scheduling, and time.

□ require adherence to state standards for teacher and paraprofessional qualifications and ensure due process. They would also provide staff at the school level the flexibility to put their own school team together to develop educational programs.

□ ensure the provision of quality professional development. Professionals at the school level would determine what they need to meet student needs.

□ set standards for fairness and dispute resolution, but encourage collegial rather than adversarial resolution.

Feldman says, “The contract should be an enforceable educational compact, in which teachers are given the training, resources, and flexibility to do the job and, in turn, take responsibility for applying their knowledge and skills to bring best practices to their students.”

Feldman recognizes that developing such contracts also requires a new mindset among school managers. “The education of children requires adults to work

together. Such contracts cannot and should not be negotiated in an atmosphere of mistrust. They can't and shouldn't be negotiated [in cases in which] the labor-management relationship is adversarial or paternalistic.”

Many school districts don't have the necessary labor-management relationships to begin the daunting work of negotiating new agreements. But as districts and local unions engage in the process of negotiation, new labor-management relationships that focus on educational excellence will evolve. The radical improvement in schools—to help children achieve at higher levels—that such new relationships may make possible is the goal of AFT in the Baldrige in Education Initiative. □

Contact aft.org; jmitchel@aft.org

NEA's New Unionism in Pursuit of Quality

By Ruben Cedeño, senior professional associate, NEA

The ongoing demands for greater accountability and higher standards are prompting America's public schools to change the way they do business. Business and industry may see a reflection of what they faced 20 years ago as they sought to regain their edge in the global economy. In their pursuit of quality, business and industry employed a host of new strategies, including employee empowerment and data-driven results. In their current pursuit of quality, educators also are using new strategies. Phrases such as *collaborative decision making*,

end users, research-based, strategic planning, and systems thinking dominate educational judgment.

The National Education Association is taking a multiyear approach to goal setting and planning, and is using accountability-driven measures. This new approach is part of the new unionism behind NEA's efforts to achieve quality in public education.

This new unionism combines the commitment to excellence of a craft guild with the advocacy and labor concerns of a traditional union. It harnesses organizational clout to improve public education as a whole. Included in that agenda are three priorities: teacher quality, student achievement, and school-systems capacity (the infrastructure necessary for a quality education).

Perhaps the most overt symbol of new unionism is NEA's willingness to experiment with new concepts based on emerging research in the field of education. At the root of this willingness to try new things is the innate desire of teachers to do what it takes to help students succeed. And in changing times, new ways have become necessary.

In the past, students were more homogeneous. But now learners are like a United Nations without the translation devices. For many of them, basic skills begin with learning the language of their new homeland, America. That fact alone shows that one-size education does not fit all. Underscoring the need for change are student diversity and other challenges—poverty rates, teacher shortages, the increased number of students, calls for smaller class size, the impact of technology, and demands for a better educated workforce.

Over the past decade, the NEA has launched several reform initiatives in pursuit of quality:

- The NEA Mastery in Learning Program was designed to demonstrate to policymakers that bottom-up rather than top-down decision making is more effective. NEA learned that a collaborative process is best.

- The Learning Laboratories Initiative aims to advance school reform initiatives at the school-district level. The initiative has succeeded in launching community-wide efforts to improve schools in 30 states.

- The NEA Keys Initiative developed a

research-based instrument or yardstick by which schools can measure their quality quotient. Administrators, education employees, parents, and sometimes students have the opportunity to score their schools on 35 indicators that provide a quality framework. The program is now operating in more than 300 U.S. schools and is beginning to yield positive results on student achievement. Moreover, it provides schools with a basis for decision making on appropriate school-reform models, enabling the schools to make good decisions for their students.

- This year, NEA's five-year exploratory venture into charter schools winds down. Those efforts are yielding valuable research that will be instructive to NEA members and policymakers.

- The NEA's Teacher Education Initiative, another five-year effort concluding in 2000, aims to improve teacher preparation. TEI is a partnership between NEA, schools, school districts, and schools of education. The professional development schools serve as TEI's laboratory. PDSs emulate the medical profession's teaching hospital, and, so far, this training model appears to be yielding better teachers. Next on TEI's research agenda is to determine the impact on student achievement.

- The Coalition for District Excellence builds on the lessons learned in earlier NEA programs and expands them statewide. One lesson is self-evident: It takes more than just educators to change schools; it takes a much broader slice of the community. Another lesson is that school systems need a foundational theory, such as the approach to quality of the Baldrige in Education Initiative.

