# **SCALING IMPACT ADVISORY BOARDS RAISING THE BAR** *TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS*







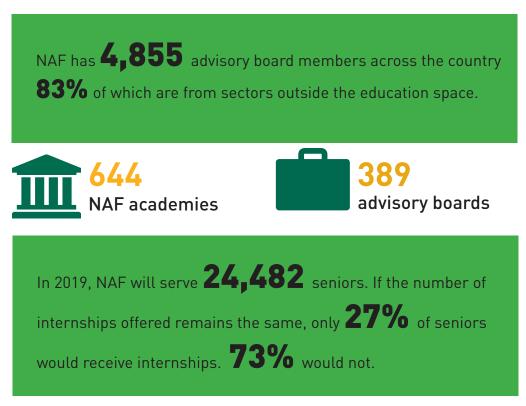
The NAF educational design is built around four essential elements of practice: academy development and structure, advisory board, curriculum and instruction, and work-based learning. Each of these elements is equally important for students in academies to achieve maximum success.

NAF advisory boards provide an essential bridge between schools, the workplace, and the civic community. Business, higher education, and community leaders volunteer on local advisory boards to help students prepare for college and careers. Advisory board members who are dedicated to the NAF mission and their communities collaborate with educators to inform curricula, help organize work-based learning activities, and are advocates of NAF in their communities. Engaging with advisory board members give students the opportunity to build relationships with mentors early on and to learn from successful adults. Not all NAF academies' business partners serve on a NAF advisory board. Rather, in partnership with the academy, NAF advisory board members accept responsibility for the success of the academy. We've learned that many advisory board members began their NAF journey as business partners before committing to board membership.

NAF has an ambitious goal of providing several work-based learning opportunities in each year of a student's high school academy experience, culminating in a paid internship and achieving NAFTrack Certification. NAF recognized a "deep dive" into NAF advisory boards would be necessary to meet this goal. Advisory boards are made up of thousands of professionals representing companies large and small across the country. They are deeply committed to academies and students and dedicate their time on a volunteer basis. Advisory boards are self-governed with guidance and resources from NAF. NAF has "no command or control of our advisory boards in an organizational sense," says Robert Dughi, member of NAF's Board of Directors and Executive Chairman of Financial Soundings, LLC. "but they are essential to our student success — they are our volunteer army."

NAF's role is to support local advisory boards and to share best practices from across the country to increase impact and success. Recently, NAF hosted its first ever advisory board convening to acknowledge the power of advisory boards and to seek insight into how to meet NAF's challenges. NAF President, JD Hoye, led the discussion with a simple question: **"How can** we replicate what successful advisory boards have figured out about creating opportunities for students and get that information out to other advisory boards?"

This case study explores promising practices and shares examples of how these practices are implemented in four high-performing districts.





#### Inaugural Convening of NAF Advisory Board Leaders

In June 2018, NAF invited 55 advisory board leaders employers, district coordinators, and superintendents from 14 high-performing districts, along with several members of NAF's Board of Directors — to discuss advisory board goals and to develop strategies for connecting NAF advisory boards and addressing the internship challenge.

Participants shared best practices, examined the commonality among these boards, and collaborated with other advisory board leaders. They spoke with candor, as well as pride, about their communities and the solutions each had created.

There were three big takeaways:

- a collection of strategies that can be shared with new or struggling advisory boards,
- acknowledgement that all advisory boards are unique, with different structures and goals, but they all support the students in ways that address academy and community needs, and
- an invigorated sense among these leaders that staying connected as NAF advisory board members will help engage other employers in a successful, growing, and fulfilling partnership that affects young people in their community positively.

# Key Strategies from High-Performing Advisory Board Leaders

There is no single route to success for a NAF advisory board; the routes are as unique as the communities in which NAF has academies. The convening of advisory board leaders reflected the broad range of settings in the NAF network — urban, suburban, and rural — all of which have high-performing advisory boards. With few overarching requirements, advisory boards have developed entrepreneurially and adapted to their local communities. However, a rough roadmap to success can be distilled and shared to ensure that the boards are maximizing impact on students and providing members with ideas, strategies, and benchmarks to use for higher performance. Attributes of Distinguished Academies' Advisory Boards:

