# THESUCCESSOF THE SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTERSCHOOL PARTNERSHIPPROGRAM

# <u>''THE PERSPECTIVE</u> OF THE PRIVATESECTOR'

PRESENTED TO THE

# **CONFERENCE ATSUNY PURCHASE**

OUR MUTUAL ESTATE: SCHOOL/COLLEGE/BUSINESSPARTNERSHIPS

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AND

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SUNY PURCHASE APRIL 22, 1987

IF ANY OF YOU ARE FANS OF PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL, AND THE BOSTON CELTICS IN PARTICULAR, YOU MAY REMEMBER SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED MANY YEARS AGO.

IT WAS 1962, AND THE CELTICS HAD JUST DRAFTED JOHN HAVLICEK OUT OF OHIO STATE.

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BUT WHEN HAVLICEK REPORTED TO THE CELTICS

TRAINING CAMP, RED AUERBACH, THE CELTICS COACH AND GENERAL MANAGER, QUICKLY SAW HE HAD MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER SOLID, DEPENDABLE PLAYER IN CAMP. HE REALIZED THAT HE HAD A BUDDING SUPERSTAR ON HIS HANDS, ONE WHOSE POTENTIAL NEARLY EVERYONE ELSE HAD FAILED TO RECOGNIZE.

IN LATER YEARS, AUERBACH WOULD RECOUNT HOW, WHENEVER HE WATCHED HAVLICEK PRACTICE DURING THOSE FIRST FEW WEEKS, HE WOULD LAUGH AND SAY TO HIMSELF: "BOY. IS EVERYONE GOING TO THINK I'M SMART AS HELL."

TONIGHT, AS WE CELEBRATE THE SUCCESS OF THE SONY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL

PARTNERSHIP, I'M STARTING TO FEEL A LOT LIKE RED AUERBACH.

WE PUT UP SOME MONEY. EVERYONE ELSE PUT OUT THE EFFORT. AND I'M BEING TOLD I'M SMART AS HELL.

DURING THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT PROGRAMS AIMED AT IMPROVING OUR SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION. SOME HAVE INVOLVED INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS.

OTHERS HAVE INVOLVED ENTIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS. ALL HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT AND WELCOME

CHANGES ESPECIALLY COMING FROM A PART OF OUR SOCIETY THAT, UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY, TENDED TO REGARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS SOMEBODY ELSE'S PROBLEM.

AS OUR INVOLVEMENT HAS DEEPENED AND MATURED, SO HAS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN PLAY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION. THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, IN A POSITION TO ASSUME THOSE FUNCTIONS THAT TRADITIONALLY, AND RIGHTFULLY, SHOULD BE FULFILLED BY GOVERNMENT. WE

DON'T HAVE THE CAPACITY, AND WE CERTAINLY DON'T HAVE THE ABILITY, TO DEVELOP AND

OPERATE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMS THE WAY THAT TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS CAN OPERATE THEM.

EVEN IF WE DID/ THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS NOT PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS. DO WE WANT THE EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN DEPENDENT UPON WHETHER CORPORATE PROFITS RISE OR FALL IN A PARTICULAR YEAR? OR WHETHER A CERTAIN PRODUCT OR SERVICE BECOMES A MAJOR SUCCESS IN THE MARKETPLACE?

I THINK NOT, AND I HOPE YOU AGREE.

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THE SAME TOKEN, OUR EXPERIENCE OF THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS HAS PROVIDED US WITH IMPORTANT INSIGHTS INTO HOW THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN PARTICIPATE MOST EFFECTIVELY IN

HELPING TO IMPROVE OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

ONE WAY IS ADVOCACY, MAKING OUR POSITION KNOWN IN WASHINGTON, IN STATE CAPITOLS AND IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES. LAST MONTH, FOR INSTANCE, SENIOR EXECUTIVES FROM FIVE MAJOR CORPORATIONS TESTIFIED BEFORE A JOINT HOUSE-SENATE HEARING CALLING FOR GREATER PUBLIC INVESTMENTS IN THE CHAPTER ONE PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES SUPPLEMENTAL FEDERAL EDUCATION AID TO SCHOOLS WITH HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF LOW-INCOME CHILDREN.