As national partners in that initiative, NEA's ongoing efforts are directed at expanding its members' understanding of the Baldrige approach and encouraging active partnership at the six new Baldrige sites across the United States. NEA members in Pinellas County, Florida, (site of one of the early NEA learning labs) and other Baldrige schools provide strong evidence of the success of the quality approach. Using Baldrige in their work with economically disadvantaged and minority students, Pinellas County has seen student test scores rise.

True education reform requires a systemic approach to the restructuring of

U.S. public schools. The appeal of the Baldrige approach is that it provides a whole system-improvement framework. In education, in which many systems are disconnected or dysfunctional, Baldrige is a promising beacon. For the NEA, Baldrige—and the business partnerships it provides—offers a potentially transformational vehicle for the association's efforts to provide a quality education for every student. □

Contact nea.org; rcedeno@nea.org

Using Baldrige to Improve Education: A Rationale Based on Results

By Peggy Siegel, director
Business/Education Leadership Initiatives
National Alliance of Business

"My students are not widgets!" exclaimed an indignant educator in 1992. She was offended by the suggestion that total quality management principles used to improve performance in the private sector could be customized and applied successfully to improve the public schools.

Fortunately, a lot has changed during the past eight years. Several developments in particular have convinced an increasing number of educators that TQM—more precisely, the Malcolm Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excel-

lence—is worth another look.

Every state, except Iowa, has adopted (or is in the process of adopting) student performance standards. State policymakers are now implementing assessments to track progress in meeting state standards and creating accountability measures that reward success and deal decisively with low performance. Students unable to pass state proficiency tests may be denied a diploma. Principals and staff in schools designated as low performing may be reassigned or dismissed. The implication: Educators are in the hot seat and need a proven long-term strategy to drive their reform efforts.

More companies, having experienced the benefit of reskilling their own workforces within a systems context, are eager to support comparable leadership development opportunities for educators. Educators are demonstrating the value of Baldrige by using the criteria as an organizational assessment tool to improve student and system performance.

Connecting the dots

If most education reform efforts have fallen short, it's not because of inertia. The past 15 years have witnessed a flurry of activity. Numerous policymakers and educators have attempted valiantly to define the essence of schooling, articulate more rigorous education goals and standards, provide meaningful curricula, offer needed staff development, assess student performance, and assign accountability for results.

Unfortunately, the resources and commitment expended on those individual reforms far exceed their collective capacity to improve student performance. Why? Because the separate pieces are greater than their sum. They are, in essence, “random acts of improvement,” to quote education leaders from Pinellas County Schools in Florida.

Ironically, U.S. school systems are where American companies were 15 to 20 years ago, when business leaders discovered that they could no longer compete in an international marketplace. For the first time, education leaders confront an equally formidable challenge: They must determine how to meet higher performance expectations, not just for

some but all students. And their challenge is the more daunting because it is unfolding in public.

Fortunately, in formulating solutions, educators don't have to design an accountability model from scratch. They can learn from and improve upon the approach taken by successful companies such as Motorola and Xerox to reinvent themselves. In discovering the means to deliver quality products and services that satisfy customers, business leaders have transformed their organizations. The actions taken by such corporations in the 1980s also produced something of lasting value—a systemic improvement

“I can't make kids learn,” admits Azalea Elementary principal Brenda Clark. “But when those kids have the data in their hands and understand they're responsible, then it becomes *their* mission. They're actively involved in making sure that our data goes higher because they want to be the best they can be.”

strategy and framework, first codified in the Baldrige criteria in 1987 and updated annually by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Since U.S. Congress extended the Baldrige Award to include education and health-care organizations, more than 40 states have put in place programs to recognize and accelerate the sharing of best practices within their borders. The Baldrige criteria give any organization, not just corporations, the means to respond to and anticipate changes in a world that will become even more fast-paced and complex.

Now educators also have the means to connect the dots.

Business leaders in places like Pinellas County; North Carolina; Freeport, Texas; and elsewhere first proposed using the Baldrige criteria in the early 1990s to transform education. Having experienced positive results inside their own companies, they were willing to support comparable reform efforts for and with their education partners.

That business intuition has been validated by concrete results:

□ North Carolina and Texas lead the United States in student performance

gains during the nineties, as well as ranking number 1 for the past three years, according to *Site Selection* magazine. Forty-five North Carolina school districts representing 70 percent of students statewide have voluntarily joined a partnership focused on implementing a Baldrige-based improvement strategy.

□ Brazosport Independent School District in Freeport, Texas, is the largest district in the state to have all schools rated as exemplary. The district serves 13,500 students, 41.8 percent either Hispanic or African American and 36.4 percent economically disadvantaged. From 1997 to 98, more than 92 percent of all students passed state reading, math, and writing tests, representing an 80 percent gain in some schools. Brazosport is the first district to win the Texas Quality Award and also received a Baldrige site visit in November 1999.

