

## **OREGON BUSINESS COUNCIL/OREGON WORKSITE 21**

### **A Statewide Approach to Connecting Schools and Workplaces**

**By Marc S. Miller**

The Oregon Business Council, whose directors represent nearly a third of the state's 100 largest employers, places a high priority on improving public education. Reflecting the linkages it sees among education, workforce quality, economic competitiveness, and social cohesion, the council has put education reform at the top of its agenda in many ways, from testifying before legislative committees, to playing a leadership role on state-level policy committees, to adopting an entire school district.

The council has been a leader in supporting, protecting, and implementing the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century. Enacted in 1991, this legislation initiated a comprehensive, statewide education reform, raising the bar for student achievement to higher levels through new standards for K-12 and postsecondary education and through a new assessment system. Shortly after the act's passage, OBC committed to its full and aggressive implementation.

In 1996, OBC created Oregon Worksite 21 to support the sweeping changes underway in public education. Worksite 21, which incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1999, is designed to build employer capacity to develop and maintain partnerships with education. These services to employers cover five areas: advocacy and networking; communications materials; training materials; consulting assistance; and measurement of results.

Together, the Oregon Business Council and Oregon Worksite 21 have helped set the stage for the statewide expansion of school-to-career and the provision of work-based learning opportunities for large numbers of young people.

#### **Key Lessons**

- School-to-career support systems for employers should begin by addressing employer and employee understanding of the benefits to competitiveness, promoting a company-wide buy-in for partnerships with education.
- As statewide intermediaries for connecting employers and schools, the Oregon Business Council and Oregon Worksite 21 provide clear, consistent goals that are a prerequisite to effective, sustainable education-workplace partnerships.

## **Background Information**

- **Mission:**  
Oregon Business Council: to contribute to Oregon's long-term social and economic well being  
Oregon Worksite 21: to help employers develop and maintain partnerships with education
- **Structure:**  
Oregon Business Council directors represent OBC member firms. OBC directors are CEOs of Oregon-based companies, senior executives of Oregon-based divisions of national companies, and individuals in the business community who play a significant role in developing public policy in Oregon.  
Oregon Worksite 21, which began as an OBC program, has become a separate non-profit organization but remains aligned with OBC. As of March 1, 2000, over 20 firms had joined Oregon Worksite 21, initially concentrated among OBC members.
- **Funding and Staffing:**  
Oregon Business Council: The annual budget of OBC is about \$500,000, funded with member dues. Its three staff members devote about one-quarter of their time to education-related activities.  
Oregon Worksite 21: The annual budget of Worksite 21 is about \$200,000. It receives administrative support and office space from OBC and, for its first three years, was funded in large part with grants from the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Argosy Foundation, with pledges from OBC members.  
Oregon Worksite 21 has two staff members (one full-time and one part-time) and hires consultants for much of its work.
- **Partners:** OBC and Oregon Worksite 21 members both represent many of Oregon's largest employers, including Intel, Providence Health System, and Portland General Electric. Both organizations collaborate frequently with other business and non-profit organizations and with state and local government agencies.
- **Organization Type:** Non-profit organizations
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## **Historical Summary**

Founded in 1985, the Oregon Business Council plays a central role in addressing public issues that are important to Oregon employers, focusing on concerns as diverse as natural resources, drugs in the workplace, tax policy, growth management, and public education. While independent in its deliberations and policy positions, OBC often collaborates with other business groups, non-profit organizations, and government agencies to promote policies that improve Oregon life. It works frequently with the governor and state legislative leaders, as well as with leaders in city and county governments, school districts, and colleges and universities.

Patterned after the National Business Roundtable, the council is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization whose directors are CEOs and other business leaders. The 40+ directors represent Oregon's largest employers, including nearly a third of the state's 100 largest companies. Directors apply their energies, knowledge, and leadership—as well as resources from their firms—to accomplishing the OBC mission: to contribute to Oregon's long-term social and economic well being. A number of former directors, often retired CEOs, assist OBC as senior directors.

The council studies and often takes positions on issues through standing committees chaired and made up of the directors, often assisted by managers within their companies. These issue teams are supported by OBC's staff of three, with occasional help from consultants.

The Oregon Agenda, reflecting the interests of the Oregon business community as a whole, provides a framework for OBC's policy interests. The agenda, which transcends issues unique to individual companies or industries, focuses on four issues:

- Pressing forward with K-12 school transformation;
- Revitalizing and restructuring higher education;
- Protecting and improving the transportation infrastructure; and
- Restoring watershed health and natural salmon runs.