A SECOND WAY IS TO FORM COALITIONS COMPOSED OF INDIVIDUAL CORPORATIONS AND SCHOOLS THAT SEEK TO ACHIEVE SPECIFIC GOALS. THE BOSTON COMPACT, WHICH FOCUSES ON EDUCATING STUDENTS FOR JOBS THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE IN OUR CHANGING ECONOMY, IS A FINE EXAMPLE OF THAT KIND OF PROGRAM.

A THIRD WAY IS TO BE A CATALYST, TO

PROVIDE SEED MONEY AND GUIDANCE SO THAT EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE HAD ONLY SLIGHT CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER CAN WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP A SERIES OF MUCH-NEEDED PROGRAMS. THE SONY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IS THE BEST EXAMPLE I KNOW OF THIS KIND OF PROGRAM,

SO TONIGHT, I WANT TO USE THIS OCCASION TO SHARE WITH YOU THOSE FEATURES OF THE SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM THAT, FROM MY PERSPECTIVE AS SOMEONE FROM A CORPORATE BACKGROUND, MAKES IT SO SUCCESSFUL AND WORTHWHILE TO EMULATE ELSEWHERE. WHEN THE SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP WAS ANNOUNCED MORE THAN THREE YEARS AGO, I MADE THE COMMENT THAT' IT APPEARED TO BE A PARTNERSHIP OF UNCOMMON CHARACTERISTICS, QUITE UNLIKE ANY OTHER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM WITH WHICH THE

# AMERICAN CAN COMPANY OR ANY OTHER CORPORATION HAD BEEN ASSOCIATED.

THAT IS AS TRUE TODAY AS IT WAS THEN.

### **CONFERENCE**

THIS PROGRAM HAS TAKEN THE PARTNERSHIP CONCEPT TO NEW LEVELS, BOTH IN TERMS OF THE TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED IN THE PARTNERSHIP AND IN TERMS OF THE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS THAT HAVE DEVELOPED AMONG THOSE INSTITUTIONS.

THE SUNY WESTCHESTER PROGRAM IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN A STATE GOVERNMENT AND A PRIVATE CORPORATION. IT IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN A STATE UNIVERSITY AND MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. IT IS A PARTNERSHIP AMONG THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND IT IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THOSE SCHOOL DISTRICTS. WITH SUCH A COMPLEX SET OF ARRANGEMENTS, IT WOULD BE EASY FOR THE PARTNERSHIP TO MISFIRE OR FAIL TO WORK. BUT THE

PARTNERSHIP DOES WORK. IT WORKS BECAUSE IDEAS ARE DISCUSSED FULLY, THOROUGHLY AND OPENLY; BECAUSE PROPOSALS ARE CAREFULLY PLANNED AND EVALUATED; BECAUSE THE MEMBERS

OF THIS PARTNERSHIP KNOW THEY NEED THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE OTHER PARTNERS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS. THIS IS A VERY SOPHISTICATED PROGRAM, PERHAPS THE MOST SOPHISTICATED AND COMPLEX EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP THAT HAS BEEN

DEVELOPED TO DATE. BUT IT ALSO IS VERY FRAGILE. IF ONE INSTITUTION DROPS THE BALL, THE PARTNERSHIP COLLAPSES. IN OTHERS WORDS, THIS PARTNERSHIP WORKS

BECAUSE EACH INSTITUTION VIEWS ITSELF AS A CONTRIBUTING PARTNER, NOT AS THE DOMINANT FORCE. I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER THAT MANY EARLY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY THE ONE-ON-ONE PROGRAMS THAT INVOLVED ONE CORPORATION AND ONE SCHOOL, WERE CRITICIZED FOR BEING TOO FADDISH, FOR BRINGING MORE PUBLIC RELATIONS VALUE TO THE SPONSORING INSTITUTION THAN