□ Pinellas County Schools in Tampa Bay, Florida, is the 22nd largest U.S. school district, with more than 110,000 students. In 1993, Pinellas was the first district to win Florida's Sterling (quality) Award. In 1998, Pinellas ranked number 1 in the state, based on multiple student performance measures. At Azalea Elementary, test scores jumped 20 percent in just two years among a student body that has a 40 percent annual mobility rate and is 52 percent economically disadvantaged. The reason: Students are taught to assume responsibility for their own learning.

When such results are shared, educators can't help but pay attention. Their growing interest in Baldrige is based on two additional motivators, exhaustion and accountability.

School people are simply wearing out from reform overload. Communities across the United States are virtual landfills of promising, yet disconnected, programs, projects, and innovations. Consequently, educators are beginning to view Baldrige as a welcome reclamation tool. Finally, they have a way to align the myriad of initiatives into a comprehensive, long-term systemic reform effort.

Not surprisingly, many educators want to invest their time and energy in an accountability model like Baldrige, with a proven track record for driving performance excellence and a reservoir of experienced champions within the

educators' own business communities. If applied thoughtfully, the Baldrige criteria alter the tenor of accountability in education. Instead of reinforcing negative outcomes such as the threat of exposure and blame for not measuring up, a Baldrige-based accountability model can help states and communities reach consensus on education priorities, reinforce fact-based decision making, and identify ongoing opportunities for classrooms, schools, and districts to implement improvements.

If used consistently, Baldrige also enables educators to address the questions that have bedeviled them for decades: How do we *really* know what works? And how do we maximize the impact of such innovations—beyond the sheer force of charismatic leaders, fortunate timing, and anecdotal success stories?

Perhaps most promising, the long-term use of Baldrige can build the organizational capacity of the education system, with business and community support, to sustain student and system improvement over time.

The Baldrige in Education Initiative, BiE IN for short, was created to capitalize on the growing interest among educators to use the Baldrige criteria to raise student achievement. BiE IN, which also stands for “buy-in in spirit,” builds common ground around the one thing about which everyone cares most: increasing learning opportunities and success for all students.

The National Alliance of Business and its partner, the American Productivity & Quality Center, initiated BiE IN and invited 22 other key national business and education organizations to join.

BiE IN has a lofty vision—to accelerate and scale up implementation of Baldrige criteria U.S.-wide in order to meet state performance standards and achieve excellence and equity in American public education. BiE IN will achieve that vision by implementing a three-fold strategy:

- Forge a National Leadership Infrastructure of key business and education organizations to build awareness of and support for using Baldrige to increase student and system performance.
- Create a State Leadership Consortium to accelerate—through coaching, training, networking, and dissemination of best practices—the rollout of Baldrige

BiE IN U.S. Partners

- Achieve
- American Association of School Administrators
- American Business Conference
- American Federation of Teachers
- American Productivity & Quality Center
- Business-Higher Education Reform
- The Business Roundtable
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Council of Growing Companies
- Council of the Great City Schools
- Council on Competitiveness
- Education Commission of the States
- International Council of School Accreditation Commissions
- National Alliance of Business
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Association of Manufacturers
- National Association of Partners in Education
- National Association of State Boards of Education
- National Conference of State Legislatures
- National Education Association
- National Education Goals Panel
- National Governors' Association
- National School Boards Association
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Utility Business Education Coalition, Inc.

“We need to restore reason and stability within our schools so that educators and students are supported for making sound decisions and being accountable for the results,” says Robert T. Jones, president and CEO, National Alliance of Business.

within and across the United States over the next two years. BiE IN will support state-community leadership teams in six states—Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, New Mexico, Ohio, and Texas—and share their lessons learned in real time with other states.

- Design and disseminate materials and provide technical support to all state and local stakeholders, including business partners, to enhance their success in using the Baldrige as a model.

Our task is less to convince educators to use Baldrige criteria to meet more rigorous standards but to align policy and practice and then build organizational capacity within education to speed up and sustain continuous improvement. It's an achievable goal.

The best thing about using the Baldrige is its potential for transforming education where it counts—in the classroom. Students play a unique role in quality-driven education systems: They're not the products but the active workers. The product they produce is learning, through the dynamic exchange with their peers and teachers. Students are also internal customers of learning, much like workers are internal customers of the new knowledge and skills they acquire on the job and that enhance their employability and competency. Once learned, that knowledge and skills become part of them.

