

NCHEMS Conclusions and recommendations

The greatest challenge facing Richmond/Wayne County is to make a quantum leap in the expectation of employers, community leaders, and the population at large regarding the level of knowledge and skill necessary for *all youth and adults* to enter the workforce, be employed, pursue postsecondary education, or engage in lifelong learning.

Wayne County presents a basic contradiction:

- Wayne County has selected levels of excellent educational performance and a depth of educational and cultural resources that could rival many comparable communities across Indiana, the Midwest, and the U.S. This reality is reflected in the performance of the brightest and best prepared high school graduates, the quality of the academic institutions, the cultural resources such as the symphony, civic theatre, and Whitewater opera, and in the region's cultural heritage.
- In contrast, RWC has among the lowest levels of education attainment and adult literacy of any county in Indiana and two-thirds of the County's secondary school students perform significantly below state standards. Student performance is highly correlated with socioeconomic status – reflecting serious divisions within the County in terms of expectations for and access to learning.

The Toft report for the first phase of this project set forth a challenging “Leap Frog” scenario, “Compete on Innovation and Entrepreneurship,” that could achieve “twenty years gain in ten.” Many of the strategies would require leadership beyond education, but dramatic improvements in education and the quality of the region's workforce were at the core of the scenario. Developing an integrated learning system alone cannot transform Richmond Wayne County's future – but no other strategy will succeed unless RWC addresses the fundamental gaps in the knowledge and skills of its workforce and population, and the performance of the schools and institutions.

Recommendations

NCHEMS recommends that Richmond/Wayne County:

1. Commit to a 10-year campaign to raise the education attainment and achievement of the County's youth and adult population to the level of the top 10 percent of Indiana's counties by the year 2012.
2. Establish an umbrella not-for-profit countywide learning corporation charged with leading the 10-year campaign. This entity would:
 - Provide continuity and coherence for measurable progress, and
 - Provide the coordinating framework and organizational base for several current and new lines of work, including, but not limited to:
 - The P-16 initiative outlined in recommendation #4 below.

- Business/industry/education clusters, developed on the model of the Machine Tool Council, in the health professions, plastics, and other critical areas, to ensure consistent communication of business/industry/employer needs to education institutions and providers.
- Use of ACT WorkKeys as a tool to identify the knowledge and skills needed by employers and to inform the design of programs and services by the public schools, Ivy Tech, IU East, and other education providers.¹

3. Move aggressively (a) to support the extension of Community College of Indiana to Region 9 of Ivy Tech State College as expeditiously as feasible (in Fall 2004 at the latest but preferably in Fall 2003), and (b) to support the transition in the mission of IU East/Purdue University Programs in a manner consistent with the “Agreement for the Continued Development of the Regional Campuses of Indiana University and Purdue University” dated May 23, 2001.

4. Establish a “P-16 initiative” (early childhood through lifelong learning) as one of the first and highest priority initiatives of the new learning corporation. The goals would be to:

- Marshal all the community’s energies and resources behind efforts to raise the achievement of *all* students in the school corporations in Wayne County to levels above the state average,
- Narrow significantly the current differences in performance among schools, and
- Achieve the 10-year goal of performance at the level of the top 10% of all Indiana Counties on key indicators in the state performance reports (PL 221-1999).

The following are the rationale and further explanation of each of these recommendations.

1. Ten-year goal

The evidence regarding education attainment and performance should leave no doubt that a 10-year campaign is critical to the future quality of life and economy of Richmond/Wayne County. The year 2012 is recommended because it is both soon enough to compel immediate action and far enough away to allow realistic, step-by-step progress. The year 2012 is also when key data will be available to assess Wayne County’s progress in comparison to other counties and the nation, such as the 2010 Census and the 2012 edition of National Assessment of Adult Literacy.