Because of the linkages among education, workforce quality, economic competitiveness, and social cohesion, OBC places a high priority on improving Oregon's K-12 and higher education systems. It also believes that the community provides a meaningful context for acquiring and synthesizing new knowledge and skills, and that positive adult mentors and role models open the doors to new dreams and wider possibilities. Thus, the council

considers school-to-career a key strategy for achieving high standards and improving education's relevance.

### Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century

In 1991, the state of Oregon embarked on a comprehensive education reform agenda. The guiding legislation, the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century (HB 3565), put in place a series of initiatives to help the state achieve its goal of world-class excellence for its students and workforce.

OBC has been a leader in advocating for and participating in the implementation of Oregon's education reforms. According to the council, tougher, more relevant academic content and work-readiness skills like teamwork, communication, and problem solving are critical to creating a workforce responsive to the needs of today's global economy. The 1991 legislation responds by raising the bar for student achievement to higher levels through new standards for K-12 and postsecondary education and through a new assessment system. The goal of these reforms is to change the focus of education from measuring student seat time to documenting what students know and can do.

Shortly after the passage of HB 3565, OBC committed to its full and aggressive implementation. In many ways, from testifying before legislative committees, to playing a leadership role on state-level policy committees, to adopting an entire school district, it has kept education reform at the top of its agenda.

Without business support in the 1995 and 1997 legislative sessions, Oregon might have repealed the act, succumbing to small but vocal factions opposed to standards-based reform. OBC executives were vocal in expressing support for the act through numerous meetings with individual legislators and with legislative committees. The key message was to "stay the course."

OBC members and staff also take part in high-level task forces that accelerate school reform. Keith Thomson, former Oregon site manager for Intel Corporation, chairs both OBC's education task force and the 30-person statewide School Transformation Advisory Council. The STAC oversees a cross-institutional team that is charged with developing a detailed plan for reform. The state formed this team based on recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on K-12 Education, also chaired by Thomson.

The School Transformation Advisory Council includes representatives of the Department of Education, the State System of Higher Education, the Office of Community College Services, and business. Recently, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Stan Bunn, asked the STAC to participate in a review of Oregon's new Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) and other issues related to the state's higher education standards.

OBC staff serve on the statewide school transformation Implementation Team as well. Led by the Governor's Office, the team works with the Department of Education and others to coordinate implementation strategies of the education reform legislation.

Moreover, as part of its efforts to preserve and advance education reform, the Oregon Business Council promotes school-to-career to the public. For example, it played a leadership role in securing funds for and designing a statewide communications campaign to inform parents, students, and teachers about education reform. One of the biggest challenges of implementing school transformation is communicating a clear message to the many key stakeholders. OBC led efforts to develop communication materials that could be shared with teachers, administrators, and parents to help them understand the changes that taking place as a result of the education act. OBC and Worksite 21 encouraged OBC companies to make the materials available to employees.

### **Engaging Oregon Employers**

While OBC promotes school-to-career and education reform to the public, its primary constituency is its member companies, along with the broader employer community. Many OBC members have been active in school-to-career, and these employers are among Oregon's leading spokespeople for strengthening the connections between schools and employers on behalf of the state's young people.

OBC members also recognize that employers are only half the equation in successful school-to-career efforts. These companies want to reach out to educational initiatives, yet working with schools, students, and teachers is not the primary business of employers. Similarly, educators are often unfamiliar with employer expectations and workplace requirements. To address this mismatch and to support the changes underway in public education, the council created Oregon Worksite 21 in 1996.

Oregon Worksite 21 is designed to build employer capacity to develop and maintain partnerships with education. It encourages employers to support four goals:

- Employers will embrace Oregon's school transformation and educate their employees about it.
- Employers will help educators redesign school systems to align with the state's new academic and career-related standards.
- Employers will value certificates of mastery in their hiring practices.

- Employers will forge relationships with schools and open their doors to provide work-based learning experiences for students and teachers.

Oregon Worksite 21 shows employers the value of education partnerships and school-to-career in addressing workforce development needs, community relations goals, and long-term business competitiveness. It helps employers develop education plans addressing those goals, and, once plans are in place, provides technical assistance, training, and appropriate implementation and evaluation tools. It connects employers with schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, then helps ensure that partnerships are productive and mutually beneficial.

