
Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers



Providing Our Students with the Skills
to Compete in the Global Workforce

Legislation introduced by
U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)
*Chairman, Senate HELP Subcommittee
on Employment and Workplace Safety*

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

July 29, 2009

Dear Friends,

A skilled, prepared workforce in our nation is more critical than ever before as we strive to compete in an increasingly global and dynamic economy. I have been a long-time advocate for workforce development and education programs that open the door to the 21st century skills needed for career success. These programs help working families prosper, while contributing to the economic strength and well-being of our nation. I believe that effective and coordinated education and workforce development efforts are critically important, particularly as so many families across the nation struggle just to stay afloat in this tough economic climate.

The new global economy has meant new opportunities for Washington state and our nation, but it has also presented us with real challenges. I am deeply troubled by the widening gap between the number of jobs that are available in growing fields from health care to energy development – and the number of workers who have the skills to fill those jobs. Drop-out rates and unemployment are on the rise. As our economy begins to recover, which it will, it is clear that we must find innovative ways to make education work for our students and our businesses.

Over the past few years, I have traveled throughout my home state of Washington, bringing together students, educators, workforce leaders, employers, and labor officials to talk about solutions. The result is legislation that I am reintroducing today for the new Congress – the *Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act*.

This packet includes information about my bill, which would provide incentives for communities, employers, and schools to work together and identify ways to open up “career pathways” that help our students get the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the 21st century economy. Education is the key to a bright future, and I am hopeful that the ideas I have presented in my bill will fuel a national discussion about ways we can improve education and strengthen our economy.

Thank you for taking the time to look at the materials I have included here. I hope you will find them useful, and please do not hesitate to contact me for more information.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator

173 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704
(202) 224-2621

1611 – 116TH AVENUE, NE
SUITE 214
BELLEVUE, WA 98004-3045
(425) 462-4460

2930 WETMORE AVENUE
SUITE 903
EVERETT, WA 98201-4107
(425) 259-6515

2988 JACKSON FEDERAL BUILDING
915 2ND AVENUE
SEATTLE, WA 98174-1003
(206) 553-5545
TOLL FREE: (866) 481-9186

601 WEST MAIN AVENUE
SUITE 802
SPOKANE, WA 99201-0613
(509) 624-9515

950 PACIFIC AVENUE
SUITE 650
TACOMA, WA 98402-4450
(253) 572-3636

THE MARSHALL HOUSE
1323 OFFICER'S ROW
VANCOUVER, WA 98661-3856
(360) 696-7797

website: <http://murray.senate.gov>
e-mail: <http://murray.senate.gov/email>
PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

402 EAST YAKIMA AVENUE
SUITE 390
YAKIMA, WA 98901-2760
(509) 453-7462



NEWS from U.S. Senator

PATTY MURRAY

Washington State

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, July 29, 2009

CONTACT: Murray Press Office
(202) 224-2834

Murray Introduces Landmark Legislation to Prepare Students for the Challenges of the Global Workforce

Landmark workforce bill will authorize new grant program to support local partnerships that give students the skills needed to fill local family-wage jobs

(Washington, D.C.) – Today, U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), a senior member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, introduced major legislation to help state and regional leaders increase graduation rates and prepare America’s next generation of highly skilled workers. The landmark legislation – The Providing Innovation to 21st Century Careers Act - provides federal funding to communities that build coalitions between employers, schools, workforce experts, and others to give students skills to succeed in school and careers in high-demand industries.

“This is about closing the skills gap between what students have and what employers need,” said Senator Murray. “Right now we are at a crossroads. Drop-out rates are up, unemployment is up and the high-wage, high-skilled jobs of the future are going unfilled. Now is the time to work together to find new solutions that will not only benefit both our kids and our schools but also our economy in the long-run. That’s why I have introduced legislation that will bring together employers, schools, workforce and economic development experts, labor and more to develop ways to help students get the skills and credentials they need for family-wage careers in their regions. In an increasingly global and dynamic economy, a skilled, prepared workforce is more important than ever.”

The legislation Senator Murray introduced is a direct result of her discussions with employers, teachers and students, and workforce experts in various regions of Washington state over the last two years. In addition to national experts, Senator Murray has reached out to regional skill centers, labor leaders, schools as well as leaders in industries like health care, construction, aerospace, energy, and more. Many employers have told Senator Murray that when they have high-skill jobs to fill they can’t find local candidates with the skills needed to fill them.

The Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act helps address critical education and workforce needs with:

New Resources - Establishes \$912 million in federal competitive grants that can be used by state and regional partnerships to help students move from high school, to a wide array of post-secondary education options, to skilled careers.

Strong Partnerships - Requires state and regional partnerships applying for funding to include representatives from high schools, post-secondary education, businesses, labor, workforce, and economic development.

Supporting Innovations - Encourages state and regional partnerships to develop career pathways for high school students that include counseling, mentoring, work-based experiences, and support to obtain degrees, apprenticeships, and other postsecondary credentials.

Real Accountability - Incorporates measures to evaluate success of state and regional efforts including reports to Congress.

[Bill Summary](#) | [Q & A](#) | [Supporters](#) | [Bill Text](#)

###

Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act
U.S. Senator Patty Murray

THE PROBLEM – A SKILLS GAP

- A highly educated and skilled workforce is an indispensable key to the nation’s economic recovery and success – particularly in this constantly changing, knowledge-based, technology-driven, global economy.
- Yet the United States ranks only 11th in graduation rates out of the 30 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development member nations, and one-third of all U.S. high school students will not graduate on time.
- Even today, high skill jobs in viable industries go unfilled in the U.S., often because of a lack of skilled U.S. workers.

