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Allies in Education

A Profile of:

**New Horizons
Richmond, Virginia**

September 1987

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A Profile of:

**New Horizons
Richmond, Virginia**

by Phyllis Snyder

September 1987

THE SCHOOL/BUSINESS COLLABORATIONS STUDY

This profile of New Horizons is part of an assessment by Public/Private Ventures of partnerships between business and education. The three-year study was funded by The CIGNA Foundation, The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, The Exxon Education Foundation, The IBM Corporation, The Pew Memorial Trust, and The Rockefeller Foundation. The assessment addressed three basic issues:

- o What is the nature of school/business collaborations? What achievements are expected?
- o What types of youth are served by these collaborative efforts?
- o What role does business play in the collaborations? How did business get involved? Why does it continue to be involved?

Public/Private Ventures has published Allies in Education: Schools and Businesses Working Together for At-Risk Youth, a two-year volume report these central questions. Profiles of nine different partnerships assessed as part of this project are included in the report's second volume.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE VENTURES

Public/Private Ventures is a not-for-profit corporation that designs, manages and evaluates social policy initiatives designed to help disadvantaged people, especially youth, become productively employed and self-sufficient.

To achieve that goal, P/PV works with schools, government, employment and training organizations, community-based agencies, foundations and business in a variety of ways:

- o We design new strategies to remedy such pressing problems as the high dropout rate, illiteracy and youth unemployment.
- o We evaluate the effectiveness of programs designed to confront these problems.
- o We conduct multisite national demonstrations to rigorously test promising new solutions.
- o We help the public and private sectors replicate initiatives that have proven effective.

From all our work, we distill the best practices and most significant research findings, and actively promote their use in the development of sound public policy.

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I. INTRODUCTION

New Horizons, a Partnership Project located in Richmond, Virginia, is a Private Industry Council-based program to prepare 11th and 12th grade economically disadvantaged youth for the world of work. The program's primary goal is to enable the youth to obtain employment or to continue their education after high school graduation. Program components include a combination of paid employment, remediation and life skills classes and careful on-the-job supervision.

New Horizons, which has been in existence since 1980, serves 50 to 70 high school youth annually. The target population is students who have completed the sophomore year of high school, have attended school a minimum of 80 percent of the time, have attained a "C" average, and meet the income eligibility requirements of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). Funding to launch the program came from The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation. Although the project has remained small and relatively unheralded in its home environment, it has been frequently visited by outsiders and widely replicated throughout the country. Its key features include the following:

- o A youth participates for 24 months, including two summers and two school years;
- o During the two summers, program offerings include basic skills and employability classes during the morning and employment in the afternoon at a job students continue to hold for the duration of the program;
- o During the two school years, students attend one life skills class every day after completing their academic classes at one of Richmond's three high schools and prior to leaving for work;
- o Curricula for the classes are well-developed and include both remediation and life skills preparation;
- o The pupil/teacher ratio is low, allowing teachers and supervisors to provide individual attention to participants;
- o The program involves the collaboration and participation of several organizations: the PIC, member organizations, the school district and a local university; and

- o The program has hired and retained a committed core staff.

This profile describes the program's goals, origins, context, structure, key features and outcomes, emphasizing factors that strengthen or weaken the program. Information for the case study was gathered by a two-member research team during three days of both focused and unstructured interviews, on-site observations and review of documentary materials during the spring of 1985.

II. CONTEXT AND HISTORY

ORIGINS

Planning for the New Horizons program began in the late 1970s, and when its first students enrolled in 1980, it was a new effort for Richmond--one that did not build on an existing program. The program was planned by the Private Industry Council Director, Frances Rosi, with substantial assistance from Ruby Martin, a lawyer who was then associated with Youthwork, a nonprofit corporation established to help implement the Youth Employment Act of 1977.