2. Countywide learning corporation

NCHEMS believes that without an organizational structure to lead and to give coherence and persistence to the recommended campaign, Richmond/Wayne County will not make significant

¹ NCHEMS recognizes that ACT WorkKeys is currently used by Ivy Tech. This recommendation would extend the use of this tool as a means to bridge the communication gap between employers and education regarding needed knowledge and skills.

progress over the next decade in improving education attainment and education achievement/performance. Progress will not be made if it depends on the actions of individual institutions and other providers and a plethora of well-intentioned but uncoordinated and largely isolated initiatives. Key characteristics of such an organization include:

- A mission to lead a 10-year campaign to raise the education attainment and achievement of Wayne County and to provide a coordinating framework and organizational base for the multiple existing and new initiatives and lines of work necessary to achieve the long-term goal
- A governing board broadly representative of the County business and civic leaders. Preferably this board should be led by and a majority membership of lay persons who are not leaders of, in official positions at, or employed by IU East, Ivy Tech, Earlham, school corporations, or other education providers.
- Functions and responsibilities to include, but be limited to:
 - Establishing benchmarks and indicators for monitoring the County’s progress toward the long-term goals and publishing an annual County report card on education progress and workforce quality. For example:
 - > Raise the percentage of students in *all* schools who meet or exceed the state average performance to the level of the top 10% of corporations in Indiana on the key indicators in the School Corporation Annual Performance Reports (IC 20-1-21).
 - > Increase the education attainment and literacy of the adult population/workforce to levels above the statewide average (measure changes in education attainment by U.S. Census in 2000 to 2010 and adult literacy as measured by the change from 2002 and 2012 on the National Assessment of Adult Literacy).
 - > Narrow the current disparities in performance between children from the lowest and highest levels of socioeconomic status in Wayne County to the end that no significant differences exist by the end of the decade.
 - Planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating specific initiatives or lines of work consistent with the overall goal and mission.
 - Acting on behalf of the community and employers to “purchase” the services of providers to meet specific education or training needs. The organization explicitly *would not* provide education and training services but would draw upon, “broker” and coordinate the institutions and schools in Wayne County as well as other providers, as necessary, to meet the needs of clients and carry out its initiatives. The intent would be that the entity could draw upon institutions and providers, both public and private, from throughout Indiana or elsewhere, to meet the needs of clients in Wayne County.
- Legal authority to:
 - Establish subsidiary enterprise (revenue generating) units to carry out functions that cannot easily be carried out by any single institution. For example, the organization could provide a “third party” mechanism for IU East, the Community College of Indiana/Ivy Tech,

and other institutions to share administrative and support services. The entity could also establish conference/seminar services and lease facilities to organizations whose missions are consistent with the overall goal.

- Own or lease facilities in Richmond and at sites (preferably at or in proximity to existing education facilities) throughout Wayne County. The intent would be for the organization to have two or more sites in the County – including at least one in Western Wayne County.

NCHEMS recognizes that there are precedents for this kind of entity in Richmond/Wayne County. In some respects it is similar to the establishment in 1969 of Eastern Indiana Community College Inc. to establish a new institution serving the region's postsecondary education needs. In this case, however, the initiative would *not* be to establish a new institution but would be to draw together the existing institutions and resources into an integrated learning system designed to achieve a long-term goal.

The “Community Learning System,” being developed by the Columbus (Indiana) Community Education Coalition is an excellent model for the system NCHEMS is recommending for Richmond/Wayne County. The goals of Coalition are to:

- Improve the learning system within Bartholomew County and the surrounding counties so that it truly serves the lifelong learning needs of the residents in a coordinated, synergistic manner; and
- Develop and seek to continue a communication process among education providers and businesses and community organizations so that education and learning needs are identified, understood, planned for, delivered, and measured.

In contrast to the Columbus model, the structure recommended for Richmond/Wayne County would not necessarily focus in the early stages on construction of a new facility or “center.” Such a focus (and the related debates about location, design and financing) could detract from the core substantive mission and functions. It would be important for Richmond/Wayne County to draw from the Columbus experience and to adopt these lessons to the unique culture, economy, and configuration of local public and private schools and institutions.

