

ADVANCING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

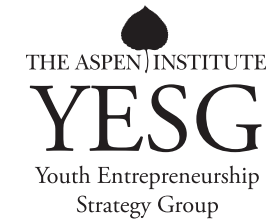


A Report of the
Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
YESG
Youth Entrepreneurship
Strategy Group

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Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group



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About the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group

Our vision is to ensure that each graduate from a high school serving a low-income community has educational opportunities to explore his or her entrepreneurial potential.

Our mission to recruit, convene, and mobilize the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group to develop a comprehensive strategy and tactical plan by May 2009 to fulfill our vision.

Through a series of convenings and ongoing rigorous dialogues, YESG will:

- *explore* the promise of, and obstacles to, implementing youth entrepreneurship education nationwide, with special attention to the 9th and 10th grade levels—a time when many students are at highest risk for disengaging from school and dropping out;
- *develop* and *implement* a concrete, targeted strategy to advance the teaching of entrepreneurship in the nation's schools;
- *prompt* public discussion and action on teaching entrepreneurship in the nation's schools.



Outcome

We seek to develop a systemic initiative to:

- engage young people in school and provide an experiential context to develop strong academic, entrepreneurial, financial and work skills;
- motivate students to be productive and engaged in their communities and the economy, and develop success-oriented attitudes of innovation, initiative, intelligent creativity, risk-taking, collaboration, opportunity recognition, and pursuit.

Overall, we are committed to creating new policies and recommendations to infuse public education with entrepreneurial energy and proven practice—transforming the system itself and preparing the next generation of entrepreneurial leaders for America.

Our efforts will have an important and sustainable impact on public education in the 21st century, as we continue to pursue a social impact strategy via strategic learning, advocacy, demonstration and evaluation.

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FOREWORD

For most of the 20th century, Americans could take pride in having the best-educated workforce in the world, but now that is no longer true. In *Tough Choices, Tough Times*, the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce reports that over the past 30 years one country after another has surpassed the United States in the percentage of its population entering the workforce with the equivalent of a high school diploma, and many more countries are on the verge of doing so. Thirty years ago, the U.S. could lay claim to having 30 percent of the world's population of college students. Today that proportion has fallen substantially, to 14 percent, and continues to decline. American students place anywhere from the middle of the pack to the bottom in all three continuing comparative studies of achievement in mathematics, science, and general literacy among advanced industrial nations.¹

Fifteen years ago, a new standards-based framework for improving K-12 education in America began to emerge. It was a radical idea. In hopes of addressing the dilemma of large numbers of students not completing high school, and even those with high school diplomas finding themselves challenged to find employment that would enable them to reach a middle-class standard of living, the goal was to have all children reach high levels of learning that traditionally had been the expectation only for a select group.

In 1994 Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was initially passed by Congress and signed by President Johnson in 1965. Since then, it has become the major legislation incorporating federal policy and funding for K-12 public education in America. The 1994 legislation, the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), incorporated the standards-based framework that set a new direction, with a policy focus on subject content standards.

The next reauthorization of ESEA, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), was passed with bipartisan support and signed by President Bush in 2002. It has led to a major shift in the federal government's expectations for states, school districts and schools, from compliance for setting standards for curriculum content to accountability for achieving specific performance outcomes, based on the achievement of all students regardless of family income, race, first language, or disability. NCLB was slated for reauthorization in 2007 but was stalled by the inability of Congress to reach consensus on how to respond to the widespread public outcry for changes in the legislation—or confront the possibility of its abolition. It is possible that reauthorization will not occur before a new president takes office in 2009, (if then).

In the past decade, state, district, and individual school efforts to improve public education for all students have intensified. Charter schools, intra-district student assignment plans providing for more parental choice, and more systemic approaches to improving all schools in school districts have gained more traction. Public interest and support remain high despite the calls for the improvement of achievement and closing the achievement gaps. Yet why does the U.S. still lag behind other countries in key knowledge domains and industries? Why aren't American children doing better? Why are so many young people not even completing high school?



One in four Hispanic and one in ten African-American students drop out of school, according to the latest figures from the National Center for Education Statistics. Students from low-income families are six times more likely not to finish high school than those from high-income families.² Dropouts face severe obstacles to employment, livable wages, and civic participation; instead, many drift into crime and are incarcerated. This situation means a loss of opportunities for the individuals, substantial cost to the government and taxpayers, and a tremendous deficit in productivity for businesses and other organizations.

Even those students who do graduate may not be well prepared. According to the National Reading Panel, American companies lose nearly \$40 billion annually due to illiteracy. Further, a survey by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee and the National Career Development Association found that a majority of youths themselves report feeling unprepared in skills, knowledge, and attitudes upon entering the workforce. According to the Manhattan Institute, only about 20% of African-American and Hispanic students graduate college-ready. This skills crisis is becoming more critical because the American economy is shifting. Not only will the traditional skills of reading, writing and math be needed to thrive in this economy, but also technological know-how and proficiency in self-direction. With the pace of innovation, many of the jobs our children will hold don't even yet exist. More than ever, we need to educate students to be continual learners.

Economic leaders and education scholars are calling for an increased need for initiative, self-regulation, critical thinking, and life-long learning skills in the growing “knowledge economy.” If we want to be competitive in the world economic arena and to maintain our high standard of living, we must rise to the challenge. As leaders, how can we develop a systemic initiative to keep young people in school, effectively learning academic and work skills, motivated to be productive and engaged in their communities and the larger economy, and developing success-oriented attitudes of initiative, intelligent risk-taking, collaboration, and opportunity recognition?

The School to Work Opportunities Act and other educational policies suggest that students learn more and perform better when tasks and skills demonstrate relevance to their current and future lives. The question then becomes: what kind of context will provide such relevance and fulfill our objectives? Evaluation studies of high-school-level youth entrepreneurship curricula report that students increase their occupational aspirations, interest in college, reading, and leadership behavior after participation. Six months later, 70 percent of the alumni of a recent evaluation cohort were in college, 63 percent had jobs, and one in three ran a small business.

Perhaps most critically, the experience of a sense of ownership in their lives was four times higher for alumni of youth entrepreneurship programs than for students who did not take such courses. “Ownership” is a powerful concept. The American economy and way of life are based on it. We own our homes and our cars. We strive to own our jobs, even if we work for someone else. Thus, we value both financial ownership and psychological ownership—being in control of resources and lives that are of our own choosing. High-school-level youth entrepreneurship education provides the experience of ownership early in life.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group believes that preparing today's students for success and eventual leadership in the new global marketplace is the most important responsibility in education today. Providing students with guidance and opportunity at the most critical junctures along their educational journey can have a most profound impact.

We have assembled top CEOs, non-profit leaders, policy experts, and the foremost thinkers in the field of entrepreneurial education to explore the promise and challenge of implementing youth entrepreneurship education in underserved communities around the country. Through a series of convenings and rigorous dialogue, we will develop and implement a concrete, targeted strategy and prompt greater public discussion and action on teaching entrepreneurship in the nation's schools.