Martin had visited and been impressed by the Success on the Move program in Oakland, a work/education program initiated by the Kaiser Corporation to assist disadvantaged youth. When Martin received a planning grant from The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to expand the model and replicate the Kaiser program throughout the country, her home city of Richmond became the site of the first replication. However, the involvement of the new Private Industry Council (PIC) broadened the collaboration to many businesses rather than one, and faculty from Virginia Commonwealth University were involved in planning the curriculum.

GOALS

The primary goal of New Horizons was and continues to be to help youth make a successful transition from school to work. The program was also designed to harmonize with other goals of the schools and businesses that play significant roles in the program. The conflict for primacy among different priorities has created problems for the program that will be discussed in detail at a later point.

The New Horizons' brochure emphasizes business' role in shaping program goals: "... a unique work/study undertaking designed by Richmond businessmen to provide year-round employment for Richmond-area high school students while training them to find and hold jobs."

The program does not seek to teach students specific skills required for specific jobs but, rather, the general skills and appropriate attitudes required to enter and function in the workplace. According to the program's administrators, many participants come from homes where neither parent works; therefore, they may never have been exposed to a model of appropriate work behavior.

During the summer classes, New Horizons seeks to strengthen the students' education in computation, reading and writing. The

program also seeks to make the students understand the importance of improving these basic skills in order to obtain and keep a job or to continue their education.

IMPLEMENTATION

Business Role

Members of the Private Industry Council were involved in the planning and design of New Horizons in order to ensure that it would address business' perceived needs and be taken seriously by the business community. Galen DeGraff, the Human Resources Director of a large printing company in Richmond and a member of the PIC, took charge of the PIC Training Committee that planned New Horizons. According to his account, the planners were able to obtain job commitments from the private sector because the chairman of the PIC Board, William Zimmer, chief executive officer of A. H. Robins at that time, was able to wield clout within the community sufficient to convince other business executives to commit jobs to New Horizons students. Funds were available under CETA to start the program's operation and business was asked to make a relatively small contribution of jobs.

Business originally agreed to participate in the program largely out of a sense of civic responsibility. The rate of teenage unemployment was high at the time the program began, up to 20 percent in some sections of the city. Also, since the schools had been losing population, the business community may have felt the need to do something to help enhance the public schools' reputation. Participation in the development of New Horizons stemmed from a growing perception on the part of the executives of local companies that they had a responsibility to assist the Richmond schools, because of the importance of the schools to the quality of life in their city. New Horizons gave business the opportunity to respond to the schools' needs through a vehicle that promised easy and responsive operation.

The goals of those business people who were involved in planning and implementing the program initially were to create a program that would:

- o Provide better workers for local business,
- o Diminish the difficulty business had previously experienced in dealing with the public sector,
- o Be organized according to business' criteria, and
- o Produce a "viable product," according to Dan Polk, Vice President of the Sovran Bank and a PIC

member involved in New Horizons from the beginning.

The program's literature emphasizes how business benefits from its participation in New Horizons. The following benefits are highlighted: better entry-level employees, no-cost training, the ability to select employees, lack of red tape, employer input and no wasteful spending. The directors of the program define their primary goal as preparing students for private sector jobs, a goal congruent with the needs of Richmond's businesses.

School District Role

A significant aspect of the planning process was that no one from the school district appears to have played a key role in shaping the program. It was a project developed by the PIC, local business and Ruby Martin. School personnel were enlisted, and they cooperated; however, the school has not been the primary focus of the partnership or the primary administrative body. The relationship with the school system has remained cooperative. The Director of Guidance Services, Ellen Chewning, has been a strong supporter and advocate since program inception.

Although the Richmond School District had operated other programs that included work components, such as cooperative education and distributive education, local businesses did not regard them highly. Furthermore, the community's confidence in the schools had been lessening as changes took place following desegregation. The school population had become increasingly black as white families moved out of the city and put their children in private schools.

III. PROGRAM STRUCTURE

MANAGEMENT

Although New Horizons has a full-time staff, the several organizations involved in the operation of the program also play specific roles. This section describes how each organization contributes to the program.