The nine members of the Worksite 21 board of directors represent a cross-section of prominent Oregon employers and have strong backgrounds related to business-education partnerships. Currently, they are: Marcy Eastham, Hewlett-Packard (chair); Duncan Wyse, Oregon Business Council (Vice Chair); Corene Bennett, PG&E Gas Transmission; Don Brown, Providence Health System; Tom Eder, A-Dec, Inc.; Jim Harper, Multnomah County; Judy Hughes, PacifiCorp (retired); Paula Ordway, Bank of America; and Larry Sears, Portland General Electric.

### Worksite 21 and Services to Oregon Employers

Oregon Worksite 21's services to employers strengthen existing school-to-career efforts and recruit more employers to participate in them. Its long-term goal is to transform public education through the integration of school-to-career into the routines of a first-class educational system.

One of the primary school-to-career tenets is that each partner must engage in experiences that are consistent with and supported by its priorities and needs. Oregon Worksite 21 helps employers link school-to-career participation to their individual situation. It works with employers to choose the most appropriate activities for promoting and enhancing employer partnerships with schools.

Since 1996, Oregon Worksite 21 has created a number of projects that help employers establish or strengthen such relationships between employers and schools in local communities, and it also helps locally based intermediaries build their own capacity to engage employers in school-to-career and other education partnerships. These projects span five categories of activity:

- Advocacy and networking;
- Communications materials;

- Training materials;
- Consulting assistance for employers; and
- Measurement of results.

### Advocacy and Networking

To date, 32 Oregon companies have appointed coordinators to help create and implement school-to-career strategies and work with schools on curricula, industry-related standards, professional development of educators, and other elements of school transformation. Through such activities as quarterly regional meetings of employers' school-to-career coordinators, Oregon Worksite 21 facilitates networking among the coordinators in OBC companies, introduces them to new technical assistance tools, and enables them to share best practices.

Employers and the coordinators value these opportunities to share information, including case histories of successful school-employer partnerships, and consider them necessary to building capacity. The program's strengths lie in the credibility and peer influence that a business-led effort has with employers and the leverage employers have to insist that schools link school-to-career programs with the high standards embodied in Oregon's school reforms.

### Communications Materials

Worksite 21's growing library of communications materials on education transformation and effective partnership practices can be customized for individual businesses and organizations and assembled into briefing packets containing fact sheets and articles that can be reprinted in internal newsletters. Eighteen fact sheets cover such topics as Oregon's education reform goals; frequently asked questions about liability, child labor laws, and other issues connected with having students in the workplace; and principles for setting up successful school-to-career experiences. Company-based school-to-career coordinators have found the fact sheets to be a valuable tool in recruiting managers and staff to host students and teachers in the workplace.

In addition, the Worksite 21 Web site describes Worksite 21 services, highlights Corporate Champions and best practices among OBC companies, and provides links to other resources. Users can download sample reports, presentations, fact sheets, and training materials. The site averages 2,700 hits a month.

## Training Materials

In 1999, Oregon Worksite 21 created The Bigger Picture, a set of tools to prepare employees for working with students and teachers. The project came about as a result of Worksite 21's consulting with companies to enhance their participation in school-to-career activities. It found that the firms' employees were typically enthusiastic about helping local schools—but were often intimidated by the prospect of working directly with students and teachers.

The Bigger Picture is designed to help employees feel more confident about working with schools and to discover how to make the most of school-to-career learning experiences. The tools help employees learn how to: 1) mentor educators through site visits and teacher internships; and 2) mentor students through job shadows, internships, classroom speaking, and school projects.

The Bigger Picture has two components—a CD-ROM and a guidebook—both of which explain activities, clarify roles and responsibilities, and provide employees with the nuts and bolts of what they need to succeed as mentors. The Bigger Picture CD is an interactive, multimedia presentation; employees can use it to find out more about school-to-career on their own and to design effective school-to-career experiences for students and teachers. The Bigger Picture Guidebook provides materials that employers need to create and deliver workshops that help prepare employees for school-to-career learning experiences.

The guidebook is designed to be used primarily by a facilitator—a human resources staff person, for example—who prepares his or her colleagues to work with students and teachers. It can also be used by a range of community partners: Chamber of Commerce members, educational service district representatives, and schools and other organizations that partner with employers to connect employees with students and teachers.