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ADVANCING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

PROCEEDINGS: AN INTRODUCTION

The Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group convened its inaugural meeting from September 26-28, 2007 at the Aspen Institute in Aspen, Colorado. A group of dynamic national leaders from the fields of education, entrepreneurship and business, public policy, media, and philanthropy met over three days to explore the promise of, and obstacles to, implementing youth entrepreneurship education in low-income communities nationwide. In partnership with E*TRADE Financial, the Aspen Institute and the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) created this educational public policy initiative to develop a concrete, viable strategy to advance the teaching of entrepreneurship—specifically in Title I high schools—and to prompt public discussion and action on teaching entrepreneurship to increased numbers of high school students from low-income communities. The conference was moderated by Dr. Jonathan Ortman, President of the Public Forum Institute, who has over 15 years of experience and decision making in the public policy field.

In her opening remarks, YESG chairperson Stephanie Bell-Rose stated, “In our new, increasingly global economy, entrepreneurial education will provide the youth of our country with the skills necessary to prosper in the 21st century. When we offer young people entrepreneurship education, what we’re really offering them are keys to success, now and in the future and not just in business—in all fields.” Bell-Rose is Managing Director of Goldman, Sachs & Co. and founding President of The Goldman Sachs Foundation, a \$300 million international foundation whose mission is to promote excellence and innovation in education and to improve academic performance and lifelong productivity for young people around the world.

“In our new, increasingly global economy, entrepreneurial education will provide the youth of our country with the skills necessary to prosper in the 21st century.”

Bell-Rose thanked E*TRADE Financial for its leadership in funding the Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group and expressed that it was an honor for Goldman Sachs Foundation to be a part of this initiative. Bell-Rose encouraged each YESG member to be an active force over the coming months. “We have the potential to make changes that can improve the lives of millions of young people. During this meeting, it will be our task to begin to create a strategic, straightforward, and focused effort toward accomplishing that goal.”

The keynote address was delivered by Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano. Since taking office, Napolitano’s top priorities have focused on education, the economy, and the environment. She describes herself as a fierce protector of children and, thus, an ideal candidate to set the tone for the proceedings. Under her leadership, the state’s 2004 budget



passed without cuts to education, and she continues to focus on early-childhood literacy programs to prevent high school dropouts. Napolitano is the brains behind the National Governors Association's *Innovation America* program, which is focused on strengthening the nation's competitive position in the global economy by improving our capacity to innovate. *Innovation America's* goal is to give governors the tools they need to improve math and science education, better align postsecondary education systems with state economies, and develop regional innovation strategies.³ "The *Innovation America* initiative was created because the "United States' economic growth in the 21st century will be driven by our nation's ability to innovate," said Napolitano. Understanding fully that innovation is a key skill set of entrepreneurship education, she applauded YESG for its vision and mission.

Napolitano touched on a number of critical topics that impact the American education system and her keynote remarks conveyed a sense of urgency concerning the larger economic and competitive challenges facing our country. She urged the group to give policymakers a tool kit, similar to *Innovation America's*, and to include a specific plan and timetable for implementation.

Student and Teacher Perspectives

The first YESG session kicked off with testimony by NFTE alumni, Jabious Williams and Kathryn Morrissey, as well as Maynard Brown, NFTE Certified Entrepreneurship Teacher/Junior Achievement Los Angeles Board Member, and Los Angeles Unified School District Business Department Head for Crenshaw High School. They each spoke about how entrepreneurship education had changed their lives. Brown, a nationally recognized inspirational teacher, opened the morning session on the importance of teaching financial and business literacy. Brown was also a successful entrepreneur and left his business to dedicate his life to teaching economics at Crenshaw, which had no business course offerings at the time. He spoke of the tireless efforts of Junior Achievement and NFTE volunteers in their ongoing commitment to entrepreneurship education. While little institutional support exists for financial and entrepreneurial literacy activities, encouragement from parents and the community has helped to increase the availability of the programs. Brown expressed his commitment to changing national education policy to include more financial and entrepreneurship literacy courses in the City of Los Angeles, synonymous with YESG's vision of nationwide entrepreneurial education.

Jabious Williams launched a clothing design business, SAJA Originals, while still in high school, and used the profits to surprise his mother with the down payment on their first home. Williams spoke with confidence about the business concepts he learned from a NFTE course offered at Suitland High School, in Maryland. He added that the course helped him to be more goal-oriented and to form standards applicable to his daily life. His mentors, Patty Alper and Phil McNeil, "made all the difference for [him] and his family."

Kathryn Morrissey echoed Williams' remarks on how the NFTE curriculum taught her business concepts and helped her to understand math for the first time. Morrissey has had learning disabilities through most of her formal-education years. An entrepreneurial education course at her local Boys and Girls Club changed how she contextualized learning. She gained more confidence in her abilities and started succeeding in high school, earning her place on the honor roll for the remainder of her high school years. From there, she

launched her first business and is now a junior at Fashion Institute of Technology, in New York, while working three jobs, including as a Public Policy Development Intern at NFTE.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A CRITICAL NEED

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which turns six years old this year, was enacted to ensure that American students learn the math and reading skills the modern economy requires. But math and reading are not the only abilities today's students need. A 2006 Junior Achievement survey found that 71% of middle and high school students would like to be self-employed at some point, up from 64% in 2004.

In December 2006, the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) released a critical report calling for a major overhaul of the country's education system. Entitled *Tough Choices, Tough Times*, the report highlights the link between education and the economy and provides policy recommendations for America's schools. Thomas Payzant, former superintendent of the Boston Public Schools and vice-chairperson of YESG, played a significant role in the development of the report. *Tough Choices, Tough Times* cites that the future of the American economy will hinge largely on our ability to develop and encourage the creative talents of our workforce. U.S. economic strength in the world will continue to be the development and innovation of new ideas. *Tough Choices, Tough Times* changed my way of thinking about 5, 10, 15, 20 years out," said Payzant, "and it is compatible to entrepreneurial education thinking and the globalized world."

The best employers the world over will be looking for the most competent, most creative and most innovative people on the face of the earth and will be willing to pay them top dollar for their services. This will be true not just for the top professionals and managers, but up and down the length and breadth of the workforce. Those countries that produce the most important new products and services can capture a premium in world markets that will enable them to pay high wages to their citizens.⁴

"The standard of living for Americans is at risk unless we prepare students to compete for jobs which demand high skills to receive high wages," Payzant continued. "America's competitive edge has been creativity and innovation. America will have serious problems down the road unless our education system prepares students to compete globally with 21st-century skills."



Cathy Ashmore, Executive Director of the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education cited the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, an organization working state by state, advocating that new skills are necessary for a 21st century education, including:

- **global awareness;**
- **financial, economic and business literacy;**
- **developing entrepreneurial skills to enhance workplace productivity and career options;**
- **civic literacy; and**
- **health and wellness awareness.**⁵

Ashmore said that entrepreneurs are not born, but rather they “become” through the experience of their lives. She asked all to consider, “How do we get the elephant of education to absorb entrepreneurship as a critical part of what is being delivered to our young people?” The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education was formed in 1982 to provide state-level leadership for entrepreneurship education in ten states, as part of the U.S. Department of Education’s policy for entrepreneurship education in vocational education and to build a consortium to help feed “the elephant.” The Consortium currently has 96 member organizations, which operate with a common thought: “That entrepreneurship education is a life-long learning process”—a whole series of experiences that enable you to see the opportunities and develop the skills to make yourself responsible for your future.” In 2004, the Consortium developed the *National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education Toolkit*,⁶ which offers a performance-indicator framework for developing curriculum for entrepreneurship programs.