A NEW APPROACH – INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

- **The Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act calls for \$912 million in federal grants to support state and regional partnerships in developing creative strategies to help high school age youth prepare for a full range of postsecondary education options and 21st Century careers.**
- State and regional partnerships, which will include high schools, post-secondary education, business, workforce and economic development, labor and other key players, are a critical component of this legislation.
- These collaborative partnerships will allow students to access help each step of the way as they transition from high school, to a postsecondary education, and on to a successful career.

FEDERAL SUPPORT – GRANT FUNDING FOR STATE AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- State and regional partnerships, either existing or new, will be eligible to compete for grants, with each state partnership potentially eligible for a grant.
- Partnerships should include members from at least secondary and postsecondary education, business and trade organizations, economic development, workforce investment boards, registered apprenticeships, and organized labor leadership.
- Grants range from one-year planning grants to five-year implementation grants. Some of the allowable grant activities include: Creating career pathways, including curriculum and coursework development; creating coherent academic and guidance counseling strategies tied to career pathways; one-to-one mentoring and work-based experiences; leveraging existing youth development funds; modernization of educational equipment and spaces; development of registered apprenticeship programs; and one-stop youth career services enhancement.
- These career pathways will provide students the flexibility to change their areas of interest and include efforts to identify, engage, and reintegrate high school age youth who may have dropped out of school.

ACCOUNTABILITY – MEASURING SUCCESS FOR OUR STUDENTS

- Graduation rates, enrollment and attainment in postsecondary education, and longer term labor market measurements will ensure strong accountability of the grants. The use of data already collected under federal statute will minimize administrative burdens.

A HOME FOR INNOVATION - THE NATIONAL ACADEMIC AND CAREER INNOVATION CENTER

- The bill establishes a National Academic and Career Innovation Center under the agreement of the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Commerce and the direction of a Board.
- The Center will manage the grant program; support state and regional capacity building; and implement research and evaluation programs to document and disseminate best practices and exemplary state curricula.

Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act
Questions and Answers

Q: What does this bill do?

A: The Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act creates a \$912 million federal grant program designed to prepare young people for careers available in communities across the country, including the credentials necessary to succeed in the 21st century global economy.

Q: How would it work?

A: State and regional leaders in education, business, labor, and workforce could apply for grants to create partnerships, study the workforce needs, both current and projected, in their communities, and develop programs that prepare students to be successful in those careers.

The act encourages these groups to also create and invest in a variety of hands-on programs that give students a chance to experience what it's like to work in fields they are interested in – and prepare them for high school graduation and a post-secondary credential, including registered apprenticeships. Those opportunities could include:

- Hands-on job-training experiences or internships that link students with area businesses;
- Training for teachers on how to incorporate real-world career skills and context with core academic courses;
- Enhanced guidance-counseling and career-education programs that help students get accurate, up-to-date information about all career opportunities – and to learn the skills they will need to apply for jobs and to get further schooling.

The idea is to engage students' interest in a wide array of potential careers, and ensure they have access to coursework and real-world experiences that will position them to pursue jobs in those fields.

Q: Who will oversee this initiative?

A: The bill creates a new National Academic and Career Innovation Center under an agreement with the Education, Labor and Commerce departments. The center would have the authority and the flexibility to develop coherent and comprehensive strategies across disciplines to better prepare America's future workforce and galvanize the resources to evaluate, document, and inform every stakeholder about results.

Q: How will you measure success?

A: Each grant recipient will be required to report to the National Academic and Career Innovation Center. The center will evaluate the success of the grantees' efforts based on whether students are:

- Graduating from high school;
- Entering postsecondary education, or going on to get a job;
- Earning a post-secondary degree or credential;
- And how much students earn when they enter the workforce.

The evaluation will determine whether a grantee gets a renewal or an extension.

In addition, the center will help collect and disseminate information on best practices and help other states and regions put those activities in place.

Q: The bill talks about "career pathways" for high school students; what does that mean?

A: The bill brings together educators, and industry, workforce, and economic development leaders to identify in-demand careers and then help interested students prepare for those fields by creating "career pathways" and opportunities for contextual learning. In essence, career pathways are the set of academic and career-related courses and services students could participate in. Under the bill, the goals are to:

- Prepare students to meet state academic standards and requirements for high school graduation;
- Align high school requirements with postsecondary education institutions' entrance requirements and the needs of high-skill, high-demand industries in the region or state;
- Provide necessary flexibility, since high school students often change their areas of interest;
- Offer a full range of postsecondary options so that students are not limited when they graduate from high school; and
- Help a student earn a high school diploma and at least one postsecondary credential that could include a two- or four-year degree, an apprenticeship credential, or occupational certificate or license.

Q: Will all high school students be required to participate in career pathways?

A: No. Student participation is completely voluntary, as is the participation of states and regions.

Q: What if a student changes his or her mind about a career pathway over time? Will he or she be stuck learning something they no longer have interest in?

A: Career pathways should be designed to provide a broad array of academic and career opportunities, including contextual learning of core academic subjects, with the recognition that most high school students will change their minds. Students will have access to quality information about postsecondary education and career options available to them and will acquire the skills they need to take advantage of those options. Regardless of the student's ultimate career choice, contextual learning in high-demand industries provides valuable experience for future education and career choices.

Q: Are all states eligible to apply for a grant?

