

# Questions and answers about Clark's Jacob Hiatt Center and the Carnegie Corporation grant

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## Why is the Carnegie grant important?

The Carnegie grant benefits schoolchildren, teachers, families as well as the entire community. Students receive extra attention and coaching in smaller learning communities, enabling them to achieve success. Teachers receive additional support and are provided with new opportunities to teach and work with kids. A deeper connection between schools and families will develop, as parents become more actively involved in their child's school life. The community will continue to feel pride and unification because of the collective efforts of institutions and others concerned with youth development and achievement.

## How is it different?

The Carnegie grant provides us with increased support and expertise from outside of the City of Worcester. It enlivens our city and increases our capacity to help our children secure bright futures. Our affiliation with the New England Small Schools Network (NESSN) and Carnegie's Schools for a New Society Learning Network provides us with an opportunity to network with and learn from experts around the country who are tackling school reform issues in their own districts. Unlike other grants we've received, the Carnegie grant requires an increased need for accountability, research and documentation of our efforts.

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## How many Carnegie grants were awarded?

The five-year grant awarded to the WEP is one of seven awarded nationwide. Clark University's Hiatt Center is the fiscal agent for the grant's funds.

## Who did we compete against?

School districts in Boston, Providence, Houston, Indianapolis, Chattanooga, Little Rock, San Diego, Portland, Sacramento and Worcester all competed for the Carnegie grants.

## Who received the other grants?

Boston, Chattanooga, Houston, Providence, Sacramento and San Diego.

## How were we eligible to compete for this Carnegie grant?

In June of 2000, the partnership was awarded one of ten 15-month, \$250,000 planning grants from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to develop a systemic (district-wide) secondary school reform plan. All ten partnerships competed for these seven implementation grants totaling up to \$40 million. Last year's award was the result of years of cooperation between the Worcester Public Schools, the Hiatt Center for Urban Education and several community leaders. The WEP has used the planning grant to engage in a process of public and professional dialogue led by the Hiatt Center to assess the status of high school education in the community and develop a blueprint and action plan for effective high schools for all students.

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# What do you believe are the benefits of getting the grant?

Worcester's ongoing educational reform program will accelerate, thanks to the funding. We believe, with the help of this grant and the secondary education reform plan, we can achieve:

- increased participation of minority and low-income students in advanced courses,
- a learning environment which allows higher level students to achieve even more success
- a higher 9th grade pass rate,
- an increase in the percentage of English language learners and minority and/or low income students who pass the statewide MCAS test,
- an increase in the number of students who complete four years of high school and pursue a four year post-secondary education, and
- improved achievement patterns in Latino and African-American students who currently lag well behind their peers in attendance and grade point average.

In addition, we hope:

- It will likely be easier for Clark University, the Hiatt Center and the Worcester Public Schools to obtain additional funding from national foundations and the government in the area of K-16 education and education reform, so that we can train and attract better teachers, and
- The Hiatt Center will likely see an increase in quantity and quality in applications for its teacher education program. The Worcester Public Schools will attract better quality teachers.

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# What changes do you propose?

1. The A.L.L. School will develop the Co-Nect Academy, to serve 225 students, in partnership with Worcester State College;
2. The Comprehensive Skills Center will combine several distinct programs (including the School-Aged Mothers program and an 11th and 12th grade program for students who have dropped out of school) into the Gateway Academy (grades 7-12), serving 200 students;
3. Burncoat High's academies (one focused in science, one on the arts, and one to be determined) will evolve with support from the College of the Holy Cross;
4. Doherty will continue to develop and expand the "Engineering Academy," serving 150 students as part of a new grades 7-12 "Engineering Pipeline," with Worcester Polytechnic Institute as the

central partner, and institute interdisciplinary teacher teams in the humanities;

5. North High will develop the Health Sciences Academy, in collaboration with UMASS Medical, as part of the continuing work of the Health Pipeline Collaborative (focused in particular on preparing minority students for work in the Health Sciences). North High will also establish the Human Services and Business Academy, and Engineering and Technology Academy;
6. At South High, the Information Technology and Academy of the Arts will develop in partnership with Clark, while the Human Services Academy will partner with Worcester State College;
7. UPCS will continue as a neighborhood small school in collaboration with Clark University; and
8. The Vocational-Technical School small schools (Information Technology Academy, Alden Academy, Allied Health Academy and the Construction Academy) will unfold with broad support from various business partners, as well as the Hiatt Center.