Ashmore emphasized that entrepreneurship education is more than writing a business plan; it includes financial literacy, economics, communications skills, a great many behaviors that become a process of discovery, and the trying out of business ideas. “In cross-walking to curriculum standards, we should be talking educational language so that entrepreneurship education becomes possible in a classroom and more than just a fun thing to do on Friday,” said Ashmore.

“In cross-walking to curriculum standards, we should be talking educational language so that entrepreneurship education becomes possible in a classroom and more than just a fun thing to do on Friday.”

She said that, according to a 2006 Gates Foundation Report, 30% of high school students drop out before graduation: “The decision to drop out is linked closely to the lack of challenge and connection to real-life experience faced by students in the public school system. Eighty-one percent of students stated that

if school provided opportunities for real-world learning, it would have improved their chances for graduating from high school.”

In 2006, the Perkins Act—the U.S. Department of Education-administered federal legislation for career and technical education—authorized Entrepreneurship as a fundable program, encouraging program growth and membership (vocational education is now called Career Technical Education [CTE]). Also in 2006, the House of Representatives passed Resolution 699, which states that entrepreneurship education is important to our schools. The Resolution was the foundation for the first National Entrepreneurship Week, in 2007. The Week will be repeated in 2008 and will consist of a nationwide celebration to build support for the growth of entrepreneurship at all educational levels.

One of the leading organizations engaged in a comprehensive, scalable, proven, and cost-effective entrepreneurship education model is the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), which is principally engaged in educating young people from low-income communities. NFTE founder Steve Mariotti, a former business executive and entrepreneur, started the organization officially in 1987, after five years as a public school teacher in New York City school system, as a drop-out prevention program in the South Bronx. Mariotti found that his students responded to math and reading when they were embedded in the “real-life” scenarios of business. He quickly discovered that when low-income youth were given the opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship, their innate “street smarts” could easily develop into business and academic smarts.

In his opening presentation to YESG members, Mariotti remarked that this carefully selected group of influential leaders had the potential to take relatively small programs engaged in very important work to one great collective effort that would make it possible for every child born into a low-income community to have an opportunity to learn the principles of entrepreneurship and ownership. “NFTE is committed to a 100% team involvement and we will do whatever it takes to achieve the goal. NFTE is privileged to help spearhead this mission. We have spent a tremendous amount of time working towards assembling a world-class group of top leaders to build and implement an effective strategy,” said Mariotti. He praised his partners in the field and highlighted the major contributions of DECA, Inc., Junior Achievement, and Communities in Schools, and the great strides each has made to help young people achieve success in their future careers and in life.

NFTE has worked with over 220,000 young people from low-income communities over the last 20 years, in programs across the U.S. in 31 states and in 13 other countries. The organization has trained more than 4,700 Certified Entrepreneurship Teachers (who deliver NFTE’s specialized curriculum), and is continually improving its innovative program models.

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Mariotti noted that there are many excellent entrepreneurship curriculums with various lesson plans and approaches. “I have read many youth entrepreneurial curricula and I have found, basically, 12 key points, or concepts, that children should know by age 17:

1. **The importance of Mental and Physical Health,**
2. **The Joy of Business and the Power of Opportunity Recognition,**
3. **The Economics of One Unit,**
4. **The Law of Supply and Demand,**
5. **The attitude of: Don't compete, create a Comparative Advantage,**
6. **The Wealth Creation Process: innovation, opportunity recognition and pursuit, personal savings and investment, home ownership, and small business ownership,**
7. **Marketing: putting yourself in the customer's shoes,**
8. **Leadership, Teamwork, Ethics, Philanthropy,**
9. **Understanding financial statements (Balance Sheet/Income Statements) and where you fit as an employee and/or owner, and critical concepts such as Return On Investment, Break-Even, and Positive Cash Flow,**
10. **The Basic Sales Call,**
11. **How to write a Business Plan, and**
12. **The Rule of 72: the power of compounding interest.”**

In addition, Mariotti highlighted four key reasons to teach entrepreneurship:

1. **It is a great way to teach basic academic and life skills,**
2. **It provides better understanding of “direct labor” and “net profit”—where you fit in on the income statement; direct labor payroll, and/or owner's equity,**
3. **Street smarts transform into business smarts, and**
4. **Greater access to entrepreneurship education is the major civil rights issue of our time.**

“Opening up the world of ownership to people who historically have been left out is something that we can do and we will do,” continued Mariotti, “And, by doing that, I think we will have a better society.”

Mariotti proposed some preliminary ideas to get the group thinking about strategy. “I think we should continue to align with NCLB and its state standards and approaches; work more closely with textbook publishers to expand the reach of the entrepreneurial

education field, find ways to expose and ‘credential’ more educators—teachers and youth workers—on the basic principles of talking to children about ownership through entrepreneurship, and increase and improve information dissemination—get positive, real-life entrepreneurial stories out to the media.”

There are many elements that make up the entrepreneurship education field and Dr. Andrew B. Hahn, professor of Brandeis University's Heller School for Social Policy and Management, thinks getting to a certain level of homogeneity represents a real challenge.

Key players in the field see entrepreneurial education through different lenses:

- **youth development**
- **school engagement**
- **equity strategy**
- **community building, experiential education**
- **economic growth**
- **other strategies**

A leading thinker in the field, Hahn posed to the group: “How do we organize a strategy for this very heterogeneous field?” Hahn stated that the Heller School has been a learning partner for entrepreneurship education since the early 80s. “Every growth movement confronts the issue of what constitutes evidence and whether philanthropy and public policy, and educational policy makers, should proceed with an initiative if the research base is not compelling enough. In other words, we have to have talking points that include social experiments with control and comparison groups that today's philanthropy and education policy makers require.”

Another issue to address is “shelf space,” or the crowded field of add-on programs that we like to see in the public schools and the limited NCLB parameters. “It's a complicated issue,” said Hahn. “We can look at comparable movements like career education and diversity training, and determine why they remained pilots or, if they grew in scale, what were the reasons, and how have other education movements succeeded or failed in becoming ubiquitous?” The quality of intermediaries—those in the business of improving teacher effectiveness, promoting standardized curriculum, promoting research-based practices—will be critical to sustainability and growth with school-based entrepreneurial programs as well as community-based programs.”

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Michael Feinberg, Co-Founder of KIPP: Knowledge Is Power Program, noted: “In the era of NCLB, educators lean more towards squeezing out time for more reading and math time, especially with remedial kids. We need to convince teachers that entrepreneurship education will—in the long run—help kids do better in school, so I’m thinking it really is about how we win that marketing war.”

