

*A Strategy Session for Achieve American Diploma Project (ADP) Network States  
Moving From Some to All:  
Upgrading Graduation Requirements for All Students*

*The Adolphus Hotel, Dallas, Texas  
February 8-9, 2007*

**Expert Faculty**

- ✓ Susan Bodary, former Executive Assistant, Governor Bob Taft
- ✓ Alex Harris, Senior Policy Analyst, Education Division, National Governors Association
- ✓ Phyllis Hudecki, Executive Director, Oklahoma Business Education Coalition
- ✓ Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education
- ✓ Linda Murray, Superintendent in Residence, The Education Trust-West
- ✓ Cheryl Orr, Senior Communications Associate, Indiana Commission for Higher Education
- ✓ Todd Webster, former Public Education Advisor, Governor Perry

**Agenda**

**February 8, 2007**

**5:30 – 6:30 pm      Reception**

**6:30 – 8:00 pm      Working Dinner**

Matt Gandal: Overview of What States Have Done to Date  
Ken James: The Arkansas Story  
Cheryl Orr: The Indiana Story  
Todd Webster: The Texas Story

**February 9, 2007**

**7:30 - 8:00 am      Breakfast**

**8:00 – 9:30 am      Defining College- and Work-Ready Graduation Requirements**

- ✓ What does “core” mean? (courses, skills, number of courses, required vs. voluntary)
- ✓ Relationship with state standards, assessment, accountability, data systems, etc.
- ✓ Tying incentives in addition to/instead of the diploma (e.g., financial aid/scholarships, admissions, placement, exemptions from required classes)
- ✓ Default/opt-out provisions and multiple pathways to achieve the standards (e.g. CTE)
- ✓ Building school capacity and student safety nets

**9:30 – 11:30 am      Common Challenges and Areas of Resistance  
(Break Into Two Groups)**

### *Common Challenges*

- ✓ Funding (direct and indirect costs; state vs. local responsibility)
- ✓ Not just more/different courses, but better courses
- ✓ Increasing teaching quality
- ✓ Counting and valuing non-traditional courses and school designs (e.g. applied/project-based/experiential learning; CTE courses)
- ✓ Identifying new delivery methods for advanced courses (e.g. online, AP, dual enrollment)
- ✓ Required vs. recommended/voluntary; voluntary as a path to mandatory
- ✓ Ensuring a broad-based high school curriculum

### *Common Concerns*

Higher graduation standards:

- ✓ Are a local, not state, issue
- ✓ Aren't necessary for all students
- ✓ Will decrease graduation rates
- ✓ Will push out the arts and other electives
- ✓ Will push out career and technical education
- ✓ Will require too much math and science for all students

**11:30am – 12:15pm                      Networking Lunch**

**12:15pm – 1:45pm                      Effective Advocacy Strategies to Enact the ADP Core**

- ✓ Build urgency
- ✓ Identify all relevant stakeholders (supporters and opponents)
- ✓ Enlist support of key influencers and constituencies
- ✓ Identify and compile case-making arguments, research and state-specific data
- ✓ Identify resistance points and proactively address concerns
- ✓ Develop and implement a supportive grassroots and grass tops communications plan
- ✓ Be prepared to negotiate on the details
- ✓ Consider a phase-in approach: voluntary vs. mandatory; incentives tied to completion

**1:45pm – 2:30pm                      State Team Planning: Next Steps and Action Strategies**

- ✓ What policy issues and challenges are most salient in our state?
- ✓ What needs to happen in our state to raise graduation standards? When?
- ✓ Who needs to champion the agenda? Who needs to do the work to get it done?
- ✓ Who is likely to support the agenda? Who is likely to oppose it? What information, tools and strategies will address legitimate concerns and/or help blunt opposition?
- ✓ What data, resources, information, strategies and tools do we need? What do we already have and what do we need to get? From whom?
- ✓ How can Achieve and other states in the ADP Network help?
- ✓ What follow-up from this meeting would be most useful?

**2:30pm                                      Wrap Up**