EDUCATIONAL VALUE TO THE SCHOOL THAT WAS INVOLVED, FOR FOCUSING ON SHORT-TERM GIMMICKS RATHER THAN LONG-TERM GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH THIS CRITICISM WAS VALID IS OPEN TO QUESTION. AFTER ALL, THOSE WERE THE EARLY DAYS OF THE PARTNERSHIP CONCEPT. MOST CORPORATIONS AND SCHOOLS WERE NEW TO THE IDEA. THEY WANTED TO START WITH SOMETHING MODEST AND MANAGEABLE IN ORDER TO DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP THEY COULD THEN BUILD UPON.

THE SUNY WESTCHESTER PROGRAM, THOUGH, NEVER HAD THIS PROBLEM. THIS IS ALL-THE-MORE EXTRAORDINARY, BECAUSE THE SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM WAS FORMED IN 1984 WHEN MANY ONE-ON-ONE PARTNERSHIPS WERE JUST GETTING OFF THE GROUND. YOURS WAS A MUCH MORE AMBITIOUS PARTNERSHIP, YET IT AVOIDED THE CRITICISMS LEVELED AT LESS AMBITIOUS PROGRAMS.

FROM THE START, THE PARTNERS IN THIS PROGRAM -- ESPECIALLY THE SUNY PURCHASE ADMINISTRATION AND THE SUPERINTENDENTS AND THE FACULTY FROM THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS -- RIGOROUSLY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO DEVELOPING PROGRAMS OF SUBSTANCE SO THAT THESE PROGRAMS COULD SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

THE PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS WANTED THE INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS TO BE GROUNDED IN THE SUBSTANCE OF PROGRAMS, RATHER THAN TO FORCE AND ENFORCE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PROMISE THAT THE SUBSTANTIVE BENEFITS

WOULD ULTIMATELY JUSTIFY THE PROCESS.

THAT IS ONE REASON THE PARTNERSHIP HAS SUCCEEDED.

ANOTHER REASON THE PARTNERSHIP SUCCEEDS IS THAT IT DOES NOT FORCE CORPORATIONS TO CHOOSE AMONG INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHEN MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO PUBLIC EDUCATION.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY IS AN EXTREMELY FRAGMENTED AND HETEROGENEOUS SCHOOL SYSTEM. IT IS COMPOSED OF 46 AUTONOMOUS SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND THERE ARE 121,000 STUDENTS AND 8,500 TEACHERS IN THE COUNTY.

SINCE THE EMPLOYEES OF EVERY CORPORATION IN THE AREA ARE SPREAD OUT, IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR AREA CORPORATIONS TO FIND AN EQUITABLE, RATIONAL WAY TO BE RESPONSIVE TO SO MANY SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN NEED. THE PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES AN AVENUE FOR CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC EDUCATION TO BE SHARED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY. AND BECAUSE THE PARTNERSHIP EXISTS, THE DOLLARS, IN-KIND SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES THE PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTES CAN BE USED MORE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

THAN THEY WOULD BE IF THEY WERE BROKEN UP AND DIVIDED AMONG A NUMBER OF COMPETING SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

CORPORATIONS DON'T HAVE TO DECIDE HOW TO ALLOCATE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS, WHETHER TO CONTRIBUTE TO ONE DISTRICT WHERE THE LARGEST NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES LIVE, TO ALL THE DISTRICTS IN WHICH EMPLOYEES LIVE, OR TO SUPPORT A SMALL PROGRAM OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE CORPORATION.