One clear consensus is that a key goal of entrepreneurship education is preparing high school students for further education. Tom Payzant commented: “Standards-based education isn’t going anywhere. Assessments need to give educators the opportunity to genuinely evaluate whether their education is working, in order to make any needed mid-course corrections.” There is a great deal of systemic thinking taking place at the moment, but, as Payzant and others addressed, the challenge is how to go to scale. “There are examples out there, but are they scalable? Extended-day is a real opportunity with groups in lots of states working on extended-school-day opportunities,” said Payzant.

Charles Roussel, Director of Disadvantaged Children and Youth Program for Atlantic Philanthropies, informed the group: “Atlantic Philanthropies has put several hundred million dollars into extended-day learning programs so kids can engage more of their lives in educational settings. Entrepreneurial education has to extend seamlessly from the school day into the extended-learning period because of the ‘dosage’ issue. And there are many examples of this happening already from KIPP to Citizen Schools—for all are making waves by keeping children engaged in youth development and academic enrichment for a longer period of the day.”

“Think of local-based programs, and how to align entrepreneurial education in some way, and then let’s determine what is scalable,” added Payzant. He then cited a few models, including Citizen Schools, Bell Foundation’s after-school program, and science fairs. “Such programs include entrepreneurial skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and innovation.”

Ed Davis, Executive Director of DECA, Inc., agreed: “The issue of scale is where we need to focus our time. There are real opportunities at the state level in terms of making a difference.” DECA, like the Consortium for Entrepreneurial Education, was involved in the Perkins legislation. “Most career and technical-education programs look at entrepreneurship as a capstone program,” said Davis, “where you teach the skills necessary to do a particular function and you teach the students how to turn those skills into a career or into their own business. That’s a very viable model and very different from a 9th grade model solely looking at students as they enter the system and trying to impact things like the drop-out rate.”

Another issue of effectiveness is not just tied to the issue of entrepreneurship but to the support system; that is, the nurturing of the teacher, student recognition and the leadership component. “These are difficult to maintain when taking the system to scale,” said Davis. “Junior Achievement, DECA, and NFTE all have this measure of success in common of creating an environment where the student and the teacher can be recognized.”

The Coleman Foundation, a leading supporter of entrepreneurial education, has invested over \$37 million in entrepreneurial education over the last thirty years.



Michael Hennessey, President and CEO of the Coleman Foundation, asked how we were to measure the impact of entrepreneurship education and how to develop support structures around it.

“The Coleman Foundation has maintained that entrepreneurial education is venture creation,” said Hennessey. “The process and all the educational objectives impacted along the way are beneficial, but if we cannot at least say that we are about the creation of the next generation of entrepreneurs, then legislation could get scattered without focus on the entrepreneurial education field.” Hennessey also cited a keen interest in community colleges and how an articulation of entrepreneurship is a central issue. “We must explore how to reach out to the community college network and community-based organizations for meaningful impact. We need entrepreneurs to come in and evaluate what we are doing,” Hennessey continued. “If they are successful, we want them looking at our [entrepreneurial] educational programs and say that, if you would have had this at age 16, would you be better [off] today than you are now.”

Ongoing dialogue within the group led to an emerging theme that clarified the definition of entrepreneurship education; that is, its broad definition, how to measure it, and its delivery.

Stephen Spinelli, President of Philadelphia University, addressed the issue from a standpoint of measurement. Spinelli explained, “‘Give a person a fish, teach them how to fish’ is an industrial-era mentality and autocratic from a management era. The entrepreneurial era is ‘I want to own the pond,’ and is a much more chaotic and difficult paradigm. When it’s autocratic, it’s pretty measurable. When it’s hierarchical, it’s really easy to measure. And when it’s chaotic, it’s nearly impossible. The key is to measure it collaboratively and as a national movement. As we make a decision on the definition of entrepreneurship education, is it about starting a business or it is about opportunity recognition or problem solving?”

“These are very different approaches as to how we enter the educational realm. If entrepreneurship education is about venture creation, is it about small business-versus-high-impact venture? We have to get common language on the definition. Teaching a man to fish is an industrial-age solution. Today it is about owning the pond. In owning the pond, it is a much more difficult paradigm, which leads to more measurement issues. Measurement is a huge issue and maybe the key to getting national change. If entrepreneurship education is about venture creation, it is very different path from teaching opportunity recognition, problem solving and creativity, and each offers challenging approaches to how we enter the educational realm.”

The overriding assumption is that the group’s mission is predominantly focused on the 9th and 10th grades and on the low-income community. But there is a great deal of effort on bringing entrepreneurship education to other demographic segments, on other various academic levels, as well as on a whole world of organizations focusing on the advancement of the field. Discussion continued and the importance of Title 1 and how it may be brought into supporting entrepreneurship was brought up. “While we have a worthy mission here [within YESG], what happens after that?” asked Ashmore. “Not that 9th and 10th grade is the only place kids get entrepreneurship but if, in fact, it is the focus of this group, how do we understand what others are doing and make those linkages?”

Some offered entrepreneurship education as the unifying theory—uniting work skills, economics, financial literacy and business, ownership attitudes and entrepreneurship skills. Others suggested that “Entrepreneurship is a subset of financial literacy.” Maynard Brown asked, “Should we look at kids over a longer period of time—say 6, 7, 8 years—so by the time they are in 9th grade they have a base of consciousness?”

Along the line of consciousness-building, Leigh Toney of Miami Dade College said, “Messaging is very powerful in urban communities. The more places young people hear the same message about entrepreneurship education, the more likely we are to pierce their consciousness. So it’s important to target not only 9th and 10th grade classrooms, but all the other ages and agencies that touch kids—such as football games.” While there is particular emphasis here at YESG on the 9th and 10th grades, it will require a more encompassing look, and a strategic focus on efforts at different points of the educational continuum will be an opportunity for greater impact.

The first session concluded with three recurring thematic questions:

- 1) **What are the challenges that the field has in reaching more students and how to take entrepreneurial education to scale?**
- 2) **What are the best ways to define and deliver entrepreneurship education?**
- 3) **What are the most effective paths to systematic growth?**

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY: PRIORITIZING ACTIONS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During subsequent meeting time, participants moved the dialogue from an inspiring set of individual ideas to a more collaborative strategy. Challenges that emerged in reaching a shared value or consensus included:

- 1) **Academic Shelf-Space: How to make room for entrepreneurial education for in-school and extended-school programs.**
- 2) **Heterogeneity of Models: Various field players and the strategic implications.**
- 3) **Measurement or Accountability: How does entrepreneurship education best fit in NCLB? How do we balance measurement and enable the field to achieve higher levels of accountability with the need for funding and other critical resources? What other constituencies do we have to convince of the value of entrepreneurship education?**
- 4) **Distribution and Alliances: The question of how to ensure there are more players delivering more content to take to scale.**
- 5) **Resources: Capacity issues.**
- 6) **Messaging/Value Proposition, or contours of demand.**

In bringing the broader world into the entrepreneurial education community, the group looked at possible tactics. Much attention focused on extended learning in the context of shelf space. Some participants advocated for a longer school day. KIPP and other charter schools are already doing this. KIPP, the Knowledge Is Power Program, is a national network of public schools in under-resourced communities across the United States. With over 50 locally run KIPP schools in 17 states and Washington, D.C., and serving over 14,000 students, KIPP schools have been widely recognized for putting underserved students on the path to college. More than 80 percent of KIPP students are low-income and more than 90 percent are African-American or Hispanic/Latino. Nationally, nearly 80 percent of KIPP alumni have matriculated to college. But how do you achieve this in traditional public schools?