3. Community College of Indiana, Ivy Tech and IU East/Purdue University programs

NCHEMS recommends that Richmond/Wayne County convey its strong support for:

- Implementation of the Community College of Indiana (CCI) in Region 9 as soon as feasible (not later than the planned date of Fall 2004 but as early as Fall 2003, if possible).
- Redefining the mission of IU East and the Purdue University Programs in a manner consistent with the May 23, 2001 “Agreement.”

In making this recommendation, NCHEMS fully recognizes the remaining difficult – but largely technical – issues involved in implementing the Community College of Indiana through a coordinated partnership between Ivy State College and Vincennes University. NCHEMS also recognizes that the change in mission for IU East (and, to a more limited extent, the Purdue

University Programs in Richmond) will have profound educational and financial implications for the institutions. Nevertheless, several points make these changes critical to the future of Richmond/Wayne County:

- The continued uncertainties as well as conflicts about mission sap energy and resources away from the capacity of these institutions to serve their students and the region. A firm decision by all parties to *move ahead* will allow time for the extensive planning necessary to make the transition.
- It is difficult to justify from either academic or economic perspectives from the State of Indiana to continue to have IU East serve a community college mission and clientele with an academic structure and culture as well as cost/price structure of a university.
- The Community College of Indiana is established by State Law and firmly backed by state policy. Even though there are clearly issues in how the Vincennes/Ivy Tech partnership will be implemented, there is little question that it *will* be implemented. It has already been demonstrated that alternative arrangements (such as having IU East provide the programs instead of Vincennes) will not be acceptable to state leaders.

For Wayne County and all of Region 9, the CCI/Ivy Tech combination and the revised IU East Mission will mean:

- Student access to through CCI/Ivy Tech to the Vincennes associate degree programs (Associate of Science and Associate of Arts) that are clearly recognized statewide for quality and transferability (including transfer to IU and Purdue).
- Full participation of the region in the statewide CCI institution and network.
- The benefits for both students and the region of having a clearly identified “community college.”
- The benefits of an academically rigorous IU East with higher expectations for academic performance, and increased access to bachelor’s and master’s degree programs for the region’s population.

For IU East, the change will require a fundamental rethinking of programs and academic resources in a manner consistent with the “Agreement,” including, for example:

- A sharp increase in the requirements for admission, including alignment of these requirements with the State Standards for K-12.
- A significant reduction in remedial and developmental education.
- Retention of only selected, highly specialized associate degree programs.
- Increasing admission of students only to baccalaureate or graduate programs and a continuing increase in the range of baccalaureate programs available in the region (especially in areas directly related to the region’s needs such as education, business and health sciences).

- Increasing the availability of graduate programs in the region offered either by IU East alone or in conjunction with other IU campuses.
- Serving as a “learning center/receive site” through which the region’s population can gain access to baccalaureate, graduate, and other courses provided not only by other IU campuses but also from the best available providers in the nation and world.

4. “P-16 initiative” (early childhood through lifelong learning)

As emphasized throughout this report, raising expectations about achievement and performance of *all* students must be the highest priority for Wayne County. The proposal to the Lilly Endowment for a planning grant under the Community Alliances to Promote Education (CAPE) would have been a first step in developing the kind of initiative we are recommending. Several current projects, such as Communities in Schools, 21st Century Scholars, and the Earlam/Lilly Indiana Initiative (ELII), have important contributions that could contribute to a broader strategy.

NCHEMS recommends that Richmond/Wayne seek the advice of the Education Trust in establishing a local K-16 council (within the framework of the proposed learning corporation) and in identifying successful models of K-16 initiatives in other communities around the nation. Excellent resource materials are available on the Trust’s web site: <http://www.edtrust.org/main/index.asp>.