THE PARTNERSHIP MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO HAVE AN IMPACT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY. AND AS THE

PARTNERSHIP HAS GROWN. THE NUMBER OF CORPORATIONS AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM HAS INCREASED. THE IBM EXECUTIVE WHO DEVELOPED A NATIONALLY KNOWN PROGRAM OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IS CONDUCTING A SIMILAR SERIES OF WORKSHOPS

FOR THE PARTNERSHIP. THE JOINT COUNCIL FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION IS WORKING WITH THE

PARTNERSHIP TO DEVELOP AND PREPARE TEACHERS FOR THE SEMESTER OF ECONOMICS THE STATE NOW REQUIRES OF ITS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. TEXACO IS <u>INVOLVED.</u> <u>SO</u> IS IBM, THE BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB, CIBA-GEIGY, BANK OF NEW YORK, GENERAL FOODS, PEPSICO AND A NUMBER OF OTHER LOCAL BUSINESSES. THE PARTNERSHIP ALSO PROVIDES THE SAME BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT IT PROVIDES TO INDIVIDUAL CORPORATIONS. JUST AS THE CORPORATIONS DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS, THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS DON'T HAVE TO COMPETE AGAINST EACH OTHER FOR THE FUNDS, PERSONNEL AND OTHER RESOURCES THE PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTES.

ONE SURE SIGN OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION IS WHEN THOSE MEMBERS WHO ONCE PARTICIPATED FREE OF CHARGE NOW CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THEIR ENDEAVOR. THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE PARTNERSHIP.

THE AMERICAN CAN COMPANY FOUNDATION PROVIDED MOST OF THE ENTIRE FIRST YEAR CORE OPERATING BUDGET OF \$85,000. OUR INTENTION, THOUGH, ALWAYS WAS TO PHASE DOWN OUR CONTRIBUTION. WE WANTED THE

PARTNERSHIP TO BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT. THAT GOAL IS BEING REACHED. NEXT YEAR, THE PARTNERSHIP'S OPERATING BUDGET WILL BE \$110,000. AMERICAN CAN WILL CONTRIBUTE \$35,000. THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS WILL CONTRIBUTE \$75,000.

IN FOUR YEARS, THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY WILL HAVE GONE FROM

PROVIDING NOT ONE DOLLAR OF SUPPORT TO THE PARTNERSHIP TO PROVIDING NEARLY 70 PERCENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP'S OPERATING BUDGET.

THAT'S SUCCESS IN ANYBODY'S LANGUAGE.

FINALLY, PARTNERSHIPS LIKE THIS WILL NOT WORK UNLESS THERE IS AN INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT FROM THE TOP. THAT HAS

HAPPENED WITH ALL THREE KEY INSTITUTIONS.

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AT SUNY PURCHASE, THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT GREBSTEIN, TED GROSS AND RESA FREMED WERE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. THE PARTNERSHIP IDEA WAS AN UNTESTED IDEA WHEN

PRESIDENT GREBSTEIN AND SUNY PURCHASE APPROACHED OUR FOUNDATION. BUT SUNY HAD A VISION OF THE FUTURE AND A COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC EDUCATION IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY.

THE SUNY FACULTY WAS ENCOURAGED TO BECOME INVOLVED. THE MESSAGE CAME DOWN FROM THE

HIGHEST LEVELS THAT WORKING WITH THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WOULD HAVE ITS REWARD, THAT FACULTY MEMBERS WHO WORKED IN THIS PROGRAM

WOULD NOT SLOW DOWN THEIR CHANCES FOR PROMOTION OR TENURE. "PUBLISH OR PERISH" WAS NOT GOING TO BE THE ONLY MEASURE OF SUCCESS AT SUNY PURCHASE. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY WAS GOING TO COUNT.

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THE SUPERINTENDENTS OF THE VARIOUS SCHOOL DISTRICTS VIGOROUSLY SUPPORTED THE PROGRAM. THEY BECAME INVOLVED IN BOTH POLICY AND IN DETAILS, IN THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND IN THE OPERATING STYLE OF THE PARTNERSHIP. THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION GAVE THE PROGRAM MUCH OF ITS ORIGINAL IMPETUS AND STATUS WITHIN THE COUNTY.