A: Yes. Any state can choose to apply – either for a one-year planning grant to develop a strategy for career pathways; or, if the state partnership already has such a strategy in place, it can apply for a five-year implementation grant.

Q: How do you define a region eligible to apply for funds from its state?

A: Regions define their boundaries in plans they submit to the state partnership for approval. Regions might choose a natural labor market as their boundary, or a workforce development area, an economic development area, or even a consortium of school districts. Regions can cross state boundaries, but they must work out how education activities will be coordinated despite state differences.

Q: Won't career pathways partnerships simply add a new layer of bureaucracy?

A: No. Rather than create a new structure or program, states and regions are encouraged to build on what works best for them by adopting existing partnerships such as P-16 or P-20 councils, workforce investment boards, economic development councils, and business-education partnerships that include key stakeholders in career pathway development. Partnerships are also required to leverage and maximize existing resources in planning career pathways development.

Q: Why is a career pathway approach important to high school age youth?

A: Recent studies show that young adults need similar skills sets to be prepared for success in college and in careers. In addition to streamlining the transition from high school to postsecondary education and careers, pathways integrate rigorous academic and career learning so that high school students reach high academic standards while learning about real-world applications. High school age youth also will learn more about the career options available to them, particularly in viable industries that hold real promise for quality careers.

Q: Isn't a high school diploma enough for most students to be successful?

A: In today's economy, not necessarily. Most high-wage jobs require some postsecondary education. Some economists estimate that by 2012 there will be a shortage of more than 7 million workers with an associate degree or higher. Studies have shown that if students can earn just one year of college credit, it can make a significant difference in their wages later in life.

Q: Going to college is part of the American dream. Shouldn't we focus our resources on making this happen?

A: One of the critical goals of this bill is to ensure that young people graduate from high school, enter postsecondary education, and acquire a degree or industry-recognized credential. While postsecondary education is critical to any young person's success in building a family-supporting career over the long term, careers in high-skill, high-demand industries require varying types of postsecondary credentials. The bill also helps students learn about the educational requirements and options for high-skill, well-paying careers by providing them with quality career-related information and exploration opportunities. It also supports a rigorous, more-engaging high school experience so that young people are prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and are equipped with the skills they need to take advantage of a dynamic economy.

Q: What about the young people who dropped out of school – can they participate in and benefit from career pathways?

A: Youth who have dropped out of school often need a structured and engaging learning experience to successfully reenter high school and attain their diploma. Career pathways provide that experience. The bill requires that regional partnerships develop strategies to re-engage students who have dropped out and help them participate in pathways and complete their diploma. It also asks regional partnerships to include existing community services to help at-risk students. In addition, partnerships are encouraged to create one-on-one mentorships between these young people and responsible, caring adult role models in their communities.

Q: Does the bill accommodate a broad range of models such as Career Academies, dual enrollment programs, and Perkins Programs of Study?

A: Absolutely. Many states across the country have already invested in similar models that work well for their students and their communities. This bill is designed to build upon their success and spark innovation around new ideas that help youth succeed beyond high school.

Q: Why is Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers needed when the Workforce Investment Act, No Child Left Behind, and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act already exist?

A: Preparing future generations of highly educated and skilled individuals means addressing complex education, employment and social challenges, and that generally requires coordination among many stakeholders and partners. This bill encourages collaboration among those stakeholders and partners to align relevant programs authorized under each separate piece of legislation and to leverage resources around common goals – something that is very difficult to achieve under an individual program. This initiative complements and builds upon each of the current programs. It does not reauthorize any of these or other federal laws; rather it aims to build bridges between the programs to help students transition smoothly from high school to postsecondary education and into skilled careers.

Q: Isn't Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers just another form of the controversial School to Work program? If it isn't, how does it differ?

A: Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers is not School to Work. The legislation does not involve career majors, nor is it intended for every student. It does, however, take several lessons about what worked and what didn't from the program:

- The bill links to the high academic standards, academic achievement outcomes data, and graduation data required under the No Child Left Behind Act to ensure that all students are on track to graduate from high school prepared for the full range of postsecondary education options.
- It encourages high school students to explore a variety of academic and career-related options throughout high school, while meeting state academic and graduation requirements, preparing for postsecondary education, and acquiring the skills necessary to succeed in 21st Century careers.
- Participation in pathways at the state, regional, and individual high school student levels is completely voluntary.

As state and regional partnerships approach the end of their grants, they will fund increasingly larger portions to sustain the initiative.

Q: Why is the focus on high-skill, high-demand careers?

A: Today's workforce needs are evolving as a result of the global economy. Employers say they cannot find enough American workers trained to fill the high-skill jobs available. Focusing career pathways on high-skill, high-demand careers not only will improve the U.S. economy by increasing America's skilled workforce, but it will also prepare youth for sustainable and family-supporting careers in thriving or emerging industries. Students, workers and industries win in the long run with this approach, and it is a necessary part of keeping our country competitive for generations to come.

Q: How will career pathways address the needs of business and industry?

A: Career pathways ultimately provide businesses and employers with better-prepared workers who have the skills and credentials necessary to be successful in the workplace. This proposal seeks to help businesses find skilled workers without having to look beyond our own country and communities. This proposal ensures that businesses are included in the discussion about the skills students need in the 21st century workforce and the strategy to help them obtain those skills.

Q: How can career pathway initiatives continue beyond the life of the federal grant?

A: This bill encourages states and regions to change the way they think about preparing young people for the demands of 21st century careers by strengthening the connections between education, workforce development, and economic development. In addition to building on existing partnerships, the bill encourages the mutual commitment and accountability of all stakeholders to make pathways a success, which should increase the likelihood of sustaining practices that work.