Just listen to Emily Hopper, a fifth-grader at Azalea Elementary, describe how her classmates were gearing up for middle school:

“We really are tougher on ourselves because...now we're like in the third grading period, one grading period left, and then we're not going to be at Azalea anymore. We're going to be at a bigger school. As our teachers started telling us more about middle school, we started saying, ‘OK, I think we better toughen up the rules....’ We thought it was a little too easy on us.”

When students assuming responsibility for their own learning becomes the norm rather than the exception, then we'll know we've arrived. No one would ever accuse Emily and her classmates of being treated like widgets. They wouldn't dare!” □

Contact nab.com; steinh@nab.com

Linking Business Needs and Lessons Learned to Education

By Brenda B. Sumberg, director (ret.)
Education Systems Alliances, Motorola

Corporations have understood for a long time that if they're to remain competitive in the marketplace, they need to have suppliers that can meet their requirements for critical resources. It came later the broad recognition that mindware or human capital is one of those critical resources. Who is our supplier of mindware? Obviously, it's our schools. We urgently need them to meet our requirements.

Companies need employees who not only have the basic skills associated with academic subjects, but also have the new basic skills, including problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, teaming, and creativity. Competency in both basics and new basics is necessary for employability. Once hired, employees must be responsible for themselves and their interactions with others in order to be successful.

Given the current environment, Motorola estimates that people who work for 40 years will experience eight to 10 different jobs and that any job can substantially change the same number of times. What happens each time changes occur? The affected workers must have some new knowledge or skill.

Hence, Motorola needs schools to prepare students who meet these requirements:

- the skills required for employability
- personal and social responsibility
- lifelong learning skills and attitudes.

The first requirement is a traditional role for education. However, even in that area, renewal is a given. Corporations are finding it necessary to continuously

readjust to accommodate the expanding global nature of the marketplace, technological innovations, and the ever-increasing rate of change. These readjustments drive differences in the specific skills or levels of expertise needed.

Education systems are encountering environments similar to those of industry—technological innovation, rapid rate of change, and more diversity of students, family structures, and experiences. As U.S. education faces those challenges, it can perhaps benefit from Motorola's experience.

The Baldrige criteria have been linked to Motorola's history and are now a part of our future. Motorola's Six Sigma Quality process, initiated in the mid eighties, laid the foundation that enabled us to be the first major corporation to win the Malcolm Baldrige National

**Companies need employees
who not only have the
basic skills associated with
academic subjects, but also
have the new basic skills.**

Quality award as a corporate-wide entity in 1988. Six Sigma remains a fundamental initiative of Motorola.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Motorola enjoyed great success. However, early in 1998, we found ourselves facing shrinking market shares, slowed growth, and loss of technology leadership. We were reminded that success is a continuous journey and requires constant vigilance.

In the past year, we have gone through a lot of pain and made tough decisions in the areas of manufacturing consolidation, cost reduction, restructuring programs, balancing employment with our going-forward strategies, and product portfolio adjustments. We exceeded our original goals for profit improvement and have emerged a stronger company.

One of key objectives that has been set as part of the renewal process is performance excellence, measured by

the same seven factors that form the basis for the Baldrige Award. These seven criteria for high-performance systems are being used to assess every business, identify gaps, and fix the problems. Our businesses document their goals and key measures on scorecards that align business-unit goals with those of the corporation. The emphasis is on results, and management accountability is tied to results.

At Motorola, we've certainly learned about improving performance by applying the Baldrige criteria. Motorola is a work in progress and will use the performance excellence initiative to continue to become stronger.

U.S. education is also currently going through a lot of pain in meeting all of the demands placed on it. It's not too difficult to draw analogies between the tough decisions Motorola has made and those being made in some education systems. For example, Motorola's need for assessment and action compare to education's need to align all levels.

The application of Baldrige criteria at each level of an education system, including the individual student level, offers huge opportunities for each student to meet critical education requirements. Imagine the promise of a five-year-old starting kindergarten to set skill and knowledge goals and continue to do so each year. Decisions about the processes and people needed to reach those goals become, at least in part, the responsibility of each student. All students in a class also set group goals and become responsible for meeting them.

What better way to develop people for Motorola with personal and social responsibility as well as appropriate knowledge and skills? Taking responsibility for one's own learning, coupled with the excitement of achieving learning goals, goes a long way toward developing the third requirement, lifelong learning skills and attitudes.

Whether high school graduates go directly into the workforce or on to obtain higher education, they'll be better prepared for success if they have met the three requirements. One way to ensure that is to use the Baldrige criteria as a management system for education. □

Contact motorola.com; cheryl.green@motorola.com