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ABSTRACT

Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School, which is located in the rural New England town of Franklin, Massachusetts, is a school of "choice" that students elect to attend. All of the school's 850 students must have a career/technical focus for their studies. Most of Tri-County's ninth-graders are unprepared for high school, and 38% have special education needs. In the past, Tri-County's leaders and teachers faced a difficult challenge in educating many low- performing students who had never been expected to achieve at high levels. To meet this challenge, Tri-County's leaders and teachers developed a school-improvement framework that included the following improvement strategies: (1) raising graduation requirements by requiring all students to complete four courses in each major subject area (plus a concentration in career/technical studies); (2) raising classroom expectations by holding students to standards; (3) revising career/technical programs, including by integrating reading, mathematics, and writing skills into students' assignments; (4) providing structured work-based learning experiences; (5) improving guidance and advisement; (6) providing extra help and time; (7) recognizing outstanding achievement; and (8) using data to guide improvement. Tri-County's improvement efforts have yielded significant gains in student achievement on the High Schools That Work Assessment and Scholastic Aptitude Test. Tri-County's dropout rate has remained below 2.7% even though standards have risen for all students. (MN)

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK

SREB

Case Study

Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School

Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School is located in the rural New England town of Franklin, Mass. Tri-County is a school of "choice" that students elect to attend. The school enrolls 850 students in grades nine through 12 — all of whom must have a career/technical focus for their studies. Students come from 11 former "mill towns" that have become "bedroom communities" for Boston and Worcester, Mass., and Providence, R.I. EMC Corp., Waters Associates, Putnam Investments and other companies moving into the area have helped change the economy greatly in the past 25 years.

Most ninth-graders who enter Tri-County are unprepared for high school. In fact, half of entering freshmen read below grade level and 38 percent of all students have special education needs. Fewer than half of graduates pursue postsecondary studies.

Tri-County has little to say about the education that students receive in the middle grades, since the sending middle schools are located in other school districts. The middle schools regularly channel many under-achieving eighth-graders into Tri-County for preparation that will enable them to get jobs after high school.

Setting the stage for school reform

In the past, Tri-County's leaders and teachers faced a difficult challenge in educating many low-performing students who had never been expected to achieve at high levels. Many students' families worked in the mills and factories and rarely attended a college or university. These mothers and fathers were not the New England parents who sent their children to elite prep schools or to Harvard and MIT.

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 proved to be a major catalyst for school improvement. It required all schools to eliminate or reduce the number of low-level or general courses, to raise expectations for all students and to establish clear accountability standards. If the schools failed to comply, they would lose local control.

The legislation also called for the development of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), which measures the achievement of all 10th-graders in English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Beginning with the graduating class of 2003, all Massachusetts high school students must pass the MCAS tests in English/language arts and mathematics to receive a diploma.

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Tri-County's leaders and teachers realized that they needed a viable school-improvement framework to make the changes that would help the school and its students meet the new state mandates and the expectations of business and industry. In 1994 the school began using the *High Schools That Work* framework of goals and key practices as a model for overhauling every aspect of curriculum and instruction.

Raising graduation requirements

The first step was to raise graduation requirements. Beginning with the freshman class of 2000-01, all Tri-County students must complete four courses in each major subject area — English, mathematics, science and social studies — plus a concentration in career/technical studies. The school has eliminated all general English and mathematics courses.

Changes in graduation requirements at Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School

Class of 1994	Class of 2003
4 credits in English	4 credits in English
2 credits in mathematics (no levels specified)	4 credits in mathematics, including Algebra I and geometry
2 credits in science (no levels specified)	4 credits in lab sciences
2 credits in social studies, including one credit in U.S. History	4 credits in social studies, including one year of U.S. History and two years of World History (Students must earn 3 credits in social studies.)
2 credits in physical education	2 credits in physical education and health
4 credits in a career/technical concentration	4 credits in a career/technical concentration
2 credits in career/technical courses related to a concentration	2 credits in career/technical courses related to a concentration
18 total credits	**24 total credits**

English/language arts

Tri-County leaders and teachers became frustrated by inconsistencies in the standards and content of English courses at the school. As a result, teachers of the same courses agreed to give the same mid-year and final exams and to count the two exams as 20 percent of a student's final grade. In the past, teachers had taught three levels of literature and two levels of composition to accommodate students with weak reading skills. The new graduation requirements halted all general English courses and increased the number of 80-minute extended blocks of learning in English. Ninth-graders who read substantially below grade level take an additional English course that is aligned with the regular ninth-grade English curriculum but includes extra help in reading. Students also receive computer-assisted help.