Q: How does professional development included in the bill for teachers, counselors, and administrative personnel complement existing efforts to help teachers develop skills that enable them to help students meet academic standards?

A: Professional development on career pathways and related activities must be coordinated with existing professional development efforts to avoid unnecessary duplication. These new efforts should include activities and experiences to provide teachers and school leaders with a strong understanding of career options for students, the value of contextual learning, and the needs of high-demand industries.

Q: Why aren't low-skill or low-earning adults included in this career pathway proposal when they have significant skills development needs?

A: While this bill focuses on young adults, pathways can benefit many workers, especially those who are low-skilled or low-earning. This concept can also enhance future conversations on workforce development, including career pathways for all, regardless of age or skill level.

PROMOTING INNOVATIONS TO 21ST CENTURY CAREERS

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

September 24, 2008

“Spurring innovative solutions within states and regions to help young people succeed in the classroom and in their future careers is key to maintaining America's standard of living for our children and future generations. We must equip students with the skills, knowledge, creativity, and flexibility they need for their future well-being, as well as that of their communities and the nation. This bill will bolster conversations and partnerships among education, industry, workforce and economic development leaders at all levels about how, together, we accomplish that goal.” -**Richard W. Riley, Former Secretary of Education (1993-2001)**

“I strongly support Senator Murray’s Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act, which would facilitate the modernization and integration of several clearly related activities—career development, high schools, community colleges, and regional and community development—into a more coherent system that would strengthen each component and make the whole developmental system much more effective. This bill could give a much-needed boost to America’s lagging education and training institutions.” -**Ray Marshall, Chair, LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin, and former Secretary of Labor**

“I want to thank you for your leadership in crafting legislation that promises to build the next generation of highly skilled workers: Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers... The legislation is very pragmatic – and practical – insofar as it gives due attention to several critical aspects for realizing success, particularly: local and regional partnerships among leaders throughout government, education, business, labor, and workforce; strong curriculum development; and professional development. Thank you, again, for your leadership in the United States Senate on this critical issue and know I stand ready to help move your legislation forward.” - **Christine O. Gregoire, Governor, Washington State**

"Senator Murray’s Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act is a bold proposal to move this Nation dramatically forward by initiating and expanding partnerships for high skill career education pipelines that will pay off in better futures for students, more skilled labor for businesses, and increased talent to advance regional growth and opportunity. She offers a clear call to transform the high school learning experience for thousands of students, equipping them with the career guidance, information, and skills they will need to succeed in the global economy." -**Ray Uhalde, Director, Workforce Development Strategies Group at the National Center on Education and the Economy, and former U.S Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor**

“Creating new pathways for preparing a skilled workforce is a critically important responsibility that requires collaboration among employers, educational institutions, the workforce system, and community leaders. Jobs for the Future commends Senator Murray’s leadership in Congress in exploring innovative ways that the federal government can support the creation of strong partnerships that will develop education and career opportunities linked to thriving local and regional industries.” -**Marlene B. Seltzer, President and CEO, Jobs for the Future**

PROMOTING INNOVATIONS TO 21ST CENTURY CAREERS

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

September 24, 2008

"A highly skilled workforce is essential to America's continuing economic competitive position and world leadership. Building that knowledgeable, creative, and productive workforce begins by providing all of the nation's students with the excellent education – including a variety of options – that will ensure that they can thrive and succeed in rewarding careers. We applaud Senator Murray's efforts to bring communities together and support the preparation of a strong American workforce for the 21st century." **-Bob Wise, President, Alliance for Excellent Education. Former Governor of West Virginia**

"Critical to its vision is the recognition that the talent pipeline must be filled by students who understand in school what it will take to engage in challenging careers. Providing accurate and engaging information of the future of work to students and young adults is one component. The other is building the curriculum and supports necessary for our teachers to prepare those young people for the challenge. This bill will help America do both well." **-James Vollman, President, Advanced Workforce Systems and former Associate Assistant Secretary of Labor**

"I believe that the further development of Career Pathways is a very important component of any strategy to address the needs of less-advantaged youth and young adults as they prepare to enter the labor market. I thus support this bill strongly and hope that it is the first step in a comprehensive effort to address this very serious issue." **-Harry Holzer, Professor of Public Policy, Georgetown Public Policy Institute, former Chief Economist, U.S Department of Labor**

"The Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act" would provide additional resources to align high school graduation requirements with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter postsecondary education, which is a critical goal for the nation's community colleges. Our colleges dedicate more resources than is desirable to helping students acquire knowledge that they should already possess. AACC thanks Senator Murray for her leadership on this issue and looks forward to working with her as this legislation progresses." **-George Boggs, CEO and President, American Association of Community Colleges**

"The National Education Association believes every student deserves the opportunity to prosper and succeed in this global economy. We need to prepare students for the real world, for success in the new industries of tomorrow like alternative energy, medical research, and cutting-edge technology. This is why NEA is a founding member of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, which is working with partners nationwide to define a vision for our schools in the 21st century. To that end, Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) introduced the Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act of 2008 that will strengthen careers paths for all students, help prepare them for tomorrow's highly needed and highly skilled jobs and build healthier and more prosperous communities." **-Dennis Van Roekel, President, National Education Association (NEA)**