New Horizons is administered in the offices of the Richmond Private Industry Council. It has a separate staff that is housed in PIC offices, uses PIC stationery, and consults regularly with the director of the PIC. Other participating organizations in the partnership are the private businesses that hire the New Horizons students; Virginia Commonwealth University, whose faculty designed the curriculum; J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College which houses the summer program; and the Richmond Public School District, which provides teachers of the New Horizons courses both during the summer and the school year.

New Horizons has two full-time staff members responsible for operating the program--Jona McKee, the director, and Lisa Mahlandt, the education coordinator. McKee has been with the program since its inception and has developed a good relationship with the business community as well as with the schools. The small program size enables him to get to know each participant well; the close relationship helps him to choose placements that are appropriate and also to check that the youth continue to do their school work once they're working. Mahlandt joined New Horizons in 1985. In addition to her responsibility for the educational aspect of the program, she also drives several students to work each day because they cannot get there by public transportation or school van.

The teachers, of whom there are generally two at each of the three high schools, assist in the development and revision of the curricula for both school-year and summer classes. Several of the teachers have been part of New Horizons since it began, and they help to promote the program in the schools. Ellen Chewing has helped work out necessary arrangements with the school district.

Business Role

Business continues to be the source of jobs and of funding for youth salaries. New Horizons is a program that makes it easy for business to do something for the community. In the words of one of the employment coordinators at Sovran Bank, "New Horizons is a convenient way to do something for the community because it has a buffer, control and follow-up."

New Horizons asks business to contribute jobs, to pay the students filling the jobs, and to provide some released time for supervisors to train, monitor and evaluate students. The students sent to businesses are generally eager to learn and ready to take on the responsibilities that the company defines. When the rare problem arises, the company supervisor or coordinator, who serves as the contact person at the business, calls McKee immediately.

A core group of businesses has been involved since the inception of the program; each business generally hires between three and six students per year. Prominent among them are the Sovran Bank, United Virginia Bank and Blue Cross. Of the 17 businesses employing youth in the 1984-1985 school year, approximately half have been involved since the first year. Recruitment of new businesses is done by the PIC director with McKee. Turnover of participating businesses has resulted from economic problems, inappropriate job requirements or inappropriate hours.

Businesses' only role in the continuing operation of the program is through the hiring of students and the evaluation of their work by supervisors. There is no regular meeting of the CEOs of the companies involved and there does not seem to be a vehicle for them to collectively appraise or reevaluate their participation in the program. Corporate dissatisfaction is expressed by dropping out of the program. Program administrators consult with the teachers, with the director of the PIC, and with Frances Rosi and Ruby Martin who have used the Richmond program as a model for developing a network of Partnership Projects throughout the country. Yet, there does not appear to be anyone within the Richmond business community who advises the director and his assistant on the continuing development and operation of the program.

Despite the substantial contribution of business at the outset, and continued supervision and job development through the PIC, no oversight body was built into the structure to provide for continuing involvement of the private sector. The perception, particularly by CEOs, that their company's contribution consisted solely of jobs and supervisors' time has continued to characterize the program and may, in fact, have been an impediment to its growth.

School District Role

The Richmond School District supplies both students and teachers for the program. Fifty-nine percent of Richmond's students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and 88 percent of the school population is black. In the high schools, the percentage increases to over 90 percent since it is at that point that many white parents place their children in private schools. About

half of public high school graduates plan to continue their formal education.

Business perception of the graduates of the Richmond School District is that they receive adequate education; the supervisors we questioned said they hired most of their new employees, particularly for entry-level jobs, from the schools. However, the business community believes, as do school administrators to whom we spoke, that the academic preparation of students in the schools is not as strong as it once was. Even the cooperative education program is having trouble finding enough qualified students to fill available slots.

IV. KEY FEATURES AND OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM

The New Horizons 24-month program encompasses two summers and the last two years of the student's high school career. A few students are accepted for senior year only. Once a student is accepted into the program, he/she begins to work individually with a New Horizons teacher to prepare to interview for summer jobs toward the end of the sophomore year. Some students are still unprepared to begin working, so job interviewing and placement continues during the first month of the summer program between the sophomore and junior years. During the summer, students attend classes four mornings a week for eight weeks at J. Sargeant Reynolds Junior College and work in the afternoon. During the school year, the students take three regular courses, attend a special New Horizons class during fourth period, and then work for four hours each day of the week at the job they began during the first summer.