Mathematics and science

In response to the findings of the Massachusetts Department of Education and a *HSTW* technical assistance team, Tri-County aligned the mathematics curriculum and the science curriculum with state requirements. General mathematics courses at Tri-County had been offered under several names — Basic Mathematics, Transitional Mathematics and Career Mathematics — none of which prepared students for further learning or the 10th-grade MCAS test. Moreover, these courses allowed many talented but unmotivated students to waste four years of high school.

The school replaced all general mathematics courses with an integrated mathematics curriculum that includes two credits in algebra and two credits in geometry content that students must know to pass the MCAS test. As a result of the emphasis on mathematics, 99 percent of students in 2000 had completed four mathematics courses. This compares with only 15 percent of students in 1998. (See Table 1.) More students who enter grade nine have taken algebra in the middle grades and plan to take Algebra II and geometry. School leaders stress the need for higher-level mathematics by offering a special five-week voluntary summer program that gives students a jump-start in calculus.

Table 1
Percentages of Tri-County students completing various mathematics courses

	1998	2000
Algebra II	58%	65%
Geometry	72%	96%
Algebra in the middle grades	43%	53%
At least four mathematics courses	15%	99%

The Class of 2003 at Tri-County must complete four credits in a lab science, including physical science, human biology and chemistry. Seniors may choose physics, Principles of Technology (applied physics), anatomy/physiology, astronomy or microbiology and may take two science courses at the same time. No students who participated in the *HSTW* Assessment in 1998 had taken college-preparatory biology; by 2000, the number had reached 35 percent. Those who took college-prep biology scored 304 on the *HSTW* science test in 2000, compared with a score of 293 for students who took a general biology course.

Other required courses

All ninth-graders take a one-semester course to build their skills in note-taking, test-taking, studying, higher-order thinking and problem-solving. Students who performed poorly on the middle-grades MCAS can take an MCAS preparation course to strengthen language arts and mathematics skills in grade 10.

Teachers have revised the social studies curriculum to eliminate courses that repeat middle-grades content. All students take two years of American History, beginning with the Civil War, and two years of World History, beginning with the Middle Ages. All social studies courses are taught to high standards.

Electives

Students are allowed to take career/technical courses outside of their concentrations as electives, but they also have access to courses that will help them meet college entrance requirements. For example, students may take Spanish as a two-year foreign language sequence.

Raising classroom expectations by holding students to standards

School leaders and teachers are raising the bar for Tri-County students in several ways. Homework is important — counting 25 percent of a student's grade in each term (half semester). Teachers in all academic departments use standard content and common semester exams and scoring guides.

Teachers emphasize reading across the curriculum and require each student to read at least two books during the summer — one that is specified for the student's grade level and another that the student selects from a grade-level reading list. During the first week of school, each student takes a written test on the required book. By the second week of school, each student writes a report, makes a presentation and produces a product based on the second book. The products may be PowerPoint presentations, reenactments of scenes from the book, or other items. Students' scores on both books are included in their first-term grades.

Students write in all classes, including mathematics and career/technical courses. This requirement helps students prepare to write essay responses on the MCAS tests. To support this practice, the school adopted standard formats for research papers and projects in all classes. Each freshman receives a copy of *A Rookie's Guide to Research* containing guidelines for research projects in all courses throughout four years of high school. Fifty-three teachers of subjects other than English/language arts received professional development on using the guide and aligning classroom assignments and assessments to reading and writing standards.

Beginning with the Class of 2001, each 12th-grader will complete a senior project on a topic related to his or her career/technical concentration. The project will include a 10-page research paper and a 30-minute presentation on a product or service. A panel of administrators, teachers and business leaders will evaluate the presentations. Career-technical teachers and English teachers will work together to grade the written reports. Each student's career/technical grade for the semester will be his or her overall grade on the project.