PROMOTING INNOVATIONS TO 21ST CENTURY CAREERS

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

September 24, 2008

"No singular initiative can take on a national challenge as large as ensuring our nation's competitiveness through the critical preparation of America's young people for careers and civic engagement in the 21st century. Not only do they represent the workforce of tomorrow, but also the community leaders who will guide this country through complex global, economic, and social challenges for the next 50 years. With youth unemployment three times the rate of adults, and high school dropout rates hovering around 50% in our nation's largest urban centers, leaders across all sectors and levels of government must come together to address this critical national problem. My colleagues in philanthropy are eager to join their counterparts in public policy, business, education, and workforce investment in designing creative responses, new pathways, and the right partnerships that will strengthen youth career training and lifelong learning opportunities." **-Steve Gunderson, CEO, Council on Foundations**

"I am so pleased that Senator Murray has introduced the 'Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act of 2008'. This is an important piece of legislation that recognizes the value of creating community-based partnerships that will help young people, including those with disabilities, prepare for jobs in their communities. This legislation recognizes that pursuing a four-year postsecondary education is not the only path that young people can follow to be successful in both work and as citizens in their communities. By stressing the importance of career planning, continuity beginning in secondary school through postsecondary education, and/or internships and employment opportunities, this legislation truly captures the essence of real pathways to 21st century careers." **-Bill East, Executive Director, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)**

"Today's youth will be entering a workplace unlike any other in history, requiring a level of preparation far more complex than in the past. Traditional career ladders will give way to career lattices, with multiple choices for career progression. Not only will advanced technical knowledge be needed, but creativity, technological acuity, problem-solving, relationship-building, and the ability to accommodate rapidly to change will be the mainstays for long-term economic success. But our schools can't achieve these objectives on their own. Business, labor, community and government must work together with educators to create the pathways to success. Senator Murray's Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act provides the formula to bring together all those entities that have a stake in the future of our young people." **-Eleni Papadakis, Executive Director, Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board**

"In order to develop a wide range of workers skilled in all areas – both academic and technical, both career-focused and knowledge-focused, both high –skills, and high-demand, our high school students must be given options that lead to the myriad career opportunities available in today's global economy. Senator Murray's Career Pathways bill paves the way for these innovative options to be imagined and carried out in high schools across our country." **-Sue Ambler, President and CEO, Workforce Development Council, Snohomish County**

PROMOTING INNOVATIONS TO 21ST CENTURY CAREERS

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

September 24, 2008

"It is my pleasure to write in support of the proposed bill establishing partnerships to create or enhance educational and skills development pathways to 21st century careers. "Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers" will help to ready students for careers in high-demand fields, increase graduation rates, decrease unemployment rates, and create a seamless transition from secondary education to post-secondary education, rigorous apprenticeships, and workforce preparation. It will improve the economic and personal wellbeing of students and their communities." **-Dr. Terry Bergeson, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State**

"Our economic survival in this interconnected global economy depends upon a highly educated and skilled workforce and on competitive enterprises. Career Pathways supports strong linkages between high school and postsecondary education that encourage students to continuously learn and upgrade their skills and creativity. It offers an incentive to pull together education, workforce and economic forces to collaborate at a system level as a powerful engine of growth for both individuals and the regional economy. And it weaves together separate and disparate services into range of traditional and nontraditional pathways for students, including those who may not have planned their next steps after high school or know all of the options available to them, or those thinking of graduating from high school and going straight to college. Thus, it is worthy of our serious consideration." **-Robert G. Templin, Jr., President, Northern Virginia Community College**

"Thank you for your leadership in developing and introducing the Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act of 2008. If enacted, your proposed legislation would enable us to expand career pathways in Greater Philadelphia and throughout Pennsylvania. As a result, we could offer these much-needed opportunities for many more young people for their benefit and for that of our employers, citizens and regional economies. We also appreciate your recognition of intermediary organizations and the important roles they play in youth workforce preparation, and urge your continued support for regional systems and strategies that build on existing successful efforts and increase education and career opportunities for our young people." **-Laura Shubilla, Co-President/CEO, Philadelphia Youth Network**

"Senator Murray's Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers legislation recognizes the need to invest in our most valuable resource- our people. America's economy will remain strong as long as we give our citizens the skills and training they need to get the job done." **-Larry Brown, Legislative & Political Director, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO District 751**

PROMOTING INNOVATIONS TO 21ST CENTURY CAREERS

U.S. Senator Patty Murray

September 24, 2008

"Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers will help to ready students for careers in high-demand fields, increase graduation rates, decrease unemployment rates, and create a seamless transition from secondary education to post-secondary education, rigorous apprenticeships, and workforce preparation—stronger economies, stronger communities." ***-John Aultman, Assistant Superintendent, Career and College Readiness, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State***

"Senator Murray has been a consistent champion for our economic growth. Her Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act shows her foresight for the skills development and education of workers that will keep us ahead of our competitors in the global economy." ***-Tim Probst, CEO, Washington Workforce Association***

"Thank you, Senator Murray, for your vision and creativity in developing the Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers legislation. It will enhance the work being done in Washington State to move Career and Technical Education forward. The students and the economy will be the real beneficiaries of your work." ***-Kathleen Lopp, Executive Director, Washington State Association for Career and Technical Education***

"Senator Murray, we applaud your leadership in advocating for funding to improve the ways in which our communities provide career information and education and skill development opportunities for youth, teachers, counselors, and parents...We are pleased to see the flexibility both at the state and local level to develop strategies that meet community and employer needs...We appreciate the opportunity for supplemental grants to support curriculum development that reinforces reading and math skills through real world applications along with teacher training." ***-Dale Lemmons, Board Chair, and Lisa Nisenfeld, Executive Director, Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council***

"Senator Murray's continued advocacy for workforce development is exemplified in this bill. The Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers Act is the type of federal policy needed to support state and regional partners, like those in Seattle, in our efforts to create innovative strategies to connect the education and skills development for young adults with the opportunities available to them in postsecondary education, careers and the needs of thriving industries. To the end, it encourages strategic partnerships between education, workforce, business, economic development and labor—partnerships that we know work because of the success of state and local workforce boards. I am very excited about this bill and thank the Senator for considering lessons learned from Washington State's leaders in this field."