- At least 80% of members represent business, post-secondary education, or alumni
- Maintain current strategic plans and updated by-laws
- Meet regularly and operate defined committees
- Review academy data, participate in the NAF Academy Assessment, and provide input on the academy action plan
- Provide students with a sequence of work-based learning activities, including paid internships, based on the academy work-based learning plan and recruit additional employer partners for these activities
- Find, fund, or furnish paid internship opportunities
- Serve as advocates for the academy to the workforce, civic, and throughout the community
- Provide teachers with curriculum support, professional development, and educator workbased learning
- Assist students with classroom projects
- Provide and solicit financial support from the community to ensure academy sustainability
- Leverage connections to raise awareness of the academy and build community support
- Collaborate with academy leaders to enhance curriculum and professional development



The academies highlighted in this case study showcase high impact practices, how they are activated in different geographical locations, in school districts large and small, and across rural, suburban, and urban landscapes.

## **ADVISORY BOARDS IN FOCUS**







- Structure: 1 advisory board serving one academy
- 1 NAF academy
- 18 advisory board members

Dinuba Unified School District (Dinuba, CA) is located in a small rural city within Tulare County, California, with a population of 21,000. The most common business sectors are agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting. The district enrolls 6,638 students, with Dinuba High School enrolling nearly 2,000 students. The academy student population is 92% Hispanic, 6% White, and 2% Asian. Seventy-five percent of their students live at or below the poverty line.

- Structure: DC CAN Executive board, oversees school and industry boards for multiple academies, individual boards serve individual academies
- 16 NAF academies
- 168 advisory board members

Washington, DC has a population of 703,608 and is situated in the greater metropolitan area with a population of over six million. As the nation's capital, federal government agencies and departments sit next to some of the largest international business and financial companies. The most common business sectors are trade, transportation, utilities, education and health services, federal government, information technology, and hospitality. Five DC school districts are home to more than 48,000 students in 36 high schools. The academy student population is 83% African American/Black, 12% Hispanic, 3% White, and 3% Asian or Other/Multiracial. Seventy-seven percent of the students live at or below the poverty line.

- Structure: 1 advisory board serving 1 academy, regional board serves area academies
- 1 NAF academy
- 34 advisory board members

Lancaster Central School District (Lancaster, NY) is in a suburb of Buffalo, with a population of 41,000. Buffalo and its surrounding areas are experiencing a resurgence, as companies are relocating to the area. The school district enrolls 5,735 students with 1,937 in the high school, of whom 6% are of ethnic minorities. Twenty percent live at or below the poverty line.

• Structure: District Executive board, oversees school and theme-based boards for multiple academies, individual boards serve individual academies

- 4 NAF academies
- 73 advisory board members

Wake County Public School System (Raleigh, NC) is located in a large urban/ suburban area within Wake County, North Carolina with a population of over 1 million. A major link in the Research Triangle, common business sectors in Wake County are management, administrative, sales, computer and engineering, and business and financial operations. The school district is comprised of over 160,000 students enrolled in 183 schools including 29 high schools. The academy student population is 57% are White, 17% African American/Black, 22% Asian, 2% Hispanic, and 2% Other/Multiracial. Thirty-five percent of the students live at or below the poverty line.

#### **ADVISORY BOARDS IN FOCUS**



#### **Customize Advisory Board Structures to Meet Local Needs**

An array of advisory board configurations and structures serve students based on the size and location of academies. The districts highlighted in this case study describe these differences. The District of Columbia's advisory board is managed by a network that includes five districts and Wake County is managed at the district level. In Dinuba and Lancaster, advisory boards serve their individual academies. Below is a description of how these districts structure advisory boards.



**Dinuba High School Academy of Health Sciences**' advisory board supports one NAF academy. The advisory board is comprised of: two cochairs, the District Director of School-to-Career, the school work-based learning coordinator, a medical counselor, a NAF student and alumnus, NAF teachers, members of the school board, and the superintendent. Other board members make up a wide array of professions, including medical doctors, nurse practitioners, chiropractors, and psychologists. The board meets monthly and has work-based learning and curriculum sub-committees. The advisory board secures funding through annual fundraising events with support from the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club. The advisory board also solicits donations from

businesses in the community. Since many clinics and hospitals are unable to pay high school interns, this strategy has worked well to raise funds to supplement the paid internship experience.

**District of Columbia Public Schools** is one of the five school districts that are a part of the DC Career Academy Network (DC CAN). The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), is responsible for the structure of DC CAN and provides annual grants for the implementation of all new NAF academies by means of support to each academy. The DC Department of Employment Services, through its Summer Youth Employment Program, works with the Network to provide salaries for summer internships.