Instructional Component of the Program

The instructional component was designed to achieve several goals:

- o To prepare the students for the world of work;
- o To strengthen their basic competencies; and
- o To provide certain life skills.

The curriculum was originally developed by Dr. Thomas Hephner of Virginia Commonwealth University. As the program evolved, classroom teachers at each of the high schools saw areas where students needed help--based on classroom work or their observation of students at the workplace--and developed new units of the curriculum.

During the summer, classes are conducted in the morning. The teachers focus on improving speaking and listening skills, increasing developmental competencies in reading and writing, strengthening mathematic abilities and skills, and teaching the youth to apply problem-solving skills to personal, social and career decisions in their lives. Training in computer skills was introduced during the 1984 summer program.

The school year curriculum for the fourth period New Horizons class includes topics such as: the five steps to finding a job, budgeting, employee rights, how to file income tax forms, assertive behavior and consumer rights. Students also spend time discussing evaluations they received on the job and developing strategies for improving in areas of weakness.

When the program began, little attention was paid to developing "employability skills" such as interviewing, answering the telephone and appropriate office behavior. However, in their reports to teachers, supervisors consistently requested that students learn to speak up and to be more assertive. According to Ellen Chewning, director of Guidance Services, students were so weak in some of these skills that "Jona (the director) took them individually and polished them" during the first year. In response to this need, the curriculum has been revised to emphasize development of students' speaking skills and to enhance their "presence". Students prepare many oral presentations for their class in order to become more comfortable with public speaking. The schools give students academic credit for the work experience; 50 percent of the grade is determined by academic performance and 50 percent by job performance as reflected in the evaluations.

The educational component has not remained static. The curriculum has been modified to address comments made by supervisors and common problems experienced by students on the job. In addition, as job placements changed from the retail sector to the service sector, and as the jobs themselves became primarily secretarial, typing and other skills required for those jobs were added to the curriculum. Another important change from the early years of the program (when the school year class was offered only after school) was the incorporation of the class into the school day so that all students are now able to attend.

Work Experience

Work experience is an essential component of the program and the "carrot" that encourages most students to apply. Although jobs are developed by the New Horizons staff and most jobs have been committed to the program since its inception, several students go out to interview for each job as they would in the labor market; the final hiring decision is made by the employer. The process of matching potential student employees with available jobs is carried out by the two administrators. The businesses are asked what their requirements are and every attempt is made to find students who offer at least some of the skills required. Since the two administrators do seem to know their students well, they are able to match students to appropriate positions.

Work supervisors either volunteer to work with program students or are carefully chosen by the coordinator at the company. Those interviewed for this assessment were pleased to have the opportunity to supervise students and commented favorably on their enthusiasm and hard work. Although some supervisors claimed that other entry-level employees performed better when they began the job, they said the students' learning curve was short and sharp. Very soon, within six weeks to three months, the students were as productive as other entry-level employees. The relationship between youth and supervisors appeared to be warm but busi-

nesslike and did not usually extend beyond the workplace. Supervisors interviewed by P/PV referred to discussions with youth about their current jobs as well as future career plans during the time they were at work.

The youth work 20 hours a week during the school year and are not allowed to work in the afternoon if they have not attended classes in the morning. Students are generally paid minimum wage, though in some companies students have been given raises as they gained experience. However, even those who have received a raise are paid at a far lower hourly rate than full-time entry-level workers hired by the company.

Some supervisors acknowledged the temptation to assign students exclusively to clean-up work, such as accumulated filing or other tasks that no one else wants to do. However, the evaluation form requires that supervisors list the tasks assigned and the skills learned to remind them that students should be learning at the same time that they are working. In addition, New Horizons teachers frequently observe work sites and are in contact with supervisors to ensure that students are performing their work and learning new skills.