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AND, OF COURSE, THE LEADERSHIP PROVIDED BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK AND GOVERNOR CUOMO WAS INDISPENSABLE. THE GOVERNOR CITED THE

PARTNERSHIP AS AN EDUCATIONAL MODEL IN LAST YEAR'S STATE OF THE STATE SPEECH, AND THE STATE UNDERWRITES, ON A PERMANENT BASIS, THE SALARIES OF FOUR FULL-TIME SUNY PURCHASE PEOPLE ASSIGNED TO THE PARTNERSHIP.

FROM THE BEGINNING, THE GOAL OF THIS PARTNERSHIP HAS BEEN TO HELP THE CLASSROOM TEACHER IMPROVE HIS OR HER KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS. THE PRINCIPLE VEHICLES FOR THIS HAVE BEEN THE TEACHERS CENTER FUNDED BY THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE TEACHING INSTITUTES DEVELOPED IN

CONJUNCTION WITH THE WOODROW WILSON FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION.

THESE WOODROW WILSON TEACHING INSTITUTES HAVE BEEN THE CORNERSTONE OF THIS

PARTNERSHIP FROM THE VERY EARLIEST DAYS. THEY HAVE REMAINED THE CORNERSTONE TO THE PRESENT DAY. INSTITUTES IN CHEMISTRY,

MATH, EARTH SCIENCES AND ECONOMICS ALREADY EXIST. NEW INSTITUTES ARE PLANNED IN

FOREIGN LANGUAGES, SOCIAL STUDIES AND EVEN FOREIGN POLICY.

THE INSTITUTES HAVE BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL THAT THE PARTNERSHIP HAS BEEN ASKED TO DUPLICATE THREE SCIENCE INSTITUTES FOR NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL TEACHERS THIS SUMMER. AND LAST SUMMER, SUNY PURCHASE WAS THE ONLY PLACE IN THE COUNTRY THAT HELD TEACHER INSTITUTES IN CHEMISTRY, MATH AND PHYSICS.

THE INSTITUTES HAVE ALSO OPENED THE DOOR TO A WHOLE RANGE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMAL CONTACTS AND ACTIVITIES AMONG TEACHERS FROM INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS AND BETWEEN PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND COLLEGE FACULTY. THIS IS NOT A ONE WAY STREET EITHER. THE

SUNY FACULTY ALSO IS LEARNING FROM THE PUBLIC SCHOOL FACULTY. A SUNY SCIENCE PROFESSOR RECENTLY DESCRIBED HOW MUCH HE HAD LEARNED ABOUT COMPUTERS FROM HIS HIGH SCHOOL COUNTERPARTS. A CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR

HAS STARTED EXCHANGING EXPERIMENTS WITH HIS HIGH SCHOOL COLLEAGUES.

LOOKING BACK ON THE SUCCESS OF THE PAST THREE YEARS, I CAN SEE THAT THE SEED MONEY PROVIDED BY AMERICAN CAN WAS MONEY WELL INVESTED. BUT

THE SUNY PURCHASE WESTCHESTER PARTNERSHIP DOES NOT WORK BECAUSE OF WHAT WE CONTRIBUTED.

IT WORKS BECAUSE OF WHAT OTHERS HAVE ACCOMPLISHED. IT WORKS BECAUSE IT IS WELL MANAGED. IT WORKS BECAUSE IT MEETS THE SAME RIGOROUS STANDARDS I WOULD APPLY TO

ANY NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT. IT WORKS BECAUSE IT SATISFIES ITS

SHAREHOLDERS -- THOSE SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHO FIND IT WORTHWHILE TO PAY A FEW THOUSAND DOLLARS EACH YEAR TO PARTICIPATE.

IT IS FOR ALL THESE REASONS THAT THIS PARTNERSHIP DESERVES TO BE REPLICATED

THROUGHOUT THE STATE SO THAT, IN THE YEARS TO COME, NEW YORK WILL BE VIEWED AS AN EDUCATIONAL LEADER IN BUILDING BRIDGES

BETWEEN ITS SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND ITS PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

THANK YOU.