- An Executive Advisory Board functions in a leadership role setting policy and strategic goals. It was established to provide coordinated leadership among representatives in industry and post-secondary institutions to enhance school-to-career opportunities for students in the network.
- The Industry Advisory Boards (IAB) provide theme-based support to academies in DC CAN. The IAB is comprised of leading educators and industry executives from the Washington, DC area.
- Site-based advisory boards build relationships with local businesses and organizations to support activities at one school.

The five districts in this network include:

- 1. District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
- 2. Friendship Public Charter Schools
- 3. Maya Angelou Public Charter Schools
- 4. KIPP DC Public Charter
- 5. DC International Public Charter

#### **ADVISORY BOARDS IN FOCUS**





Lancaster High School's Academy of Finance has a local advisory board comprised of 34 members. These members include advisory board officers, a district liaison, and student leaders. The advisory board meets six times throughout the course of the year. In addition, they conduct a significant amount of business virtually. The advisory board has developed an actionable strategic plan to address areas that need improvement and to outline responsibilities of committee and student advisory board members. For the past several years, all seniors participated in a paid internship by graduation.

The advisory board is sustained and expanded by their bi-annual recruitment event. Advisory board members are charged to bring a colleague to these events as a conduit for engagement with the advisory board and academy activities. Related to expanding the network, a member of the Chamber of Commerce serves on the advisory board and is in charge of disseminating messages to the community regarding academy affairs. Every other year, the board has an off campus event featuring a prominent speaker (i.e., local business representative, state or local politician, alumnus) to present to students on various topics, such as the role of entrepreneurship. In addition, a member of the advisory board attends Board of Education meetings and the advisory board invites Board of Education members to the advisory board meetings as well. The meetings are usually scheduled from 7:00 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.

Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) has a school-tocareer council that serves as the legislative Business Advisory Council for WCPSS's Board of Education. The Council is comprised of business, higher education, and community leaders within the community that help advocate school-to-career efforts at the system's district level, including NAF academies. There are three work teams that make up the school-to-career council: business alliances, career academy advisory boards, and career advisory teams.



- The business alliances consist of a group of business, higher education, and non-profit representatives from various careers that support the school in all career-related activities as well as goals related to academic achievement.
- The career academy advisory teams are comprised of individuals from business/industry and higher education that provide advice and assistance to teachers and senior administrators at the district level in a particular career cluster/program area in career and technical education in establishing, operating, and evaluating programs.
- Local advisory boards exist to support each of the 19 career academies (four of which are NAF academies). Each advisory board is comprised of individuals from business/industry and higher education related to that particular career academy theme.

Three success strategies emerged from interviews in the four focus districts: **Scaling Up Good Practices**, **Reaching Out to New Audiences**, and **Celebrating Success**. Every advisory board has champions that are catalysts for change. They embrace new ideas and find ways to scale them in the academy and across the district. No matter how big or small, in each district, there are many champions that tap into their networks to expand opportunities to academies and students to prepare them to be college, career, and future ready. This case study recognizes their dedication to the work.

# **IDENTIFYING A CHAMPION AS A CATALYST FOR SCALING**

**Create an extensive, expansive network of support from business partners** is the clear message from NAF's top advisory boards. To facilitate that vision, there is a need for champions to pave the way in keeping the network of business partners engaged and sustained. Champions serve as catalysts for scaling up partnerships and reaching out to the broadest communities. And, no matter how big or small each district, these champions tap into their networks to bring incredible opportunities to academies and students to prepare them for college, careers, and to be future ready.



**Danielle Orosco**, Psychologist, is an alumnus of the Academy of Health Sciences at Dinuba High School. She sees her primary role as a mentor to students and believes her fresh perspective as a recent graduate of the academy helps empower students and inform advisory board members. She shares tips and insights with students to help navigate college and the challenges that may lie ahead. Ms. Orosco views serving on the advisory board and mentoring students as part of her duty to give back to her community. Even with limited resources as a function of being in a rural community, Dinuba still connects professionals to academy students who provide them with high level work-based learning opportunities and college support, largely due to the dedication and coordination of academy director, Tonya Pennebaker.