To develop The Bigger Picture, Oregon Worksite 21 convened a large number of individuals, companies, and organizations. For 18 months, they contributed as part of the design team, as hosts and participants in pilot workshops, and as members of a review team. Oregon Worksite 21 also raised funds for the project, drawing on a variety of sources. The National School-to-Work Office provided a substantial portion of the budget, with additional funds provided by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Office of Professional Technical Education, Oregon Department of Education.

## Consulting Assistance for Employers

An innovative direct-consulting-assistance model focused on employer-

school partnerships is the result of Worksite 21's work with OBC members to develop education partnership strategies that align with company goals. Two firms, Intel and Legacy Health System, have developed education plans documenting their philosophies, resources, current initiatives, and school partnerships. Oregon Worksite 21 has also prepared a comprehensive plan for Multnomah County, a large public-sector employer. Completed in May 1999, this plan links to the county's long-term community goals. It is also designed to leverage internal resources and provide opportunities for a broad base of the county's 4,500 employees to participate in an appropriate range of school-to-career activities.

### Measuring Results

The Barometer of Education Reform and School-to-Career Activity is an OBC/Worksite 21 tool for quantifying employer involvement in activities ranging from classroom speakers, to job shadows, to teacher internships. The most recent Barometer shows that OBC member companies reached over 95,000 students and teachers in 1998-99 through school-to-career opportunities, with steady growth each year since OBC introduced the tool in 1996.

The Barometer helps an individual firm assess progress in meeting its school-to-career goals. Employers are also better able to understand and acknowledge school-to-career activities taking place within their companies and through their employees' volunteer efforts. Moreover, employers can use the Barometer in establishing short- and long-term goals compatible with their corporate missions and overall school-to-career objectives.

When combined with results for all OBC companies, the Barometer documents the progress of Oregon's most influential employers in engaging in school-to-career efforts. This helps stimulate such activity among other Oregon employers and encourages their support for higher standards in education. It also helps Oregon Worksite 21 understand how best to assist employers with expanding local and statewide school-to-career systems.

### Supporting Local Employer-Education Partnerships

In several communities, the Oregon Business Council and Oregon Worksite 21 have played a more direct role in local education reform, such as conducting analyses in Washington and Multnomah counties of the number of work-based learning experiences that the schools would need. Also, in the first few years after the enactment of the state education reform legislation, OBC partnered with David Douglas High School in a pilot program to help advance reform at the school-building level. The effort helped show how employers could effectively help educators design and implement school-to-

career learning experiences across the six career pathways called for in the legislation.

Oregon Worksite 21's most active local partnership has been in North Clackamas, a suburb of Portland. Worksite 21 expects this effort to provide a rich source of best practices for future work in other communities.

The North Clackamas School District formally began its school-to-career initiative in 1994, creating the Office of Work-Based Learning to implement a comprehensive, K-12 work-based learning program for all students. That same year, the school board adopted a five-year Work-Based Learning Strategic Plan, focused on expanding the work-based learning opportunities available to students, including job shadows, apprenticeships, and internships. These initiatives placed the district on a fast track toward the priorities in the 1991 education reform legislation, which tied reform to workforce development and identified specific content and performance standards for student achievement.

In North Clackamas, Oregon Worksite 21 has begun to play an important role, helping the district to move toward implementing career-related learning experiences on a large scale. This becomes especially significant as North Clackamas seeks to enable all juniors and seniors to benefit from work-based learning and other career-related learning experiences.

Oregon Worksite 21 sees its role in North Clackamas as two-fold:

- To assist in the design of the district's career-related programs to ensure that they make sense from the employer point of view; and
- To promote and enhance employer involvement with the school district.

These efforts are now in the design phase. As those plans move into implementation, the contributions of Oregon Worksite 21 will help the North Clackamas School District reach its own goals, including:

- Implementing rigorous learning standards for all students;
- Providing authentic assessments that measure what students know and can do;
- Developing quality, career-related learning experiences that are linked to classroom learning; and
- Building and sustaining business and community partnerships to provide relevant learning experiences for all students.

## **Achievements**

The commitment of the Oregon Business Council and other business leaders to education significantly contributed to the 1991 enactment of the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century. Since then, the council has been critical to preserving and implementing this legislation.

Recognizing a serious mismatch between what students learn and what they will need to know as successful adults, the Oregon Business Council actively supports reform that makes classroom education more relevant and helps young people see that what they learn in the classroom connects with what they will need to know later in life. It further emphasizes reforms that provide clear transitions to postsecondary education, advanced training, and career employment and that achieve the necessary scale to provide work-based learning opportunities for all students.