In planning the senior project, members of Tri-County's curriculum focus team contacted other *HSTW* sites that require senior projects and visited Paul M. Hodgson Vocational Technical High School in Newcastle County, Del., where a senior project has been a graduation requirement for 10 years. The committee decided to adopt the Hodgson model.

Revising career/technical programs

Tri-County has improved its career/technical programs significantly. Advisory committees for the various career/technical concentrations have more responsibility than in the past. In addition to recommending upgrades in shop equipment and helping place students in jobs, these committees suggest revisions to ensure that courses meet industry standards. As a result, the school has combined the commercial art and graphics programs into a single concentration known as Graphic Design and Publishing. Students in a new computer technology concentration are responsible for maintaining the school's computer network and are eligible to receive the Computing Technology Industry Association's A+ Certification and Cisco Systems' technician and network certifications. The school established a Facilities Management program to respond to changes in the fields of electricity, welding, small gas engines, carpentry and plumbing. Students in the construction trades take a Computer Assisted Drafting (CAD) course that allows them to practice high-level thinking and planning skills that are essential for quality work.

Career/technical teachers make a special effort to integrate reading, mathematics and writing skills into their assignments. For example, the culinary arts teachers require students to read and write summaries of at least three articles from trade journals each term. Students in this class complete a year-long research project on operating a restaurant. They write a business plan, prepare a budget, use nutrition science to develop menus, and estimate the costs of using certain recipes.

Culinary arts teachers worked with an English teacher to learn how to review and grade students' writing.

Students in the medical careers program become certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) through the American Heart Association and in first aid through the American Red Cross. Before they graduate, all students in this program must pass the certification exam to become a nursing assistant and must meet the criteria for providing home health care. Students say these certifications increase their interest in the health field and motivate them to study hard in all classes, particularly medical careers and science classes.

One student said, "Having to earn these certificates improves my participation in medical careers classes, provides skills that I can use in helping people, and motivates me to learn things that doctors and nurses need to know."

Teachers encourage medical careers students to work hard by scheduling a special "pinning night" — a ceremony for 12th-graders who receive their licenses as nursing assistants. The students' parents and friends are invited to attend.

Students in medical careers, carpentry and culinary arts programs keep portfolios containing products or photos of products that they have produced and awards or recognition that they have received. For example, a carpentry student's portfolio might contain a daily journal, estimates of materials for a shop project, and a drawing of a "dream house" designed for a senior project. Students must show how they used mathematics formulas to estimate the amount of materials needed for a project. Seniors in all three programs use their portfolios in interviewing for work-based learning positions and college admission.

In revising career/technical programs at Tri-County, school leaders "push" students to meet industry certification requirements.

- Culinary Arts students are expected to meet the certification requirements of the American Culinary Federation.
- Facilities Management students are expected to earn approval from the American Welding Society.
- Cosmetology students take the state licensing test; most students are licensed before graduation.
- Construction Trades students must complete 200 of the 300 classroom hours of theory required for a license and must work in the shop for a period of time equivalent to one and one-half years of field experience.
- Early Childhood Education students are expected to become licensed as pre-school teaching assistants.

- Auto Technology students are expected to pass the Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) exam prior to graduation.

Providing structured work-based learning experiences

Tri-County's leaders and teachers realize that the curriculum must contain real-world influences to motivate students to work hard. The result has been several school-based enterprises operated by students. One example is "Gerry's Place," a restaurant that is open to the public for lunch five days a week and provides catering services for special occasions at the school. With the guidance of their teachers, culinary arts students plan menus, order food, price the meals to cover costs, and perform all other tasks associated with running a restaurant. One student said, "I never realized how much planning goes into running a restaurant and how many mathematics and communication skills are needed to be successful."

Marketing students in grades 10 through 12 operate a branch of Dean Cooperative Bank in the school lobby. Tenth-graders participate in a job-shadowing experience at the main bank, 11th-graders work in the school's branch bank, and 12th-graders rotate between the school's branch bank and other bank locations as part of the school's cooperative education program. The program's success has resulted in bank jobs for several Tri-County graduates.