**Autumn Banks,** U.S. Department of Commerce, OCIO/ International Trade Administration and co-chair of the DC CAN Academy of Information Technology industry advisory board, is an alumnus of NAF's first Academy of Finance at John Dewey High School in New York. She is working to extend opportunities to students beyond internships at the Department of Commerce. She encourages department leaders to provide post-internship work for students. She envisions that these employment opportunities will spill over into college and post-college employment for students. That strategy, consistent with NAF's strategic goal to provide a pipeline from high school to the workforce for students, has gained traction with other advisory board members who are now also seeking support for student postinternship opportunities in their workplaces.



**Peyton B.**, is a paid advisory board intern for the Lancaster High School Academy of Finance. She was excited about her role as she was able to make important connections with business professionals in the community who will serve as future references for potential job opportunities. Peyton said her most important goal is to ensure students are getting the best possible experiences, making sure they have paid internships, job shadows, networking opportunities, and providing clarity regarding career-themed job options. She explained that she is able to provide a student perspective of what students envision within the academy and with regard to experiences and opportunities they want for themselves.



**Sheila Jones,** Environmental Education Specialist, Wake County Soil and Water Conservation Department, and outgoing chair of Enloe High School's Academy of Health Sciences advisory board, is a public health nurse. For the last two years, the AOHS students won the Lenovo Scholar Network mobile app competition with their apps Respirate and CPRonDemand. "I learned so much about app development and usage while helping them develop content for the project," Jones said. The strength of this advisory board is the wide range of health professions represented. By recruiting members from across the health sciences spectrum, she believes it strengthens the board's capacity to provide students with the full range of opportunities in the field.

#### **MAKING CONNECTIONS**

Reaching out to key professional organizations, alumni, and members of the community is another important strategy deemed critical by high-performing advisory boards. All champions tapped into their own networks to bring others on board. Those individuals that were invited to engage would similarly tap into their own networks. The connections that form continually grow while amassing a large network of collaborators to support the needs of the academies and students. Reaching out grows both work-based learning and internship opportunities for students. NAF President, JD Hoye said, "we need to shatter the belief that high school students are not capable of adding value to the bottom line through a paid internship." Below are examples of how the various champions reached out to their stakeholders.



**Dr. Kuldip Thusu,** Owner of Alta Family Health Clinic in Dinuba, Dinuba Academy of Health Sciences advisory board member, and recipient of the 2018 Advisory Board Champion award, believes it is important to provide access to good health care, especially in his community where healthcare resources are limited and there is a high proportion of people living in poverty. There is only one health care provider for every 2,700 people. The need for additional health care facilities and professionals trained in a variety of fields is high. Dr. Thusu sees students as an opportunity to fill this need and is leading the charge to interest local students in the healthcare profession.

Dr. Thusu created a number of work-based learning opportunities in his clinic for students. One such program, called the *You Make Me Ill* project, has empowered students to select a disease that interests them, conduct research on the causes, cures, and resources available for the disease, and then host a seminar highlighting their findings for health care professionals at the clinic. Dr. Thusu created a competition and provided monetary incentives for the best seminars. More professionals attended the seminars, were impressed with the students, and invited them to intern at the clinic. The research projects are funded through clinical research and clinical trials. Academy students have gone on to become registered nurses, x-ray technicians, and some have also pursued medical school and returned to the community.



**Marullus Williams,** President of Limbic Systems and co-chair of the DC CAN Academy of Information Technology industry advisory board, believes that students should have access to good jobs, especially in DC, a haven for information technology positions. Williams hires employees for his company and notices that he does not encounter enough students who come from underrepresented backgrounds. He states, "we need to prepare our students for college and the workforce. We can't afford to have a sector of the population left out."

Williams and McKinley Technology High School's AOIT director Robert Holm are pros at marketing. They know academy teachers need to know about the

IT field, the business community needs to know the potential of high school students, and students need to be recruited to the industry theme. The advisory board conducts an annual symposium for teachers to address what is needed in the IT field and to strengthen the partnership between teachers and advisory board members. Williams and Holm inspire colleagues to attend and present at professional meetings such as the DC STEM Network, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc (IEEE), the Black Code Collective, and the American Association of Blacks in Engineering (AABE) to encourage professionals to get involved with high school students. Holm and Williams have also collaborated for five years on a business-education non-profit called On-Ramps to Careers that helps employers create nearly 100 tech internships per year. Finally, academy students will pay off. It has: one McKinley Technology AOIT team created a winning app, Rapid Fire Escape for the Verizon App Challenge. Another student team won the Congressional App Challenge. Students use these success stories to explain the benefits of the academy when they are recruiting peers to enroll in the academy.