Junior Achievement (JA) is another model that is also working. For over thirty years, JA has broadened its scope to include in-school and after-school programs, reaching approximately eight million students worldwide. “JA programs work through middle grades and high school, focusing on the key content areas of entrepreneurship, work readiness, and financial literacy,” said Jack Kosakowski, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of JA Worldwide, and President of Junior Achievement. Junior Achievement was founded in 1919 by three entrepreneurs: Theodore Vail, president of American Telephone & Telegraph; Horace Moses, president of Strathmore Paper Co.; and Senator

Murray Crane, of Massachusetts. Its first course, JA Company Program, was offered to high school students on an after-school basis. In 1975, the organization entered the classroom with the introduction of a project business/applied economic theory model designed for the middle grades and presented with the assistance of volunteers.

Charles Roussel cited the Supplemental Educational Services (SES) as a potential resource area for entrepreneurial education to find possible linkage. As part of NCLB, SES includes academic assistance such as tutoring, remediation, and other educational interventions (provided outside of the regular school day) designed to increase the academic achievement of students in low-performing schools. Students from low-income families who attend Title I schools in their second year of school improvement (i.e., which have not made adequate yearly progress [AYP] for three or more years), are in corrective action, or in restructuring status, are eligible to receive these services.

“Leaning towards extended learning, 19% of the SES money has been allocated and it is the role of the state to decide who gets on the list,” said Roussel. “So there is wide-open space for entrepreneurial education.”

Cathy Ashmore noted that, in a very crowded shelf space, there should be consideration given to existing courses that students take in the 9th and 10th grades, (i.e., general business or computer-skill courses), where entrepreneurial education can be an enhancement, as opposed to building a new program.

...entrepreneurial education can be an enhancement, as opposed to building a new program...

work in Swahili, empowers young people with financial education and savings programs, college and career exploration, and essential life skills. In thinking more about shelf space and scalable models, Spencer posed the question, “How do we complement the public-school learning experience in such a way so we are adding value to what students need to transition into positive adulthood?” And “Could we align with the same approach around entrepreneurship education which determines the shelf space issue?”

Kelvin James, Director of Community Investment for E*TRADE Bank, also addressed the strategy issue of alignment, “It is important to align with financial literacy movements and to find those linkages. There is promise for this group to implement strategies for entrepreneurship education in schools nationwide that can have an overall positive impact on low-income communities.” Part of E*TRADE Financial’s commitment is to invest in communities through non-profit partnerships to improve neighborhoods and increase financial literacy. As a leader in on-line financial services, E*TRADE is expanding to low- and moderate-income communities.

Marc Spencer, Executive Director of Juma Ventures, cited the financial literacy movement and the adoption of standards into the curriculum. Juma Ventures develops and operates businesses as “social enterprises,” for the purpose of providing job opportunities to economically disadvantaged teens. Juma, which means

Leigh Toney added: “Another way of looking at alignment is the convening authority that an institution has.” Toney is Executive Director of Miami Dade College’s Carrie P. Meek Entrepreneurial Education Center (MEEC), an outreach facility focused on entrepreneurship, economic, and community development. MEEC offers a program to high school students called the Institute for Youth Entrepreneurship (IYE), which is a comprehensive business-skills-development project aimed at educating inner-city high school students on the craft of entrepreneurship.

Kim Pate, Vice President for Strategic Partnerships for CFED, suggested alignment with existing financial education institutions that may not have entrepreneurship education as part of their mission but are involved in enterprise development, such as CFED and the work it is doing with the Native community. “CFED offers asset-building tools that are compatible with entrepreneurial education,” said Pate. “We focus on communities that have traditionally been excluded from or limited by the mainstream economy, such as the Native population.”

...alignment with existing financial education institutions involved in enterprise development...

Alignment became a central theme as the direction shifted to considering more concrete strategies. The group outlined several goals:

1) Increase the Supply of Entrepreneurship Education:

- **Scale likely to be achieved through the public education system. Train more entrepreneurship teachers. Integrate into teacher education and certification schools of education and professional development. Create an “Entrepreneurship Education Teacher-of-the-Year” award program for organizations.**
- **Engage community-based organizations in supporting growth within public education system.**
- **Strengthen existing entrepreneurship education programs.**
- **Establish “best practices” and assist field in growing to scale.**
- **Raise more funds for entrepreneurship education.**

2) Increase Demand for Entrepreneurship Education:

- **Partner with other advocates. YESG members must expand leadership network. Partner with other education policy experts and advocates for education reform (i.e., extended-day, experiential education) to create a unified and powerful message.**
- **Increase links to higher education. Advocate for an Advanced Placement test in business. Include Entrepreneurship Club as an option in the extracurricular activities lists on the College Entrance Common Application.**

3) Develop the Connection Between Supply and Demand:

- Determine how to measure outcomes of entrepreneurship education.
- Create a network to broker supply and demand.

4) Prompt Public Discussion and Action:

- Define our most impactful audience.
- Develop consistent messaging platform to support YESG action plan.
- Use YESG members as key major media spokespeople.
- Activities could include op-eds and article placement.

Events:

- Small roundtable convenings with local leaders to inspire action.
- Events in February 2008 to be coordinated with National Entrepreneurship Week.

5) Advocate for Policy Change

- Develop a YESG Policy Action Guide.
- Work to include Entrepreneurship Education in NCLB, Perkins Act, Workforce Improvement Act, or any other relevant legislation.
- Pursue legislative changes in bellwether states.
- Communicate message to Presidential campaign issues' directors, asking all major candidates to include a statement in favor of entrepreneurship education in their education platforms.
- Implement demonstration program. Use a school, district, city or state as a research site to prove that system-wide implementation is possible and worthwhile; could potentially achieve the same goals with an entrepreneurship school.

Timeline Roles and Responsibilities

- September 2007: Convene to commence work on developing concrete targeted strategy at YESG 1.
- Oct 2007 – April 2008: two local public events:
example: Meeting of Deans of Schools of Education
example: Local meeting in NYC comparable to February 2007 DC and SF meetings
Design and implement communications plan
- May 2008: YESG 2: Finalize Strategy – White Paper
- May 2009: YESG 3: Policy Action Guide

Measure of Success: Track and support annual progress towards mission. By the end of May 2009, convene three additional YESG member meetings; conduct six regional events, conduct media messaging effort; mobilize and support individual YESG member action plans.

Messaging Entrepreneurship Education: Making Ideas Stick

Dan Heath, noted author and consultant to the Aspen Institute, addressed how to communicate new ideas around entrepreneurial education in a way that changes behaviors and makes those changes stick. In Heath's book, *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Stick and Others Die*, he distills lessons from ten years of research on why some ideas succeed while others fade away. Heath offers six principles to move ideas into a successful communications strategy:

- 1) Simplicity: the essential core of ideas;
- 2) Unexpectedness;
- 3) Concreteness;
- 4) Credibility;
- 5) Emotional; and
- 6) Story.