-Kris Stadelman, CEO, Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

June 24, 2009

Despite Recession, High Demand for Skilled Labor

By [LOUIS UCHITELLE](#)

Just as the recession began, Chris McGrary, a manager at the Cianbro Corporation, set out to hire 80 “experienced” welders. Only now, 18 months later, is he completing the roster.

With the unemployment rate soaring, there have been plenty of applicants. But the welding test stumped many of them. Mr. McGrary found that only those with 10 years of experience — and not all of them — could produce a perfect weld: one without flaws, even in an X-ray. Flawless welds are needed for the oil refinery sections that Cianbro is building in Brewer, Me.

“If you don’t hire in a day or two, the ones that can do that,” Mr. McGrary said, “they are out the door and working for another company.”

Six million jobs have disappeared across the country since Mr. McGrary began his quest. The unemployment rate has risen precipitously to 9.4 percent, the highest level in nearly 30 years, and most of the jobs that do come open are quickly filled from the legions of seekers. But unnoticed in the government’s standard employment data, employers are begging for qualified applicants for certain occupations, even in hard times. Most of the jobs involve skills that take years to attain.

Welder is one, employers report. Critical care nurse is another. Electrical lineman is yet another, particularly those skilled in stringing high-voltage wires across the landscape. Special education teachers are in demand. So are geotechnical engineers, trained in geology as well as engineering, a combination sought for oil field work. Respiratory therapists, who help the ill breathe, are not easily found, at least not by the Permanente Medical Group, which employs more than 30,000 health professionals. And with infrastructure spending now on the rise, civil engineers are in demand to supervise the work.

“Not newly graduated civil engineers,” said Larry Jacobson, executive director of the National Society of Professional Engineers. “What’s missing are enough licensed professionals who have worked at least five years under experienced engineers before taking the licensing exam.”

While these workers might be lured away by higher offers in a robust economy, they should be more plentiful when overall business demand is as slack as it is now.

For these hard-to-fill jobs, there seems to be a common denominator. Employers are looking for people who have acquired an exacting skill, first through education — often just high school vocational training — and then by honing it on the job. That trajectory, requiring years, is no longer so easy in America, said Richard Sennett, a [New York University](#) sociologist.

The pressure to earn a bachelor's degree draws young people away from occupational training, particularly occupations that do not require college, Mr. Sennett said, and he cited two other factors. Outsourcing interrupts employment before a skill is fully developed, and layoffs undermine dedication to a single occupation. "People are told they can't get back to work unless they retrain for a new skill," he said.

None of this deterred Keelan Prados from pursuing a career as a welder, one among roughly 200,000 across the nation. At 28, he has more than a decade of experience, beginning when he was a teenager, building and repairing oil field equipment in his father's shop in Louisiana. Marriage to a Canadian brought the Pradoses to Maine, near her family. And before Mr. Prados joined Cianbro, an industrial contractor, he ran his own business, repairing logging equipment out of a welding and machine shop on the grounds of his home in Brewer.

The recession dried up that work, and last December, he answered one of Mr. McGrary's ads. "I welded a couple of pieces of plate together for them and two pipes, and they were impressed," Mr. Prados said. In less than two weeks, he was at work on Cianbro's oil refinery project, earning \$22 an hour and among the youngest of Mr. McGrary's hires, most of whom are in their mid-30s to early 40s.

The [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) does not track how often Mr. Prados's experience — applying for a job and quickly being offered it — is repeated in America in the midst of huge and protracted unemployment. A bureau survey counts the number of job openings and the number of hires, but the data is not broken down by occupation.

[The Conference Board](#), a business organization in New York, comes closer. In a monthly count of online job openings — listed on Monster.com and more than 1,200 similar Web sites — it breaks the advertised openings into 22 broad occupational categories and compares those with the number of unemployed whose last job, according to the bureau, was in each category. In only four of the categories — architecture and engineering, the physical sciences, computer and mathematical science, and health care — were the unemployed equal to or fewer than the listed job openings. There were, in sum, 1.09 million listed openings and only 582,700 unemployed people presumably available to fill them.

The Conference Board's hard-to-fill openings include registered nurses, but the shortage is not as great as it was before the recession, particularly in battered states like Michigan and Ohio, said Cheryl Peterson, a director of the American Nurses Association.

“Until the downturn, it was easy for experienced registered nurses to find employment right in their communities, in whatever positions they wanted,” Ms. Peterson said. “Now it is a little more difficult because the number of job openings has fallen and we have more retired nurses, in need of income, coming back.”

That does not hold for nurses who have a decade of experience caring for critically ill people, particularly in hospital recovery rooms, said Dr. Robert Pearl, chief executive and chairman of the Permanente Medical Group, a big employer of medical professionals. “There are probably more nurses recently trained than there are jobs for them,” he said, “but for those with the highest level of skill and experience, there are always openings.” And at \$100,000 in pay.