**Marc Rachiele**, Senior Program Executive, Crossfuze and advisory board chair emeritus at Lancaster High School Academy of Finance, heeds the advice of academy director, Scott Dixon: "Start small, don't expect a person to join the board and immediately provide lots of internships. Get people involved with the students first. Realize that the small asks lead to greater involvement." Marc added, "This idea was central to our paradigm shift and significantly widened our scope of possibility for business leader involvement by creating a comprehensive work-based learning plan and inviting the community to support it. Everything changed."

Rachiele stated that his favorite program in the academy is the student coaching program. The program begins sophomore year and extends to graduation. Seniors are responsible for organizing coaching sessions and for taking the sophomores

on their team under their wing. The program involves teams of three students from each grade and a coach in five, 45-minute sessions (before or after school). Session themes align with the curriculum (i.e., interviewing skills, networking). The program has proven to be a great first step in long-term commitment from community members and a great leadership opportunity for students. Currently there are 25 coaching groups and all NAF students participate.

Rachiele just handed off his role as Lancaster's advisory board representative to the Western New York Regional Advisory Board to a colleague. The regional board is comprised of five NAF academy advisory boards who gather quarterly to find ways to increase business partnerships across the region with a focus of increasing paid internship opportunities for students.



**Dr. Craig Statham,** Senior Software Development Manager at SAS and Apex High School Academy of Information Technology advisory board member, says that the partnership is a two-way street. He states, "The reason SAS is invested in the academy is because it is a great opportunity for our company. We create great programs for students and they provide a lifeline to the future for our company."

The advisory board, together with the academy team and parents, are scaling up work-based learning. The advisory board of 65 members meets monthly with a portion of the meeting devoted to committees. Statham is on the internship committee that meets weekly from January to summer. Lots of committee work is done virtually. Having an effective academy coordinator like Teia Robinson monitoring the committees ensures the overall success of advisory board activities.

The internship committee is charged with securing 30% of the internships needed each year, developing collateral, and circulating informational materials to organizations and individuals interested in hosting interns. Apex AOIT was one of the first academies to strategically recruit parents as internship providers and partners. Over the years, academy parents have been a source of a third of the annual internship placements. Students at Apex assist by finding another third of their internships. Now that the academy has many graduates, the Apex team is also tapping into an alumni network to support work-based learning in their academy. Alumni are invited to speak at regularly scheduled "lunch and learns" sponsored by the advisory board. Statham also highlighted that the board is unique because many members have children who have graduated from the program and the board members continue their service. Not only do board members remain, but their children return to support the academy, as well. A strong network of support develops directly out of the academy program.

#### **CELEBRATING SUCCESS**



Finding ways to bring the community together to celebrate the successes of the academy and to acknowledge the members of the community who support the academy students is critical. Strong advisory boards find unique and powerful ways to do so each year.

**Lancaster High School's AOF** is a shining example of how an academy might showcase their accomplishments in bold, innovative, and exciting ways. They host an end-of-year celebration to express their gratitude. This event serves to recognize the accomplishments of interns and their mentors. The event is designed like the Academy Awards and features a red carpet with photo opportunities for both the mentors and their students. Students present a digital story about their internships in a comical and engaging manner. The content is focused on connecting what students learn in the classroom to the internship and is evaluated by the advisory board. Then, all students and board members come up to the stage while the master of ceremonies opens up an envelope and announces the winner. All students, their mentors, internship providers, and board members are recognized through this event. The advisory board learned the importance of celebrating academy success and efforts as a form of appreciation and motivation for key stakeholders (students, teachers, mentors, parents, alumni, community members, and business/industry and higher education representatives).

At **Dinuba High School AOHS**, the academy celebrates the advisory board and employers by conducting two specific events: the "thank you" luncheon and the banquet. The academy team hosts the luncheon for internship supervisors, which includes most of the advisory board members. Students from the school's culinary program prepare for the event by creating the menu, making floral arrangements, and decorating the room. About 40 people attend and at the lunch, the academy team thanks each supervisor for their service.