Training of Supervisors

New Horizons runs an annual training meeting for supervisors at one of the banks. Experienced supervisors have an opportunity to share their experiences; new ones receive an orientation to their responsibilities as well as a New Horizons booklet describing their role in the program. In addition to working directly with students, a supervisor's only other responsibility is to fill out the evaluation form. Initiative and feedback from supervisors is encouraged by the program administrators; a supervisor who was dissatisfied with the student evaluation form provided a revised form and letter that is now the official form. Supervisors interviewed at several firms commented that New Horizons required far less paperwork than did other similar programs and did not demand much extra time from them.

V. NATURE OF PARTICIPATING YOUTH

TARGET POPULATION

The target population for this program is JTPA-eligible students who are doing reasonably well in school (not less than a "C" average) and have a pattern of regular school attendance. According to Jona McKee, New Horizons does not accept high-risk youth because the program does not have the resources or capability to provide enough remediation or counseling to make such students work-ready. Nor, he feels, would private sector employers be willing to hire such students. Despite the relative success of students accepted for New Horizons, measured by retention in school and passing grades, the program's director believes that they remain at risk of dropping out of school or of joining the unemployed after graduation. Many of the students in the program are in the general track at their high schools, since they did not meet requirements for the college preparatory or the commercial track. The majority would graduate from high school without sufficient preparation either to obtain a well-paying job with opportunity for advancement or to continue their education.

RECRUITMENT

New Horizons serves between 50 and 70 students each year. McKee says that a major reason for the program's inability to grow and serve large numbers of youth is the rigidity of JTPA income-eligibility requirements; many students who fit other targeting criteria and whose family income qualifies them for reduced or free lunch still do not meet the JTPA eligibility requirements.

During the first four years of the program, over 95 percent of the participants were JTPA-eligible. The administrators of the program have begun working with the school district in an attempt to use the school district's in-kind contribution, calculated at \$766 per student per term, to justify inclusion of a percentage of students who do not meet the JTPA standards. Richmond has many high school students who are poor and disadvantaged but whose family incomes are slightly above JTPA levels. If the limit could be stretched, they could be included in the program. In an attempt to estimate the number of students who might qualify for 1985-86 program at a slightly higher eligibility level, it was determined that a total of 721 10th graders qualified for free or reduced-price lunches.

However, examination of the recruiting process indicates that difficulties in recruiting do not result exclusively from JTPA limitations. The guidance counselors who are responsible for recruitment have many other responsibilities; they appear to make perfunctory announcements to the student body and follow up more

intensively with a small sample. The schools have not been saturated with information; many students only hear about the program from friends or family members who may have participated. According to James Bynum, a New Horizons instructor, "Sometimes it seems to be the best kept secret in the Richmond school system."

Another teacher, who had been teaching for several years before she became a member of the New Horizons faculty, had never heard about the program until she was asked to participate. When we asked to see recruitment materials, by which we meant materials left in the school to publicize the program, the only piece of information available was a three-page description attached to a sample application form given to guidance counselors. There were no posters or fliers that would call students' attention to the program.

An additional constraint on recruitment has been the competition for both businesses and students between New Horizons and cooperative and distributive education programs run by the Richmond School District. New Horizons has had an edge over these programs because of its acceptability to many firms usually unwilling to accept high school students. Both the program's access to business and the concern that New Horizons might be attracting students eligible for other programs had created tension between New Horizons and the school district programs. During the fall of 1984, an agreement was worked out by the director of vocational and adult education, the director of the PIC and the supervisor of guidance services. It stipulates that by February 15th of each year counselors will give New Horizons staff a list of all the 10th-grade students who have a grade point average of 2.0 or above and who appear to be economically disadvantaged. It also provided that New Horizons would not attempt to recruit students who put business classes on their tentative schedules and who would be good candidates for the cooperative education program. In addition, it was agreed that students accepted into the New Horizons program would be terminated when it was determined by both the student and the counselor that the student's course schedule would no longer permit him/her to participate or that the student should pursue a sequence of occupational preparation courses and enter into the cooperative education program within the school.