OBC has helped set the stage for a statewide school-to-career system and the provision of work-based learning opportunities to large numbers of young people.

OBC companies provided over 95,000 learning opportunities to students and teachers in 1998-99. OBC companies and other employers have been particularly active in offering school-to-career opportunities to Portland-area students.

To facilitate and enhance employer participation in school-to-career, OBC created Oregon Worksite 21. Worksite 21, in turn, is demonstrating how to move a comprehensive, statewide school-to-career system to scale while ensuring the depth and quality of the learning experiences supported by employers. In three years, Oregon Worksite 21 has created:

- An innovative direct-consulting-assistance model focused on employer-school partnerships;
- The Bigger Picture and other school-to-career training materials for employees; and
- A growing library of communication materials on education transformation and effective partnership practices.

## **The Future: Plans, Priorities, and Challenges**

To meet increased demand for its services, Oregon Worksite 21 is engaged in a structural transformation.

Initially a non-profit subsidiary of OBC, Oregon Worksite 21 was restructured in 1998 as a separate organization to expand its fundraising and service base. OBC members made an initial pledge of \$200,000 to Oregon Worksite 21 and also support the program through leadership and advocacy. The pledges, which are in addition to OBC membership dues, provide concrete evidence of corporate commitment to the new organization.

Oregon Worksite 21 has initially concentrated its consulting services on OBC companies, and the organizations will remain closely aligned. In the second phase, which began in 1999, OBC is reaching out to non-OBC companies, industry associations, chambers of commerce, public-sector employers, and smaller communities around the state. Eventually, OBC plans to actively include state and local agencies and communities in its circle of assistance. For example, after seeing the benefits for private-sector employers, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners elected to contract with Oregon Worksite 21 to develop its comprehensive education plan.

Oregon Worksite 21's long-term goal is to transform public education with a statewide school-to-career program. For students in grades 9-12, this will require an estimated 70,000 community-based learning experiences each year. Employers of all kinds—large and small, public and private, urban, suburban, and rural—will have to be involved.

As schools gear up the demand side of community-based learning (better structures and more-prepared students), employers will need to increase the supply side (job shadows, worksite tours, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities). An OBC analysis suggests that thousands of students will need community-based learning experiences each year, just to meet minimum goals. Getting to that scale is a daunting task.

Oregon Worksite 21 is developing ways to expand employer involvement beyond the OBC base of large employers. The role of major employers as stakeholders in education is critical to maintaining momentum in school-to-career and enacting systemic change, and individual firms have been great champions of reform and catalysts for engaging their peers throughout the state. But Oregon will need to engage a much larger share of its employers in education reform if transformation is to reach all students, and in small districts, small employers carry the load. Smaller employers will need technical assistance to get started, and all employers, large and small, benefit from cooperative efforts that help them develop successful strategies and learn from one another.

Oregon Worksite 21 must address two issues as it expands its efforts statewide: 1) the quality of community-based learning experiences; and 2) coordination to ensure that these experiences align with classroom curricula and prepare students to meet the state's new achievement standards.

In 2000, Oregon Worksite 21 is planning three projects that address those issues: 1) statewide community outreach; 2) raising awareness of the value of higher academic standards; and 3) leveraging corporate training resources.

**Statewide Community Outreach:** With funding from the Oregon Community Foundation and Bank of America, Oregon Worksite 21 has begun a project to provide outreach and technical assistance to train adult mentors for work with students and teachers. In several communities, the project will deliver train-the-trainer sessions centered on The Bigger Picture, bringing the tool to several communities for workshops, individual demonstrations, and consulting. Oregon Worksite 21 is in the process of choosing at least six communities to participate, based on their readiness for and interest in promoting school-community partnerships.

**Valuing Higher Academic Standards:** This project, aligned with community outreach, will create a "menu" of activities that provide a more direct, more visible link between higher standards and career success. It will address the lack of understanding among students and educators of the value of the state's new Certificate of Mastery and related applied learning experiences. At the same time, it will help companies recognize the value of the higher standards and Oregon Worksite 21's efforts to support business-education partnerships.

**Leveraging Corporate Training Resources:** This project will focus on making corporate training resources available to school administrators and teachers. Worksite 21 will convene a small group of employers and education representatives to share potential offerings and prioritize key areas of interest. Worksite 21 will then convene key human resources and training staff from OBC companies to determine larger interest and opportunities for participation, identify and pilot training opportunities, and convene employers and others to share results.