The banquet is a much larger event, hosting 500 people including internship supervisors, parents, students and school leaders, and advisory board members. Students present thank you letters to their supervisors and there are photo opportunities for seniors in their scrubs. Students are also recognized for their accomplishments, including an announcement of the colleges each student had been accepted to attend.

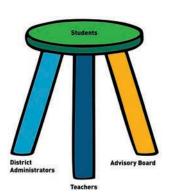


**Apex High School AOIT** celebrates students and supervisors monthly and at the end of the year. Each month, 10 students present their internship experiences to an audience of supervisors, parents, students from lower grades, faculty, and staff. Each student provides a summary of the internship experience, a snapshot of a day in the life of an intern, and their future plans. After the presentations, a roundtable is facilitated by a teacher who asks presenters to describe skills they developed and tell the story of the most humorous day at the office. Anywhere from 25 to 100 people attend these monthly events that celebrate internships.

For the year-end celebration, students in the multimedia strand of the IT academy create a video with snapshots highlighting the year's annual experiences followed by a slide show recognizing each senior and where they will attend college. Over 200 people gather, including internship providers, parents, alumni, students, and the academy team. It is a celebration for the graduating seniors, as well as everyone who got them there.

## WHAT'S NEXT

Wake County uses a visual that follows the NAF Educational Design. It is the threelegged stool that John DeFazio, former Apex High School AOIT Advisory Board Chair and member of the School-To-Career Council, shared with all the Advisory Board Chairs at a county-wide meeting a few years ago. He said that in this stool we have the students which are the seat and the three legs which include **District Administrators**, **Teachers**, and the **Advisory Board**. DeFazio reminded the advisory board chairs that anything that they do with the academy should have an ultimate benefit for the students. "No one leg of the stool is stronger, or more important than the other. Each leg must be of equal length or the stool becomes lopsided and the students will fall off." Advisory board members lay the foundation for students' career journey. De Fazio's illustration echoes NAF Board Member Robert Dughi's statement that the advisory boards are NAF's volunteer army.



The promising practices highlighted here serve as examples of how different school districts utilized their local resources to exponentially increase the work-based learning opportunities for their academies and students within their diverse communities. While these districts structure and implement their advisory boards differently, they all shared common features that contributed to their advisory board's effectiveness. In that regard, they each identified champions that creatively used their networks and ideas to transform the experiences of NAF students and change the mindset of community members and business professionals to want to engage with high school students to improve the pipeline of future talent. These individuals reached out to various stakeholders to grow resources to support students and the academies. As a result, innovative practices and programs with the potential of scaling up across the NAF network emerge. Celebratory events motivate all stakeholders to continue to power up and expand the network of supports and learning experiences for all students across the NAF network.

Advisory boards are expanding our influence among education, business, and community leaders. They are also helping to advance technology-driven innovation to help scale the work so that young people are poised to fill the nation's workforce pipeline with highly skilled and diverse talent. These efforts are creating a broader movement where communities are committed to work-based learning, significantly increasing the number of low-income students impacted by NAF, and helping to close the skills and opportunity gaps. Future strategies NAF is developing to continue this forward momentum include:

- enabling interaction and collaboration between advisory boards through the myNAFTrack platform's collaboration function
- convening advisory boards regionally to share best practices and action plans
- codifying best practices to develop an advisory board playbook and resources
- developing and implementing an advisory board dashboard to give advisory boards visibility into academy quality related to the Academy Assessment and the number of hours students are involved in work-based learning and other activities
- mentoring across advisory boards, pairing high-performing advisory board members with advisory boards that are new or that would benefit from the experience of mature advisory boards
- providing tools to help advisory board members of recruit new partners
- initiating advisory board-led NAF Future Ready Labs, NAF's innovative approach to scaling the quantity of internship opportunities

The time is right to recognize the investment being made by advisory boards and other employer partners across the country and use that information to expand the network to help students in many communities be successful and choose a career. As JD Hoye put it, "we need to capture that investment and return on investment that companies make in providing work-based learning experiences. Trying to capture that, especially the return on their investment, will make it seem so affordable when you see what it's actually doing for students: helping them to be successful and choose a career." NAF Founder, Sandy Weill adds to the sense of urgency, "We have to get more people to care and to understand."



#### MISSION

NAF solves some of the biggest challenges facing education and the economy by bringing education, business, and community leaders together to transform the high school experience.

VISION

NAF envisions a world in which all young people have equal opportunity for successful futures.



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