Since this agreement was signed only recently, it is impossible to evaluate how successful it will be in providing a more comfortable relationship between New Horizons and the other programs. It is also hard to predict whether settling this issue will encourage a more aggressive and open recruitment process in the schools.

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH

Over 95 percent of New Horizons students are black, as are the teachers in the program. Approximately two-thirds of the youth are female. All are age 16 and 17, and are in the 11th and 12th grades. When P/PV staff questioned the teachers, the students and the program administrators about the preponderance of females in the program, they suggested several explanations. First, they felt it was easier for boys to find jobs on their own. Second, many of the jobs offered by the program are clerical jobs that would be more likely to appeal to females. Even in companies where both males and females are hired, males were often assigned to stereotypically male entry-level positions, those demanding physical strength or those in mail rooms. Third, since the program has not been widely advertised, much of the recruiting is by word-of-mouth, and this tends to perpetuate the characteristics of current participants.

Once students are accepted, both administrators are extremely vigilant and check report cards each quarter to ensure that youths' grade point averages remain at or above the 2.0 level during the course of the program. If students do not maintain this average, they are given several warnings before they are dropped from the program.

VI. COSTS

The primary source of funding for the 1984-1985 program was \$90,000 in JTPA money administered by the PIC. These funds are used to pay the yearly salaries of the administrative staff, the summer salaries of the teachers and some transportation costs. During the first two weeks on the job, students are given bus fare that they are expected to pay back from their wages. Since a number of jobs are located outside the city and are difficult to reach, the PIC funding also pays for a van to transport students.

Fifteen thousand dollars, contributed by the Reynolds Company in lieu of jobs, is used to subsidize jobs in companies that would not or could not pay student wages; \$5,000 is funneled to the program from the Clark Foundation through Rosi and Martin for publicity and for entertaining the many visitors who come to see the Partnership Program.

Most student wages are covered by the employer. Companies also must subsidize the costs of supervision.

The Richmond School District provides classroom space and pays teachers' salaries during the winter when the New Horizons class is offered for credit within the high schools.

VII. OUTCOMES

OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH

An important benefit of the program is the students' recognition that they can work successfully in corporate environments that they might have been reluctant to enter or have been prevented from entering without the New Horizons experience. Even if they are not hired by the company at the conclusion of the program, the youth are encouraged to return and apply for jobs at some later date. In the words of one of the teachers, they had gained "a head start" on the working world.

Meeting the challenge of a regular job also produces a change in the youths' bearing and poise. They responded clearly and thoughtfully to interview questions after 10 months in the program, despite the fact that when they initially began working, supervisors and teachers reported that they had problems communicating. Related to this is the sense of success that many of these students gained from being appreciated and welcomed within working environments.

Participants also benefit from close and continuing contact with a variety of adults, administrators, teachers and supervisors who are interested in their progress and future plans. The linkage between the life skills classes and the job helps heighten the value of school and reduces the chance of dropping out. In addition, the youths' recognition of the limits of entry-level jobs has shown many of them the need to gain further education to obtain more interesting jobs and to allow them to advance within a company.

The program's retention rate has been good and has remained constant since the program began. The first year of the program there were 32 graduates, the second year, 42; the third year, 40; the fourth year, 34; and the fifth year, 36 graduates. Generally, the summer program begins with 60-70 students, of whom approximately 60 percent are seniors. Seventy-two students began the program during the 1984-85 academic year and 64 completed the year, an attrition rate of 11 percent.

The New Horizons project maintains contact with its graduates by mail and then follow-up telephone calls to determine how they are doing one, two and three years out of the program. The 1985 survey of the 148 graduates from the first four years had a 92 percent response rate and revealed the following information:

- o 54 percent were attending college;
- o 40 percent were employed;

- o 17 percent were working and attending college.

