

THE CASE FOR A HIGH QUALITY, FULL-TIME ACADEMIC CAREER/TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL IN NORFOLK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Greater Norfolk Corporation

PREMISE

Too many students across the country and here in Norfolk are losing interest in education and not graduating on time or at all. In addition, many who do graduate lack the skills and work ethic needed for many jobs that pay a middle-class wage.

Given that, the question school districts and communities across the country are pondering is how to engage students in learning and motivate them to graduate on time with the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful in the 21st century work force.

We are convinced that there is a proven model that can *increase student engagement and in so doing, reduce the dropout rate and increase on-time graduation; strengthen achievement and prepare young people for success in postsecondary education and the workplace; a model that focuses on rigor, relevance and relationships* and that is a **comprehensive, full-time career/technical high school**.

A high quality, comprehensive full-time career/technical high school like Worcester Technical High School in Worcester, Mass. blends rigorous academic studies with equally demanding career/technical education studies and creates career pathways/programs of study designed to help students apply academic knowledge and skills to current and projected employment. Young people who struggle to find meaning in traditional academic classrooms often thrive when they are asked to tackle authentic projects and solve problems, which is what we found during our site visits to Worcester Technical High School. Students see the relevance of what they learn in the classroom to the real world. Close, effective partnerships with local industries are critical to this success. The results speak for themselves:

KEY COMPARATIVE METRICS

	Norfolk Public Schools		Worcester Tech HS (2012)
On-Time Graduation Rate	76%		96.4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Americans • Low Income 			96.8% 95.3%
Drop Out Rate	4.38%		1.5%
Attendance Rate	89%		95%

The MetLife Foundation and the National Association of Secondary Principals named Worcester Technical High School a Breakthrough School for 2011, one of ten middle level and high schools recognized nationally that are high achieving or are dramatically improving student achievement and serve large numbers of students in poverty. Worcester Technical High School was the only vocational technical school selected in the country.

In 2012, Worcester Technical High School was featured on the TODAY Show as part of NBC News' *Education Nation*, a year round initiative to engage the country in a solution focused conversation about the state of education in America. Worcester Technical High School was one of ten *Education Nation* case studies that highlight communities that have implemented focused and innovative solutions and have achieved demonstrable success as a result.

COMPREHENSIVE HIGH-QUALITY CAREER/TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL - KEY ATTRIBUTES

- *High expectations and standards for all - all students WILL succeed
- *Rigorous academics - all students enrolled in college-prep academic curriculum
- *High-quality career/technical courses in high demand fields
- *Strong and continuing partnerships with local industries
- *Commitment to providing students the extra help they need
- *Academic subject teachers and technical study teachers collaborating together - curriculum is based on integrating CTE and academics in a single class; i.e. "techademics" - CTE teachers are expected to be able to teach academically rigorous course material embedded in a given subject and academic teachers are expected to know how the knowledge can be applied
- *Students actively engaged in their education with a sense of purpose
- *Enhanced counseling/guidance
- *Dual enrollment at local community college
- * Emphasis on work-based/project-based learning; i.e. immersion in application
- *Internship/job shadowing/apprenticeship opportunities
- *Strong leadership
- *Partnerships with community colleges and universities
- *Feeder system
- *Emphasis on high academic standards, teamwork and motivation

POTENTIAL "ANCHORS" FOR A COMPREHENSIVE, FULL-TIME CAREER/TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL IN NORFOLK

Norfolk and the Hampton Roads region have a number of potential anchors and all the ingredients needed for success, including:

- *One of the largest concentrations of federal facilities in the country, including the world's largest Naval Base
- *Sentara Healthcare, the largest integrated healthcare provider in the State, as well as the Bon Secours Hampton Roads Health Care System and Eastern Virginia Medical School
- *A nationally recognized Community College, Tidewater Community College
- *Nation's largest shipyard and Virginia's largest industrial employer, Newport News Shipbuilding
- *Largest concentration of naval ship repair and marine subcontracting facilities in the country, including Norfolk Naval Shipyard
- *A growing Modeling & Simulation Industry
- *An engaged private sector, including the Greater Norfolk Corporation and organizations such as Opportunity Inc., Hampton Road's Workforce Development Board and the Virginia Ship Repair Association