As Oregon's K-12 reforms proceed, OBC will pay increasing attention to postsecondary education.

Since 1991, implementation of Oregon's education reforms has focused on K-12 education, yet a growing economy and changes in the workplace are intensifying the skill and knowledge levels demanded by employers. For recent college graduates and for workers already employed, higher education is the key to employment security, higher pay, and expanded career

opportunities.

OBC has created a vision for higher education, supported by “Legislative Action Steps” that it will promote among member companies, to other employers, and to the public. For example, part of OBC’s vision is that “Oregon’s higher education institutions will be especially strong in engineering and computer science.” To help achieve this, OBC supports the allocation of an additional \$20 million in the state’s 1999-2001 budget to fund postsecondary engineering, computer science, and technical education.

### **Key Lessons**

Through a decade of intensive experience in school-to-career and education reform, the Oregon Business Council and, since 1996, Oregon Worksite 21 have learned a great deal about what it takes to assist employers and educators in developing a common understanding, well-aligned goals, and successful partnership strategies.

School-to-career support systems for employers should begin by addressing employer and employee understanding of the benefits to competitiveness, promoting a company-wide buy-in for partnerships with education.

After the why of school-to-career is clearly understood, support systems can address the what and how of school-to-career programs and projects. An employer’s school-to-career plan and overall mission must be compatible: companies need school-to-career strategies that help them meet their own bottom line goals. For example, one of OBC’s health system members often states that school-to-career is “the right thing to do” because it contributes to the health of the community in ways that are compatible with the company values. Several of OBC’s high-tech member companies particularly value school-to-career projects that relate to their immediate workforce needs.

With company-wide buy-in, employer support for school-to-career can be broad and deep. It is imperative that top management support the involvement of middle managers and their staffs in the day-to-day activities of school-to-career. Those actually hosting students in job shadows, mentorships, and internships receive personal satisfaction from working with teachers and young people, but they want to know that the firm considers the time they spend a valuable and legitimate part of their job.

As statewide intermediaries for connecting employers and schools, the Oregon Business Council and Oregon Worksite 21 provide clear, consistent goals that are a prerequisite to effective, sustainable education-workplace partnerships.

Oregon aims to achieve a world-class education system, with high academic standards, new assessments, and community-based learning opportunities that make academic learning more meaningful. Through The Oregon Agenda, the Oregon Business Council brings employer concerns into the process, with a long-term vision for transforming both K-12 and higher education. In preparing that overarching policy statement, the council convened teams of business leaders to answer key questions: What is our vision? How do we measure success? Why is it important? What will it take to achieve the vision? What should the legislature do?

The Oregon Business Council and Oregon Worksite 21 provide a noteworthy leadership model: the employer community is taking responsibility for supporting Oregon school reform, higher standards, school-to-career, and partnerships with schools. Yet, as statewide organizations, they strive to avoid duplicating the efforts of other regional and local intermediaries. For example, Worksite 21 does not match individual students to employers. Rather, the Oregon Business Council and Oregon Worksite 21 focus on mobilizing employers and preparing them to make strategic contributions to partnerships with schools.

As the experience of these two statewide intermediaries shows, it takes time to strike the right match between employers and schools, to overcome the barriers to bringing together people from two diverse cultures. Fostering effective, sustainable partnerships is, in fact, one of the biggest challenges to the success of school-to-career systems—and perhaps the most important contribution of Oregon Business Council and Oregon Worksite 21.

### **Acknowledgements/For More Information**

This case study was prepared by Marc S. Miller of Jobs for the Future, with assistance from Oregon Worksite 21 Executive Director René Leger, OBC President Duncan Wyse, and Karen Phillips of the North Clackamas School District.

The Web sites of Oregon Worksite 21 and the Oregon Business Council contain a great deal of information on these organizations, Oregon's school reform, and school-to-career in general. Many of these resources can be downloaded or ordered, including: Oregon Worksite 21: Fact Sheet Library; Oregon Worksite 21: Innovative Consulting Assistance for Oregon Employers Engaging in School-to-Career; Education Transformation in Clackamas,

Multnomah and Washington Counties: A Masterwork in Progress; and  
National Research: Responding to A Nation At Risk. The Web site  
[www.Worksite21.org](http://www.Worksite21.org) ordering information for The Bigger Picture.