Getting clear on what the group was advocating in one voice still needed more refinement. An underlying theme are the strategies, tactics, communication approaches, and targeting who the audience will be, in order to accomplish the objectives.

CONCLUSION

As the proceedings came to its final session, much of the discussion focused on the vision and whether it was too narrow. Michael Caslin, Executive Vice President, Office of Public Policy, for NFTE, who is leading the YESG initiative, remarked that he had taken into account the comments and concerns of the group and thought that additional work was needed to better synthesize the vision, mission, and strategy. It is clear that a more refined version of the vision could have a greater impact and be more inclusive.

With an expression of different opinions from around the room, Moderator Ortman gave the roundtable participants an opportunity to redact the draft vision statement and suggest how it might be better shaped, given the YESG convening:

Each year 500,000 9th & 10th graders (14 to 16 year olds) in Title 1 High Schools will have the opportunity to participate in entrepreneurship education.

The group agreed that the "vision" language needed reshaping so practitioners in the field could best crystallize a common ground to leverage most effectively each member's part in the overall field. The initial question was: why 500,000 and if that number referred to new students, and why narrow the focus to 9th and 10th graders? Caslin pointed out that there were at least 500,000 9th and 10th graders in Title 1 high schools, so the number related to a target of 100% penetration. In the last few years, NFTE had made a concerted effort to be more aware of the needs of those 500,000 students attending high

schools in low-income communities. One panel member argued that 100% penetration was a daunting challenge and suggested that an impact analysis be conducted on the education of 500,000 students relative to resources and capacity.

Participants considered whether the vision should be delivered to students beyond the 9th and 10th grades. “I would not target an age group, I would target high school, all grades,” said Ed Davis. “When you target the 9th and 10th grades, does it mean that a 17 year old taking an entrepreneurship class sponsored by the state department of education would not count? I understand the purpose of targeting 9th and 10th graders for the purpose of keeping them in school, but many schools have entrepreneurial classes above the 10th grade.”

In addition to the points raised about the 500,000 student target number issue, and the limitations of focusing on 9th and 10th graders, there was also a discussion on whether quality programming could be delivered effectively. In addition, the notion that 100% penetration suggested a mandate was discussed. Payzant commented, “Keep in mind that the concern of backing off from an ambitious goal is that there is tension present when there is a big reach, but consider that perhaps a stretch goal may be beyond what we can imagine, but reachable.”

Maynard Brown said, “To take this to scale, we should start small and scale up quickly. A possible model could be to set pilots strategically across the country—perhaps in ten different school districts—get superintendents to embrace it, and use our collective assets.” Charles Roussel mentioned that it might make sense to think of the numbers in terms of collective assets and collective “access” among YESG participants. “If you consider partnership pathways and look at the different networks that the group represents, a lesser number might be a good baseline to build from,” said Roussel. He added that the number of 500,000 will come under a lot of scrutiny and it would either speak to the credibility of the initiative or would be a reason for people to ignore it. Someone suggested that, in addition to scrutiny, the group might be driven towards outputs instead of outcomes.

Each graduate from a high school serving a low-income community will have the opportunity to explore their entrepreneurial potential.

In order to actualize the vision, the YESG group members then looked at a holistic strategy and formed four subcommittees to develop a strategic approach and tactics, and how each member could sign on to a particular group—specifically how the vision would fit around the following areas in a shared commitment:

The finalized vision statement was then developed and agreed to by the YESG members and reads as follows:

Each graduate from a high school serving a low-income community will have the opportunity to explore their entrepreneurial potential.

- 1) *Partnership Pathways*: for In-School/Out of School-CBO/Extended-Day/Community College partners.
- 2) *City/State Strategy*: Three states, multi-states, or a focus on school districts that have the largest Title 1 urban school districts.
- 3) *Federal Alignment*: to NCLB, Perkins, SES, and Competitiveness.
- 4) *Field Development*: Knowledge Management and Best Practice Promotion.

Alliances and networks will play a critical role in helping the education system implement sustainable models and achieve real successes. YESG is hopeful of recruiting more associations to help in this effort.

“The Aspen Institute has partnered with the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship because there is tremendous opportunity to have an important and lasting impact on public education through entrepreneurship education,” said Peter Reiling, Executive Vice President of the Aspen Institute. “This inaugural meeting has launched a formal association, and this dynamic group with its collective assets can harness new energy into the education reform movement. We are looking to this network of leaders to develop and implement strategies that help educators, policymakers, and influential leaders in the education field understand how teaching entrepreneurship can make a difference in the lives of young people.”

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Subcommittee Dialogue

(The following are notes to the sub-committee conversations.)

With regard to the state strategy, the highest concentration of Title 1 high schools are in California, Texas, and Florida:

Texas: 3,674

California: 2,324

Florida: 1,028⁷

There was consensus around “Making a difference in keeping kids in school.” Daniel Cardinali, President of Communities in Schools, leads an organization dedicated to helping children stay in school. Cardinali emphasized the importance of national networks with superintendents, principals, students, parents, as well as community partners. Successful school engagement strategies are clearly linked to partnerships with community-based organizations. Roussel agreed: “For any partner, you are always looking for national networks as distribution channels for great programs. No national leader can push something onto a network if the value proposition is not clear. If this is an anti-dropout strategy that can augment other anti-dropout strategies, that’s great, but clarity is important.”

Ed Davis of DECA, Inc. asked how the Partnerships Pathways and the City/State Strategy sub-groups would interact. “Is one designed to create the broad scheme and the other to create and implement it in a state-by-state strategy? What is the role of each of these types of delivery systems and how does that role support the vision?”

Michael Caslin spoke of the Pathway map of the life cycle of a child, and how each member can plug in somewhere on the pathway and work to replicate it in a state-by-state strategy. “It’s an opportunity to align all of our energies,” said Caslin.

Added Roussel: “The best national organizations have very strong state organizations and so many of the partners you may want to partner with are already very well grounded programmatically in the states and on the policy level, so we should look for those organizations who are already doing entrepreneurial education initiatives. The ultimate goal is to gain traction on a state-by-state basis. We lose our primacy as a group if we limit ourselves to certain parts of the country.”

Irv Katz, President and CEO of the National Human Services Assembly, signed on to the Partnership Pathway on behalf of the National Collaboration of Youth, whose membership includes national institutions such as 4-H, Girls and Boys Clubs of America, Girl Scouts of USA, and the YMCA of the US. “I think there is a lot of translation needed among different subsectors—the positive youth-development community, the entrepreneurship community, and the financial-literacy community,” Katz said. “It’s finding the leverage points for identifying common ground.”

The group explored vehicles for policy change and considered options at the federal, state and local level. Considerable thought was given to current issues and how entrepreneurship education could be implemented nationwide. Federal alignment was considered worth pursuing. “Watch the NCLB reauthorization process as it unfolds,” observed Payzant. “There are opportunities with certain amendments, so we should keep the options open, perhaps with the Competitive legislation or Stem, and how that connects to the National Science Foundation. Other traditional legislation such as Perkins ought to be reviewed in terms of where it is going and how that might fit in our overall work. Timing is critical.”