That is also the case for geological engineers like Diane Oshlo, who was hired last month by Kleinfelder, a professional services firm headquartered in San Diego that takes on big projects, like the environmental cleanup work Ms. Oshlo is doing in Corpus Christi, Tex., at the site of an inactive oil refinery. Engineers like her, skilled in petroleum, are in short supply, and those who are also professional geologists are even rarer.

That made Ms. Oshlo, 50, a hot prospect when she decided to relocate from Chicago, where she had lived for years, doing similar work for a similar firm. Margaret Duner, a Kleinfelder recruiter, spotted her résumé when it arrived in the spring in response to a job ad, and quickly brought her into the hiring process. “Diane stood out,” Ms. Duner said.

Two other firms to which Ms. Oshlo sent résumés also quickly offered work. What swayed her was not the \$65,000 salary — there will be raises and bonuses soon, Ms. Duner said — but Kleinfelder’s willingness to pay to move her to Corpus Christi.

“I told the two others I couldn’t wait,” Ms. Oshlo said. “They offered roughly the same pay, but they weren’t sure about the relocation package.”



http://www.seattlepi.com/business/341513_worktrain29.html

Students, state urged to fill the void in the work force

College isn't the only career option

Last updated November 28, 2007 9:00 p.m. PT

By DAN RICHMAN
P-I REPORTER

Washington's educational system must change to fill a growing gap between job openings and qualified workers, said a panel of 13 educators, businesspeople, labor representatives and students on Wednesday.

The consensus at a two-hour hearing convened by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and held in a packed auditorium at South Seattle Community College was that alternatives to four-year college degrees must be destigmatized and better publicized.

Otherwise, the state and the nation could lose jobs as employers look elsewhere for a skilled work force. And the one-third of all American students who don't make it past high school may lack a career path.

"It's very worrisome that we are not focusing all our attention right now" on the job-skills gap, said Murray, chairwoman of the subcommittee on Employment and Workplace Safety.

That gap is undeniable, speakers said.

- In 10 years, 60 percent of the state's 21,000 electrical workers will have left the work force, said Don Guillot, secretary-treasurer of the Washington State Association of Electrical Workers.
- Each year between now and 2012, about 3,900 jobs will open in Washington that require a computer science degree, but fewer than 700 such degrees are being awarded annually in the state, said Bob Drewel, executive director of the Puget Sound Regional Council.
- Washington has 87,000 job vacancies today, with 145,000 people looking for work but lacking the skills to fill those vacancies.

"There isn't a person at this table who wouldn't argue that education is the answer," said Drewel. "We just have to be smart about how we do it."

Terry Seaman, vice president of Seattle's Seidelhuber Iron & Bronze Works Inc., called for a full-scale vocational high school teaching both academic and job-oriented skills.

Many school districts have dropped vocational programs from their high schools because they're too expensive, said Charles Mitchell, chancellor of the Seattle Community College District.

It's not just specific job skills people need to succeed in the workplace, the panelists said.

They also need:

- Tips on basics such as showing up on time, personal grooming and appropriate dress, said David Harrison, a University of Washington professor.
- Communication skills -- even debate-team experience -- despite the emphasis on math and science needed to place students in high-tech jobs, said David Allen, an executive vice president at McKinstry Co., a construction and engineering firm.
- The ability to be creative, no matter what the field or job, Drewel said.

Alternatives to college aren't publicized enough, said Meisha Nash, now studying culinary arts, and David Steinhoff, who chose an electrical-wiring apprenticeship rather than college.

In his high school's career office, "the tech and vocational and apprenticeship information is shoved in the back, covered in dust and two years old," Steinhoff said. "So it's about getting the programs out there."

Some questioned the need for college degrees entirely.

"Not everyone in this room needs to go to college, especially in our industry," said Guillot, the electrical worker. "If you get into an apprenticeship program, in four years you're pulling down \$65,000."

At the least, a nationwide stigma over the failure to earn a four-year degree has to be overcome, said Rick Bender, president of the Washington State Labor Council.

"There are some tremendous opportunities that pay a good family wage, with health care and a pension" but that don't require a college degree, he said.

So is a liberal arts education valueless in today's work world? No, said McKinstry's Allen.

"I have lots of friends whose kids are calling me -- they have four-year liberal arts degrees from 'a small, East Coast college,' and now they want to figure out what they want to do," he said. "I don't think that's wrong, either, if it opens your mind."

The technical-training path and the college-bound paths shouldn't diverge too widely, so students can move easily from one to the other should they change their minds, said the UW's Harrison.

One example of that proximity, said newly minted electrician Steinhoff, can be found in his apprenticeship program, which he said lets participants earn an associate's degree at Pierce College with just a few additional classes.

After the session, Murray said she intends to hold similar hearings elsewhere in the state over the next year on behalf of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. She said she will develop federal legislation to support the improvements that need to be made.

"It takes policy, resources and, most of all, a national conversation and focus, and I intend to use my committee to make that happen," she said.

P-I reporter Dan Richman can be reached at 206-448-8032 or danrichman@seattlepi.com.

© 1998-2010 Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Tacoma, WA - Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Tacoma dropouts get a new chance

KRIS SHERMAN; kris.sherman@thenewstribune.com

Last updated: September 25th, 2008 12:43 AM (PDT)

Nineteen-year-old Cameron Buesgens went to work at Les Schwab Tire Centers on Monday. He expects he'll be stocking and sweeping, gofering and getting job experience.

But he wants more for himself. And what he wants – entrance into a construction electrician apprenticeship program – requires a high school diploma. He's two credits and a senior project shy of graduating.