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## **What do you believe are the keys to effective high schools?**

- Small, personalized learning communities
- Academic opportunity, support, challenge, growth
- Excellent teachers working in a professional culture of learning
- Youth development
- School-community integration and partnership

## **Can you expand on the small schools initiative?**

In the Worcester district-community action plan, high schools that are now compartmentalized, struggling against their own size and bureaucracy in their efforts to meet students' needs, will be transformed into small open, learning-centered communities committed to academic achievement and youth development. These learning communities will be enhanced and connected to the larger community through partnerships.

We believe small schools are effective because they are self-governed, can uphold high expectations, and offer personalization and performance-based assessment in collaborative professional learning communities.

## **Have you had success with the small schools before?**

We are experienced with implementing models of reform that promote achievement across the demographic spectrum. Our most notable examples are the High Schools That Work model at North High School, the alternative program at the Comprehensive Skills Center (CSC), and the University Park Campus School (UPCS), a small neighborhood school (grades 7-12) developed in collaboration with Clark University.

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## **How will the academic curriculum change?**

Our academic curriculum is designed to fulfill Massachusetts curriculum guidelines and learning standards. We envision an enhanced curriculum that is more deeply responsive to student needs and diverse backgrounds and more dynamic and engaging in light of the critical thinking, versatile problem-solving, and collaborative knowledge-making needed in our new society. We will incorporate a new cross-curricular emphasis on literacy development and numeracy, in particular to support students in the 9th grade transition on through to the 10th grade proficiency level set by the statewide MCAS test, and to build the academic competence necessary for successful involvement in enriched academic courses at every grade level. We will also expand the availability of challenging and engaging courses from grades 7-12 through our collaboration with the College Board, higher education institutions, and community-based cultural and educational partners.

## **How will the WEP team measure success?**

Success for the WEP will be defined as having many, many more students, especially poor and minority students who:

- Take advantage of small, personalized communities for learning,
- Enroll in and succeed in more rigorous courses,
- Are interested and prepared for participation in the Advanced Placement program,
- Pass the State-mandated MCAS exams and graduate from high school,
- Enter and graduate from four-year colleges, and
- Tell us that the adults in their lives respect them and challenge them to achieve at high levels.

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## **What are other ways in which the WEP team will measure success?**

When there is evidence of:

- More parents actively involved in their children's school life,
- Principals and teachers more involved in designing and advancing smaller, more personalized learning communities,
- More teachers using project-based, technology-rich, interdisciplinary instructional and assessment practices,
- Support staff from both agencies and schools coordinating and increasing services for students and their families.

## **What are Carnegie's expectations?**

Carnegie expects a new model of secondary education that promotes youth development in a "new society" that will require mastery of new tools of communication and information exchange, collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to problem-solving, an ability to think in terms of global as well as local concerns, and a proactive, responsible and creative citizenry. Carnegie contends that current models do not foster development and intellectual achievement for all students, and fall far short of the kind of education needed to ensure opportunity, quality of life, and the vitality and growth of local, national and global communities.

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## **What is the Worcester Education Partnership (WEP)?**

The WEP is a community-wide effort to foster youth development and educational achievement. Formed in the spring of 2000, its purpose is to examine, rethink, imagine and plan a new model of secondary education corresponding to grades 7-12+. Partnership members include Worcester Public School teachers, administrators and students, the Education Association of Worcester, parents, social and health agencies, civic, cultural, and religious institutions, the business community and local colleges.

## **What is the overall goal of the Worcester Education Partnership?**

The overall goal of the WEP is to provide full opportunities for learning; build student resilience, motivation and aspiration; ensure academic growth and high levels of academic achievement for all students; and prepare all students for post-secondary education and participation in a new society.

## **What is the role of the Hiatt Center for Urban**

# Education and Clark University?

As facilitating partner, Clark University's Hiatt Center has served a necessary and valuable role in the process of setting common goals; charting the path of planning leading to significant structural, curricular, and pedagogical changes; connecting discussion to research on effective practice; and overall partnership-building. This role in many ways fulfills the main overall purpose of the Center, which was founded by Jack Hiatt to join Clark and Worcester as partners in fostering educational opportunity and achievement for urban youth.

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