Moderator Jonathan Ortman highlighted legislation such as COMPETES⁸, which is charging federal agencies with entrepreneurship missions under the auspices of global attention on innovation. In April 2007, the U.S. Senate passed the America COMPETES Act, to promote American innovation in the global economy. The legislation, which was signed into law on August 9, 2007, will increase federal R&D funding, strengthen science, technology, engineering, and math education, and create a Presidential Council on Innovation and Competitiveness. “With innovation being the viable term these days, every federal agency has funds allocated for financial literacy,” said Ortman. The Public Forum Institute is putting together a government website, www.entrepreneurship.gov, to include all the federal funding sources.

Marc Spencer spoke on the future work of the fourth subcommittee, established to address field development through best practices. “Is there an evaluation approach to be mindful of within these subcommittees? In certain evaluation exchanges, there is a menu

of outcomes for advocacy and policy work that we may want to look at,” said Spencer. “For each area of activity—i.e., strengthening organizational capacity—there are examples of outcomes and strategies, so it would behoove us to look at an evaluation approach that we feel comfortable with so that we have measurements aligned with a common vision and goal.” More field building and management of that knowledge would be a critical component to legitimizing the goal.

It was agreed by the members that the formation of four subcommittees within YESG will allow members specialized opportunities to develop tactics. Periodic meetings highlighting actions, sharing insights, and forming linkages will help build momentum in support of advancing entrepreneurship education, and will provide measurable ways to evaluate progress. Once again, the subcommittees are:

1. **Partnership Pathway:** for In-School/Out of School-CBO/Extended-Day/Community College partners.
2. **City/State Strategy:** (e.g., CA, TX, FL, DC, NY) with largest number of Title 1 urban school districts.
3. **Federal Alignment:** to NCLB, Perkins, SES, and Competitiveness (tactics would address outcome-based custom messaging).
4. **Field Development/Knowledge Management:** through best practices dissemination based on research and evaluation findings.

Participants recognized that there was much work ahead but could certainly sense that a movement was indeed building in the field and, through collective efforts, the goal of each graduate from a high school serving a low-income community having educational opportunities to explore their entrepreneurial potential is attainable. In building the movement, clear instruction on best practices on how to measure success will be necessary.

Michelle Molloy, of Spitfire Strategies, offered ways that YESG could effectively mobilize the group. She presented guidelines specifically on strategies for supportive action by identifying and leveraging their *activation points*. “An activation point occurs when the *right people* at the *right time* are persuaded to take an action that leads to measurable changes for an important social issue,” Molloy explained.

In 2003, on behalf of the Communications Leadership Institute (CLI), Spitfire Strategies produced the Spitfire Strategies Smart Chart planning tool, to help nonprofit organizations and the funders that support them plan and execute communications efforts that support social change.⁹ By defining activation points more clearly, groups can create the architecture for efforts that create tipping points. Molloy said that there has been

“An activation point occurs when the right people at the right time are persuaded to take an action that leads to measurable changes for an important social issue.”

much discussion about *The Tipping Point*, a best-selling book by Malcolm Gladwell. He describes a “tipping point” as that magical moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire. “The downside of this phenomenon is that the tipping point is something revealed in hindsight,” said Molloy. “We can look back and analyze the confluence of events that made it possible.”

Currently, there are many organizations working to transform education for millions of children. Such change agents have transformed the American education landscape and are beacons to what is possible in our nation’s schools. Ventures such as Teach For America, College Summit, The New Teacher Project, LA United, the New Leaders for New Schools, Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the organizations represented on the YESG panel, are all prime examples. The entrepreneurship field is indeed building momentum and a real promise of opportunity for all children to reach their entrepreneurial potential is possible.

With a sense of urgency, enthusiasm, and commitment, YESG I concluded and the work of YESG was officially launched, with the convening of YESG II scheduled to take place in Spring, 2008 at the Aspen Retreat Center in Wye, Maryland.

AFTERWORD

The core mission of the Aspen Institute is to foster enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue, as reflected throughout the pages of this conference report. The Aspen Colorado campus is home to a wide range of policy work and an ambitious set of initiatives to help emerging leaders face critical decisions with creativity, wisdom, and the spirit of service.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy Group (YESG) is engaged in an extremely important conversation about ways to increase accessibility to entrepreneurship education. YESG’s successful efforts will in turn influence hundreds of thousands of young lives in America over the coming years. YESG members have chosen to participate in the exploration of a critical human capital development issue—why we learn what we learn when we learn it and we are very fortunate to have the leadership of 33+ national organizations involved.

YESG has the urgent task of promoting Entrepreneurship Education as an effective response for a number of converging issues now facing us both in the policy world and in the classroom. From American competitiveness, workplace readiness, workforce development, student and teacher engagement as measured by school performance, high school graduation, drop-out prevention success via basic skill development and improved teacher performance in the classroom, we will seek to discern the best ways forward to bring the promise of entrepreneurship education to greater numbers of students, especially deserving youth from low-income communities in Title 1 high schools having high rates of free and reduced meals (minimum 40% or greater).

This is an effort in which we can and must prevail. To accept the status quo in policy and practice of a currently limited access and patchworked state by state entrepreneurship education system would be, in my opinion, a surrender of the economic and civic leadership of our future. It is that serious. This is the next critical phase of the civil rights movement—accessibility to entrepreneurship education. For some it will be a matter of life or death.

YESG’s policy successes will enhance the ability of young people to enter into and succeed in the world of work and more thoughtfully connect to the business and education community. YESG success will result in an expanded capability of American teachers and schools to inspire learning through proven, scalable, well-researched and cost-effective experiential entrepreneurship education.

From my 20 years of leading NFTE’s program growth in the U.S.A. and into 13 countries on four continents, I know many positive results will be seen. For this is a common-sense, pragmatic and just approach. And the time is now. There are powerful trends facing us that cannot be ignored. For example, David Rothkopf of *The Washington Post* has written, “The Coming Battle of the Ages,” predicting, in my opinion, the rise of a human

tsunami created by economic and demographic fault lines. Rothkopf states, “Demography is, in fact, destiny: Half the people in the world today are under 24 years of age. Of these, nearly nine out of 10 live in the developing world. One billion of them will need jobs in the next decade — 60 percent of them are in Asia, 15 percent are in Africa. For them, the choices are simple: dignity or desperation, a job or starvation.”

It is our firm belief that entrepreneurial thinking and behaviors, skills and attitudes positively focus a young person’s energy and provides a powerful possibility for long-term social change. Hence our urgent commitment to expanding the promise of entrepreneurship education to youth from low-income communities right here in America’s needy communities which are currently being threatened by massive high school drop-out rates and growing under and unemployment.

Author Howard Means states in his book, *Money and Power — The History of Business*, “Today, business drives the world, from all around the world. A global network of corporations, stock markets, banks and industries (driven by entrepreneurs) churns out more riches than humankind has ever known. Yet, poverty hasn’t been defeated. Miseries — from war to disease and famine — spread themselves far too broadly. The environment is threatened, in some cases by the very rapaciousness of the business spirit we are describing. But today the access to this global wealth and the capacity to participate in the machinery that produces is now available in ways that would have been almost unthinkable even half a century ago. People have more freedom to be, to do, to go and to know at the start of the new millennium than they ever have had in the history of time. They have more means and capacity and opportunity to do all those things than the human race has ever known. And in no small measure the credit belongs to the business leaders of the previous millennium who have set the table for us all.”

