



## **Academic Credit for Project-Based Learning In Philadelphia**

**Youth Council:** Philadelphia Youth Council working through the Philadelphia Youth Network

**Elements:** Academic Achievement, Career Development

**Function:** Coordinate Youth Services

### **The Challenge**

Prior to summer 2000, youth workforce development programming had little or no connection to schools or academic achievement. As a result, there were few reasons and less opportunity for staff from organizations operating youth programs and school teachers and administrators to communicate even though they were often working with the same young people.

### **The strategy**

Building on the basic skills requirements for WIA youth programs, the Philadelphia Youth Council and the Philadelphia Youth Network, its administrative partner, instituted requirements as part of its RFPs that programs for all students funded either by the Workforce Investment Act or TANF youth development funds, provided through the state Department of Public Welfare, should include project-based instruction and project development that demonstrated mastery of both School District academic standards and of content and information about their workplace or service experience. To ensure that projects were of high-quality, certified teachers were employed as academic advisors to funded programs and students, and also served as evaluators of student projects.

### **The Outcomes**

Since summer 2000, more than 20,000 students have been recommended to receive academic credit from the School District of Philadelphia for their projects. Based on this great success, in 2005 student workplace portfolios, developed by students participating in foundation- and employer-paid internships, also became eligible to receive School District credit. In addition, year-round WIA providers offer approved courses that are also credit-bearing and integrate academic and workplace skills.

### **Next Steps**

Major efforts continue to be made to train funded providers in the skills and techniques of effective project-based instruction, and to increase the numbers of students who earn academic credit each year. Additional work will take place to attempt to gauge the relationship of students' credit accumulation in Youth Council programs on their progress towards graduation.

# *YCideas from around the Nation*

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## **Links**

[www.workreadyphila.com](http://www.workreadyphila.com)

[www.pyninc.org](http://www.pyninc.org)

[www.osyphila.org](http://www.osyphila.org)

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