School leaders have created partnerships with local employers to provide job shadowing and other work-based learning experiences for students. For example, Tri-County participates in Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES), which connects the school to General Motors, the Chrysler Corp. and the Toyota Motor Corp. The partnership allows students in the automotive program to participate in job shadowing for three weeks in grade 11, a paid internship in the summer between grades 11 and 12, and cooperative education with the automakers in grade 12. Each student has a mentor at a local dealership. The program is certified by the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation and students are expected to meet Automotive Service Excellence standards for participation. Students don't see the program as a way to "get out of academic work." One student said, "The program has increased my expectations because I want to be successful on the job."

Tri-County's medical careers students participate in work-based learning through the school's partnerships with Milford-Whitinsville Regional Hospital, Medway Country Manor Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, Hillside Adult Care, the Franklin Council on Aging and the Wrenthan Senior Center. Building-trades students receive on-site training at the World War I Memorial Park and Pine Hill School construction sites. Juniors in the machine-trades area participate in one or more days of observation and job shadowing at Texas Instruments, one of the region's largest employers. Students in the cosmetology program provide hairdos, manicures and facials for residents of nearby nursing homes. They also do the hair, nails and make-up of middle-grades students for the "big dance night."

Some students in the electronics program serve internships with EMC Corp., a manufacturer and marketer of computer storage devices. EMC Corp. contributed $80,000 in tools and materials to support the school-based portion of the program. Seventeen juniors and seniors, 20 sophomores and 24 freshmen participate in the program — and there is a waiting list of students who want to benefit from this experience.

Students who want to participate in off-campus work-based learning must maintain good grades, attendance and behavior. They are evaluated on these criteria at the end of grade 11 and at the end of each grading period in their senior year.

Improving guidance and advisement

Tri-County's Career Advisement Program (CAP) requires each student to have a four-year program of study that is revised annually. Sixty staff members — including administrators, teachers, counselors and support staff — have volunteered to help the students and their parents work on the plans. These advisors receive four hours of professional development and attend monthly meetings with a coordinator. CAP began as a weekly class that guidance counselors conducted for freshmen but has evolved into a schoolwide program in which students in all grades meet with their advisors for 45 minutes once a month. A team of seven coordinators prepares monthly lesson plans and meets with the advisors before CAP sessions.

All students complete portfolios containing their best work from academic and career/technical courses; a summary of leadership experiences; and copies of awards, letters of recommendation and newspaper clippings on their achievements. They use the portfolios as a permanent record of their high school accomplishments and to discuss career opportunities and college requirements with their advisors.

The heart of the CAP is an annual meeting of each student, his or her parents and an advisor to review the student's program of study and achievements, to highlight requirements of the student's chosen career field, and to select courses for the coming year. Eighty percent of parents attended a CAP session in 2000. An annual meeting will be a requirement for all students by 2003.

Providing extra help and time

Tri-County has a variety of extra-help programs to assist unprepared and failing students to succeed in challenging courses and to pass the MCAS tests. These programs are aimed at getting students to complete homework assignments, strengthening the academic skills of incoming ninth-graders, and giving all students access to after-school sessions throughout the year. The programs are:

The Homework Center

An analysis by teachers in 1999 revealed that students were failing primarily because they refused to do homework. The study showed that only 40 percent of students were completing homework. With a grant from the state, Tri-County established a homework center that is open after school until 6 p.m. three days a week. The center is coordinated by a retired English teacher who assigns students to a faculty or student mentor. The mentors help students with research and homework and "coach" students in subject areas in which they are struggling. Students can be referred to the center by teachers, counselors and parents or choose to attend voluntarily. They use the center to study, do homework, use computers, take tests and work with other students. Located in the library, the center has 24 computer stations and full Internet access. The coordinator notifies the parents of students who do not report to the center as directed. The center clearly is paying off for students, particularly younger students who are still adjusting to high school. (See Table 2.)

Table 2
Homework Center activity at
Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School
1999-2000

Grade	Number of visits
9	1,311
10	1,102
11	590
12	397

Summer Academy

Tri-County's teachers are responsible for helping students succeed in challenging courses regardless of whether the students are prepared for high-school-level work. Since 1997 Tri-County has administered voluntary placement tests to entering ninth-graders. The school used teacher-designed tests in mathematics, reading and writing in 1997 and 1998 and replaced them with the short form of the Stanford 9 in 2000. Students who scored in the third quartile were invited to participate in a voluntary summer academy. In 1999 the group was expanded to include sophomores who had either failed MCAS tests in grade eight or mathematics or English in grade nine. Students spend five weeks improving their reading, writing and mathematics skills while getting to know the school and some of their new classmates. The 2000 academy had 40 ninth-graders and 334 students from grade 10. Each Thursday during the summer program, ninth-graders spend time in one of two career/technical areas, where they complete projects that require mathematics and

English skills learned in the academic part of the program. Pre- and post-academy testing reveals that students improve in all subject areas.

