

## Part 5 – BEYOND THE DISTRICT

The four chapters in this section address issues related to school districts even though the events they describe are not districtwide future searches. The themes, processes, leadership issues, and follow-up efforts described in these chapters can be transferred to local school systems. The problem of financial constraints is another reason we have included these examples. For some, the leap to leading a future search seems too great a risk. The 12 previous chapters may have helped allay some of those fears. If readers are still not convinced, they should begin their future search journey by reading about opportunities to be a stakeholder in a future search. In all four of the examples in this section, the school district was a key stakeholder.

The impact of the future search in North Montgomery County Technical Career Center in Pennsylvania (chapter 13) transformed a failing, near-closing technical school into a model in technical career education. In this unique school fed by five different districts, partnerships with community employers, businesses, parents, and students have created innovative programs. Readers will learn how teachers have become leaders in taking initiative to improve education.

In Ohio, IL (chapter 14), very young children and their parents have benefited from the results of future searches and their follow-ups over a 10-year period. To increase services to this very important age group, nonprofit and governmental service providers have formed partnerships to be able to “blend funds” while still meeting funders’ regulations. As the connection between early childhood education and student achievement is gaining more attention, communities can look to this chapter to learn about creative ways to leverage scarce resources as well as to imagine how a state-initiated future search could catalyze change at the school district level.

Chapter 15, set in the University of Southern California’s Rossier School of Education, describes how a future search and subsequent activities led to a more coherent, less-fragmented organization, which then produced measurable results, including balancing the budget, meeting enrollment targets, and increasing the student applicant pool. This chapter shows how the school created a structure to integrate and implement the outputs from its future search conference.

Chapter 16 tells the story of the Kansas State Department of Education’s future search. It produced six strategic directions that now serve as a frame of reference for decision making and communication. Greater collaboration and partnerships with local school districts have been established. The future search principle of bringing the whole system into the planning process has been incorporated into how the department now operates. The state, along with the cooperation of local districts, has established a centralized data system that streamlines processes and provides more useful information. This chapter also describes the leadership dilemma of convening and attending a three-day future search in a time of budget shortfalls. “How can we afford to do this at a time like this?” “How can we afford *not* to do this at a time like this?” This chapter will be of interest to every school district that interfaces with a state department of education.