Enter the new Tacoma Business Academy High School.

The partnership of the Tacoma School District, Bates Technical College and Communities in Schools of Tacoma aims to give dropouts between 16 and 21 the individualized learning plans and one-on-one attention they need to earn their diplomas.

It's also unlike other high schools in one big respect: Students must either have a job or be willing to get one before they gain admission. Part of the philosophy is teaching youths the importance of work and helping them to eventually learn and earn their way out of low-paying jobs.

The school opened last week on the Bates campus. More than a dozen students are enrolled, and new ones are signing up every day, said business teacher John Ruby.

It's not a continuation high school, but targeted at youths who might not re-enter school any other way.

Roughly one-third of Tacoma's high school students drop out before they finish. Buesgens doesn't consider himself a dropout. He simply came up shy of credits at the Tacoma School of the Arts, he said, and discovered he can't walk his chosen career path without a diploma.

Once Buesgens completes an English class, finishes an online course in Washington state history and turns in that culminating project, he'll get his diploma. As soon as December, he could become the Tacoma Business Academy High School's first graduate.

Other students have a much longer road. A young woman came in Monday with just half a high school credit, Ruby said. Twenty-three are needed for graduation.

PART OF A SOLUTION

Tacoma's on-time graduation rate, as reported by the state, is about 68 percent.

The School Board has set goals of decreasing the dropout rate by 10 percent a year and reducing the number of students who don't graduate by the same amount.

"It will take some time to turn that ship around," School District Superintendent Art Jarvis said of the district's

dropout statistics.

But he thinks the Tacoma Business Academy High School might be one weapon in the battle.

Tyler Stanek, a Communities in Schools board member and organizer of the mall school project, calls the new school “huge” in the movement to get dropouts back in class.

Communities in Schools is a nonprofit group dedicated to helping the city’s most vulnerable students succeed in school.

“Anytime you can bring just one student back and try to engage him and really go at that student in a different fashion” is a measure of success, Stanek said.

Though school districts in other states offer business high schools, Tacoma officials said they know of no model exactly like their new offspring. The school has the capacity for about 50 students, and officials hope it will fill up fast. There is no charge to eligible students.

The pieces of this puzzle fit together in a relatively short time because Bates had the space and Tacoma schools officials had the desire to get the school going.

Educators thought it would be easier to lure dropouts to a college campus than a high school. The Bates facility downtown has both a central location and the cachet of the largest public technical college in the state.

Bates’ existing Technical High School provides academic classes in concert with the World of Work, Digitools, business law and business math offered by the Business Academy High School, Ruby said. Students can take Washington state history online using the 19 computers in the new lab.

As promising as the concept sounds, Tacoma Urban League President Emeritus Thomas Dixon said Tuesday that he hopes the school district works closely with representatives of minority groups to reach the students who need it most.

“There’s no question it’s a wonderful idea,” he said. “It sounds good if they do it right.”

Minority leaders have expressed concern about the school system failing too many students, particularly young black males, who drop out of school and land in low-earning, poor-advancement jobs.

School officials are working with Felix Flannigan, executive director of the Martin Luther King Housing Development Association, on exactly that, said Bates Technical College President David Borofsky. Flannigan and his staff believe they can find young black males who might fit the program model and are willing to enroll, Borofsky said.

‘I THINK IT’S PRETTY COOL’

As Ruby, teacher Janet Hopkins and Communities in Schools community resource specialist Sinuon Hem explain it, there are a handful of major components of the Business Academy. Besides the work requirement:

- Each student works with teachers to make an individual plan that will help meet his or her goals.
- Students get small-school instruction and one-on-one help and guidance as they need it.
- Hem links youths up with the social services they need. That could be finding food from a food bank, bus

passes or dealing with “math fright.”

“When they come back, they often have a lot of issues,” Hem said. “We ask them, ‘What do you need?’”

In Hopkins’ World of Work class on Monday, Buesgens and a handful of other students wrote elements about their personalities, hobbies and interests, constructing self-portraits in words. Such insight will help them both in school and in the job market, Hopkins said.

She related well to the youths, talking to them about football and skateboarding, exhorting them to be specific – and professional.

“I don’t want to know that your hobby is drinking,” she said. Then she told one student, “I want you to go down your list and give me more specifics. Skateboarding: Do you ride it? Do you teach it? Do you have your own skateboard jump at your house? Whatever it is, write it down.”

Erick Than, 16, worked on a posterboard showing his interests, including basketball, football, cars, family, friends and the University of Southern California, which he’d like to someday attend, perhaps on an athletic scholarship.

His immediate plan, though, is to graduate on time with the Class of 2010.

While at Lincoln High, “I always goofed off,” he said. “I have like three or four credits.”

Tony Barros, 15, sat, skateboard in lap, soaking up his World of Work lessons.

The former Stadium student needs 22 credits to graduate, he said. He wants to be a professional glass blower at the Museum of Glass.

“I think it’s pretty cool,” he said of the new school. “There’s individual people who can work with you and explain all the things you need to know.”

John Page, the School District’s assistant director of career and technical education, is encouraged.

“You can see the hope in their eyes,” he said. “This is a chance to come in and finish that diploma.”

Kris Sherman: 253-597-8659

WHERE TO CALL

For more information about the Tacoma Business Academy High School, call 253-571-1126. If you want to apply, you can schedule an appointment with a staff member. If you want to refer a potential student, you can get a referral form.

Originally published: September 25th, 2008 12:43 AM (PDT)