After-school programs

In 1999-2000 school leaders applied for and received a Title I grant to give students with significant reading deficiencies a chance to attend an after-school program. These students sign a contract to accept help from a tutor and a computer-assisted learning program one to three days a week. Thirty students completed the program in the first year.

The Essential Skills program is designed for special-needs students who have individual educational plans (IEPs). Members of the school's special needs department provide assistance three days a week. Some 30 students participate in the program each year.

School and district leaders include time for extra help in staff members' annual contracts. As a result, each staff member specifies one day a week that he or she will provide 50 minutes of extra help after school. Many teachers sign up for two or more days. The schedule is posted in the classroom and students are notified of any changes.

Recognizing outstanding achievement

The outstanding senior in each career/technical program traditionally receives a cash award at graduation. In 1992 the school established an Honors Night to present awards for excellence in academic and career/technical areas to students from all four grade levels. The school has expanded the recognition to include awards for leadership and other achievements. Parents, students, teachers and school leaders attend the ceremony.

Students also receive *High Schools That Work* Awards of Educational Achievement on Honors Night. These awards are presented to career/technical seniors at *HSTW* sites who meet the *HSTW* performance goals in reading, mathematics and science and complete two of three components of the *HSTW*-recommended academic curriculum.

Tri-County students have received many top awards from the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) in a variety of career/technical areas, such as health occupations and computers. Marketing students have won state Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) awards in restaurant management, hospitality service management, vehicle and petroleum marketing, and civic consciousness. Tri-County students captured the Massachusetts School Banking Association Marketing Project championship three years in a row. In addition, one student was named the state Automobile Dealers' Association auto-tech champion. The promise of rewards and recognition has motivated students to work hard in school. As a result, Tri-County students have won more competitive medals and scholarships in the last four years than during any other period in the school's history.

Using data to guide improvement

Tri-County's leaders and teachers say many school improvement activities they have undertaken since joining *HSTW* are the result of reviewing, analyzing and using data from *HSTW* and other sources. The actions include:

- Ninth- and 10th-graders take mathematics every day during both shop and academic courses. A study of students' mathematics scores on the MCAS in grade eight pointed to the need for this schedule.
- All ninth-graders take a study skills course. The achievement of eighth-graders on the MCAS showed that many students were unprepared for high school studies.
- The summer reading requirement was based on the *HSTW* student survey, which indicated that students did not read very much.
- The Title I extra-help program emerged when school leaders studied the Stanford 9 placement test results.
- The attendance policy was changed after the focus committee on evaluation and assessment analyzed the correlation between students' grades and their attendance.

School leaders will continue to analyze and use data in raising student achievement. They have found that data increases the credibility and objectivity of their recommendations for improvement. The use of data enables school committees to focus on curriculum and instructional practices that matter most in improving the entire school.

Results of Tri-County's efforts to improve student learning

There is ample evidence that the efforts of school leaders and teachers are making a difference in the achievement of Tri-County students:

- Scores on the *HSTW* Assessment improved between 1996 and 2000 in reading, mathematics and science. (See Table 3.) Between 1999 and 2000 the percentage of students who scored at the advanced or the proficient level on the MCAS mathematics test increased, while the percentage of students failing the MCAS mathematics test decreased by 10 percentage points.

Table 3
Average scores of Tri-County students
on the *HSTW* Assessment between 1996 and 2000

	1996	1998	2000	Goal
Reading	272	282	289	279
Mathematics	292	305	303	295
Science	286	293	297	292

- Average scores on the SAT verbal test increased by 78 points — from 382 in 1994 to 460 in 2000. The average SAT mathematics score increased from 411 to 460 during that period. Likewise, the percentage of Tri-County students entering postsecondary education nearly doubled — from 27 percent in 1994 to 46 percent in 2000. (See Table 4.)
- The percentages of students meeting the *HSTW* performance goals in reading, mathematics and science increased between 1996 and 2000 by 33 percentage points in reading, 14 percentage points in mathematics and 25 percentage points in science. (See Table 5.)
- The dropout rate has remained below 2.7 percent even though standards at the school have risen for all students. Attendance rates have remained steady at about 93 percent since 1993-94.