These provocative words challenge us to consider the possibility that our societies 20 to 100 years from now will also be built by new entrepreneurs in the decades to come but only if they know how to “access the wealth” and “participate in the machinery” and are truly able to use their “freedom to be, to do, to go and to know”.

Entrepreneurship Education, especially targeted for the most needy of communities, will unleash a new generation of entrepreneurial leaders at all levels of society. And will contribute to a more effective synergy among universities, governments, business leaders, school systems, policymakers, youth development organizations, members of the media and social influencers.

The time for action has come: together we must and will make Entrepreneurship Education more available to all young Americans, especially those most in need.

Michael J. Caslin, III
Executive Vice President, Public Policy, NFTE
Director of YESG

APPENDIX

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Perspectives: Entrepreneurship Training Can Empower Students Being Left Behind

By Michael J. Caslin III, Porcher L. Taylor III, and Dr. Catherine S. Fisher



Michael J. Caslin (above right, pictured with Mayor Bloomberg of New York) is executive vice president for public policy of the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship

If Congress renews the controversial No Child Left Behind Act, as it is expected to do, some impoverished, low-performing students will inevitably lose the hypercompetitive race to get into college.

Perception, tragically, often becomes reality.

Entrepreneurial self-employment, however, would hold great promise for business-minded students, if they learned entrepreneurship in high school and could try out their innovative business plans on consumers in their own neighborhoods and beyond—especially Internet start-up ideas. The social and community networking success of MySpace has opened a wide door for anyone to market a new idea or product to a myriad of potential customers instantly.

In a bold, dramatic move to address the lack of an entrepreneurship component in NCLB, Congress should amend the law to fund the certification of high school educators to teach entrepreneurship electives, especially to students most likely to be “left behind.” Alternatively, Congress should pass separate legislation to this effect, or the federal Department of Education should launch this as its own initiative without a Congressional mandate. Unfortunately, there is no current push by lawmakers to include entrepreneurial education in NCLB.

The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), which has trained and certified over 4,700 entrepreneurship teachers since 1987, would be the ideal pedagogical vehicle to launch such an initiative. Since its founding, more than 220,000 young people have gained the ability to take an individual pathway to prosperity—not be left behind—by taking NFTE’s rigorous, proven, relevant and relationship-driven “mini-MBA” course.

NFTE students have been taught by their teachers to conceptualize, design and present their own business plans, guided by volunteer business plan coaches, learned to open up bank accounts and conduct business operations, while tracking income and costs. Drafting a personal business plan is an experiential and asset-based approach that enables students to understand the importance of clear, concise writing, reading ability, and accurate math calculations: personal profits and business growth provide context and rewards for learning traditional subjects. Significantly, NFTE’s teaching programs have been adopted in 600 mostly low-income middle and high school districts in 31 states and 13 other countries. This demand-side growth has come from the success of NFTE’s two founding sites in 1988: the South Bronx and Newark, N.J.

Such an experiential approach could prepare our future workforce to be innovative, competitive and entrepreneurial. And it would complement the rote learning taking place in classrooms across the country in order to meet minimum NCLB benchmarks—an approach that leaves most students bored and many teachers demoralized. In today’s classrooms, the lack of experiential and contextual methods—which are at the heart of entrepreneurship education—truly leaves the students needing the most help behind—and turned off.

...prepare our future workforce to be innovative, competitive and entrepreneurial.

With America becoming ever more of an entrepreneurial nation, the timing is right to amend NCLB. An amendment should promote the teaching of standardized academic skills, including essential life skills such as entrepreneurial development, which would help students prepare for success in the marketplace via success in the classroom.

Recently, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation’s research and policy guide, *On the Road to an Entrepreneurial Economy*, stated that “A central task for educators and policymakers is not only to give students the key skills to thrive in any work environment—reading, math, science, technology and history—but also to nurture whatever creative and entrepreneurial skills each of us has at birth. Programs that teach basic entrepreneurial skills to middle and high school students could be especially valuable for children from disadvantaged backgrounds as a way to encourage their interest in academic achievement in general.”

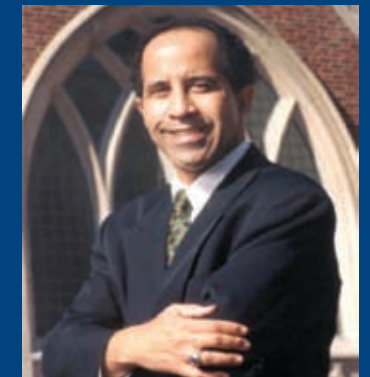
A 2006 Junior Achievement survey revealed that 71 percent of middle and high school students wanted to be self-employed at some point, up from 64 percent in 2004. The phenomenal explosion in recent years of business downsizings and overseas outsourcing of U.S. service jobs only adds to the need for entrepreneurship skills.

Most important, NCLB mandates math and reading proficiency. In order to help deserving youth who are entrepreneurially inclined to avoid being left behind, Congress needs to amend NCLB so those students can gain entrepreneurship literacy as an essential step towards participation in the world’s most dynamic entrepreneurial economy via enhanced math and reading skills.

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Porcher L. Taylor, professor at University of Richmond’s School of Continuing Studies.

ENDNOTES

¹ National Center on Education and the Economy. *Tough Choices, Tough Times: The Report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce*, 2006, p.4.

² Anthony Lutkus and Andrew R. Weiss, *The Nation's Report Card: Civics 2006*, May 2007, National Center for Education Statistics, at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main2006/2007476.asp>.

³ National Governor's Association, *Innovation America: A Final Report* at <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0707INNOVATIONFINAL.PDF> (last accessed November 2, 2007).

⁴ *Tough Choices, Tough Times*, p.7.

⁵ Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education at <http://www.entre-ed.org/NFTE/1> (last accessed October 25, 2007).

⁶ Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, *National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education*, at http://www.entre-ed.org/Standards_Toolkit/.

⁷ For more information on Title 1 high school statistics, visit: <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/2002indicators/index.html>.

⁸ See U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Science and Technology, *The America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act (COMPETES)*, http://science.house.gov/legislation/leg_highlights_detail.aspx?NewsID=1938. In April, 2007, both the House and Senate passed comprehensive legislation (H.R. 2272, S. 761) to ensure our nation's competitive position in the world through improvements to math and science education and a strong commitment to research. H.R. 2272 is the culmination of a year-and-a-half-long, bipartisan effort led by Members of the House Science and Technology Committee to pass a package of competitiveness bills in response to recommendations in the 2005 National Academies report: *Rising above the Gathering Storm*. The Conference Agreement follows through on a commitment to ensure that U.S. students, teachers, businesses and workers are prepared to continue leading the world in innovation, research and technology — well into the future.

⁹ For more information on Spitfire Strategies, visit: <http://www.spitfirestrategies.com/>.



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