

Career Builders	
Overview	<p>The Gateway School-to-Career Partnership, which became Career Builders in 2001, is one of nine regional partnerships in Louisiana. It connects the work of seven parishes (counties), with an educator and a business representative from each parish on the board. Seats rotate to ensure commitment and provide more opportunities for involvement in decision-making. The board includes faith-based organizations, youth agencies, organized labor, parents, and students.</p> <p>Even before Louisiana received a five-year STW grant, STW initiatives were underway. One was designed to connect all youth to appropriate, high-quality learning experiences. In 1997, the state enacted the Career Options Law, mandating that all students complete career exploration activities, starting in the sixth grade. By the eighth grade, all students must complete a five-year career plan that identifies the career cluster a student is interested in and maps out courses for grades 9-12 and one year of postsecondary training.</p>
Scale of involvement in making and managing community connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTE staff on STW: 0-5 • Annual org. budget: \$251k-\$1m • Annual budget for STW: \$50k-\$500k • Schools (all levels) served: 51+ • Employers served: 501-1,000
Organization impact on the community and schools as an intermediary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1997, Gateway has implemented the Career Options Law, spending about \$4 million and collaborating with a Tech Prep Consortium and employers to provide career exploration and awareness activities. Gateway partnered with the state Department of Education to develop the "Act 1124 Implementation Guide for Educators." • In 2000, Gateway hosted focus groups with business and education groups to forge understanding of the state's education problems. The discussions suggested a dire need for an intermediary that could create more opportunities for business and education leaders to talk to one another. Gateway proposes to broker these services. • Also, in 2000, Gateway visited work-based learning sites. Some comments received: "Gateway has tied education to real-world application by involving businesses in educational decision-making." "Gateway is recognized as the link between business and education by establishing a mutually beneficial relationship." "Vocational teachers and academic teachers are working together to create a more comprehensive curriculum as a result of STW."
Project impact on the site and the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2000, Gateway conducted an Employer Satisfaction Survey based on the SCANS skills. The survey went to employers involved in work-based learning or who hired students directly involved in school-to-work activities. At least one-third of the employer acknowledged a <i>noticeable improvement</i> in student skills in: teamwork, personal development, interpersonal skills, oral communications, computation skills, and/or creative thinking. At least 26.5 percent of the employers cited "improvement" in all skill categories.
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