Table 4
Average SAT verbal and mathematics scores and
rate of postsecondary enrollment by Tri-County students
1994-2000

Year	Average SAT verbal score	Average SAT mathematics score	Percentage entering postsecondary education
1994	382	411	27%
1995	369	399	25%
1996	438	416	36%
1997	279	272	48%
1998	480	463	43%
1999	478	449	48%
2000	460	460	46%

Table 5
Percentages of students meeting the *HSTW* goals
in reading, mathematics and science between 1996 and 2000

	Meeting the *HSTW* goal	
	1996	2000
Reading	38%	71%
Mathematics	52%	66%
Science	42%	67%

Lessons learned

To use the *HSTW* model effectively for education reform, Tri-County leaders and teachers found that they needed to:

- Empower teachers to raise standards;
- Spend time and energy to develop an organizational structure for change;
- Be patient in getting 100 percent of teachers to support improvement;
- Establish clear expectations for teachers and students;
- Take a few steps at a time and not try to change everything at once;
- Believe that the students would participate in the summer academy, the homework center, the senior project and other efforts to raise student achievement;
- Provide strong leadership-by-example for committee membership, professional development and the teacher-adviser system.

Plans for the future

School leaders and teachers will continue the practices that have been effective in raising student achievement and will refine other efforts to improve the school. They plan to:

- Reduce the percentage of students performing "below basic" in reading. A schoolwide reading program will increase the amount and quality of reading in all academic and career/technical courses.

- Hold career/technical teachers more accountable for teaching reading and writing skills in their classes.
- Continue to improve instruction in all courses to prepare students for further learning.
- Establish an alumni foundation or association as a source of funding for more scholarships and professional development for school improvement.
- Expand the portfolios required in some career/technical courses to be a requirement for all students through the school's advisement program.
- Continue to collect and analyze data on the effectiveness of the summer academy and the homework center and to improve those programs in response to the data.
- Strengthen connections with the middle-grades schools that send students to Tri-County and work with leaders from those schools to align the curriculum in the core academic subjects.

District support

Tri-County has received full support from district leaders, who have:

- Encouraged the development of a school council — composed of teachers, students, parents and community representatives — to play a leadership role in school improvement.
- Hired an academic coordinator to oversee the development of the academic curriculum and the evaluation of all academic teachers.
- Supported school leaders and teachers who wanted to attend professional development conferences and workshops and visit "pacesetter" *HSTW* sites.
- Aggressively pursued federal and state funds for school improvement. More than $500,000 has become available as a result of these efforts.

State policies that support Tri-County's improvement efforts

School leaders cite state policies and resources that have been helpful in efforts to improve student achievement. The state:

- Requires all schools to eliminate or reduce the number of low-level or general courses, to raise expectations for all students and to establish clear accountability standards. Schools that fail to do so risk losing local control.

- Will require all students to make a passing score on statewide standardized tests to graduate from high school in 2003.
- Provided funds for the summer academy.

Additional state assistance needed

School leaders would like to find out what happens to their students after high school graduation. They will ask the state for information on the number of graduates who need to take remedial courses in mathematics and English/language arts or reading when they enter the state's postsecondary education system.

How has *HSTW* helped Tri-County raise student achievement?

School leaders say that most actions taken during the past six years probably would not have happened without the *High Schools That Work* framework of goals and key practices. *HSTW* has enabled the school to:

- Adopt a school-improvement framework that helps the school meet state accountability standards;
- Have access to data that has helped identify the biggest problems in student achievement;
- Receive technical assistance from an external team that recognizes the school's accomplishments, confirms their challenges and provides a workable plan for addressing the challenges;
- Join a network of *HSTW* sites, including many schools that have been successful in solving problems associated with raising student achievement; and
- Participate in professional development programs led by educational experts and effective school leaders and teachers.

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