OUTCOMES FOR BUSINESS

New Horizons provides numerous economic benefits to business. After graduation, many of the students remain at the businesses to take full-time jobs; they are productive immediately because they have been trained as part of the New Horizons internship. In addition, very soon after students begin working, supervisors comment that their work is equal to or better than that of other entry-level employees, yet their salaries are generally lower than those paid to regular workers. Supervisors at the banks described the students as better quality than the typical walk-in applicant, though this opinion was not shared by supervisors at other businesses.

Yet executives at companies employing students, often those in decision-making positions, are frequently unaware of the extent of New Horizons' economic benefits. At the time that the program was developed, teenage unemployment was high and many of the CEOs within the Richmond community saw a need for this kind of program. Many of the jobs were initially given as a contribution in response to solicitation by peers in business. However, for those supervisors responsible for working directly with students, it was an opportunity to obtain trainable workers who could do productive work for less than usual wages. As the program progressed, supervisors recognized the value of students' work. However, we found no instances where a systematic study was done within a company to demonstrate the contribution the students were currently making or to count the number of students who had been trained in the program and then gone on to join the permanent work force at the company. The lack of quantification, of looking at the "bottom line", may reflect management's attitude toward participation in New Horizons. Participation constitutes giving and there is generally no expectation of obtaining a return. Although the productivity of the students has generally made this program more a benefit to the companies than a contribution by them, this recognition has not always been communicated by the supervisors to the top executives.

The first year of the program, 35 companies hired students; up to 40 companies have participated since the program began. Twenty firms hired students during the 1984-85 school year; several banks hired five students each, as did VEPCO and Reynolds Metals Company.

OUTCOMES FOR SCHOOLS

Like business, the schools have not assessed the outcomes and benefits of New Horizons since the district does not see it as

its program. Our investigation suggests that the program has given the school district better visibility and a more positive image within the community. Yet, the curriculum developed by New Horizons has not had wider use within the high schools.

Teachers who participate in the program gain from the opportunity it offers them to develop curricula, to work cooperatively with other teachers and to gain direct contact with businesses. The teachers, perhaps even more than the supervisors on the job, serve as mentors and role models for the students. The low pupil/teacher ratio in the New Horizons class allows teachers to enhance their roles and to give the students more intensive attention than they would be able to in the standard classroom.

VIII. PROGRAM STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

New Horizons is a small, well-managed program that has served as a model for a network of programs throughout the country. It provides participants with a great deal of attention and access to jobs that many would be unable to attain on their own. It serves business by supplying well-trained youth and requiring only a little paperwork from business in return. It has worked successfully with the school district to integrate the special New Horizons class into the school day.

Among the program's strengths are:

- o The administrator's responsiveness to the changing educational needs of the students;
- o Maintenance of a low attrition rate;
- o The ability to place students in appropriate jobs; and
- o Tracking of a high percentage of program graduates over several years.

Although New Horizons has performed well at its current scale of operation, we question its reluctance to expand. It appears that there are many more youth in Richmond who would benefit from participation in this type of program. There are opportunities for growth that the staff has not chosen to pursue. For example:

- o New Horizons has relied primarily on large businesses. Although small businesses are harder to reach, job growth is occurring at a greater rate in small firms. In addition, students often have the opportunity to try more varied tasks in small businesses.
- o Despite the limitations of JTPA funding, New Horizons' staff has not tried other funding sources. New Horizons' solid reputation could assist fundraising efforts and allow it to obtain additional staff to serve a larger population.
- o There is no evidence of a vigorous effort by staff to bolster the recruitment process and reach and serve more students, both those whose grades may fall below the academic requirements and those whose family income is slightly above the eligibility limits.
- o To recruit business, the staff has prepared a videotape and brochures to help explain and sell the program; yet, New Horizons is better known nationally than it is within

Richmond. The current staff may be too busy running the program to do the necessary publicity and recruitment. Expansion requires more staff and better use of participating business to assist in the recruitment.

- o Business's role in program operation is very small. The program could benefit from increased business involvement and responsibility.

New Horizons embodies many aspects of successful partnerships between school and business. Its next challenge may be to extend the program to a larger population without diminishing its quality.

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