

Young People Urgently Need New Skills to Succeed in the Global Economy

Partnership for 21st Century Skills and Citizen Schools convene thought leaders to promote new policies and practices.

Washington, D.C., November 2, 2006 – Thought leaders and representatives from business, philanthropy, K-12, after school, and youth development gathered today on Capitol Hill to discuss the skills children need to succeed in the 21st century and the venues where they can develop them—in and out of school.

The policy discussion, convened by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and Citizen Schools, comes at a time when employers are clamoring for a better-prepared workforce. “The fact is, our young people are woefully under prepared for the demands of today’s workplace,” said Ken Kay, president of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

A recent national survey of company human resource officials found that:

- Almost 70% believe that high school graduates fall short in critical thinking skills
- 81% believe high school graduates are deficient in written communications
- Almost a third said they will reduce their hiring of employees with just a high school diploma
- 42% said they will hire more people with advanced degrees

The implications of this survey for low-income and minority students in particular are staggering. “When employers are finding the skills of high school graduates so very lacking, the implications for the large numbers of students who never make it to graduation in the first place are truly sobering,” said Kay.

“If we are to help our youth realize the American Dream, then we must act now to prepare them for success in the demanding and ever-changing economy of the 21st century,” said Eric Schwarz, president and CEO of Citizen Schools. “The after-school community is uniquely positioned to teach 21st century skills, but is still largely untapped and underutilized for this purpose,” Schwarz continued. “It’s time for the after-school community to become a full partner with parents and schools in teaching our nation’s children.”

Today’s policy forum included leaders from various sectors who are committed to creating a new momentum for education in our nation’s communities. Today’s panelists included Ken Kay, President and Co-Founder, Partnership for 21st Century Skills; Eric Schwarz, Co-Founder, President & CEO, Citizen Schools; Allyson Knox, Academic Program Manager, US Partners in Learning, Microsoft Corporation; John Wilson, Executive Director, National Education Association; Dr. John Box, Vice President, Product Development, JA Worldwide; and Leide Cabral, Citizen Schools alumna and Hamilton College student.

The event also marked the release of a new policy book co-edited by Partnership for 21st Century Skills and Citizen Schools, entitled *The Case for Twenty-First Century Learning*. For more information on the book, contact Colin Stokes at (617) 695-2300 ext. 229, or colinstokes@citizenschools.org.

About Citizen Schools

Citizen Schools is a leading national education initiative that uniquely mobilizes thousands of adult volunteers to help improve student achievement by teaching skill-building apprenticeships after-school. Our programs blend these real-world learning projects with rigorous academic and leadership development activities, preparing students in the middle grades for success in high school, college, the workforce, and civic life.

Launched in Boston in 1995, Citizen Schools currently serves 3,000 students and engages 2,200 volunteers in 15 cities.

For more information, visit www.citizenschools.org.

About the Partnership for 21st Century Skills

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills has emerged as the leading advocacy organization focused on infusing 21st century skills into education. The organization brings together the business community, education leaders, and policymakers to define a powerful vision for 21st century education to ensure every child’s success as citizens and

workers in the 21st century. The Partnership encourages schools, districts and states to advocate for the infusion of 21st century skills into education and provides tools and resources to help facilitate and drive change.

Member organizations include Adobe Systems Incorporated, American Association of School Librarians, Apple, BellSouth Foundation, Cable in the Classroom, Cisco Systems, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Dell Incorporated, EF Education, ETS, Ford Motor Company Fund, Intel Foundation, JA Worldwide™, LeapFrog SchoolHouse, McGraw-Hill Education, Microsoft Corporation, National Education Association, Oracle Education Foundation, Pearson Education, Riverdeep Incorporated, SAP, SAS, Texas Instruments, Thomson Gale, and Verizon.

For more information, visit www.21stcenturyskills.org.

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