

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Tim Westerberg
School Improvement Coach
Dillon, CO

The Leadership Challenge:
Closing the Gap between Promising Practices
and Common Practices in Michigan's High Schools

From President Bush and Bill Gates to the Cherry Commission and new state graduation requirements the message is the same—high schools in Michigan and across the nation have to change, and school- and district-level leaders and leadership teams will be held accountable for making those changes. “Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships” is the catchphrase of this movement, and the common expectation across the country is that all students graduate from high school college-ready, without remediation. This is expected to happen, in most cases, with existing or even shrinking resources. Ah, there’s nothing like a good challenge to stimulate thoughts of courageous leadership, or early retirement.

The leadership challenge for Michigan’s high schools today is to close the gap between what research and common sense tell us are promising practices for increasing student achievement and the common and sometimes counterproductive practices found in our school. In his keynote address, Dr. Westerberg will use personal experience and humor to highlight what works in high school reform and the leadership challenges that accompany those initiatives. The goal of the session is for participants to leave with a sense of direction and enthusiasm for leading high school reform in their communities. Recycling bins for discarded early retirement application forms will be available in the lobby.

Closing the Gap Breakout Session

This breakout session will use a question-and-answer format to expand upon school reform initiatives highlighted in Dr. Westerberg’s keynote address as dictated by the interests of participants. This will also be a good time to share specific leadership strategies for leading the change process in the context of the realities of today’s high schools.

Biography: Dr. Tim Westerberg
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Tim Westerberg served as a high school principal for twenty-six years, the last twenty of which were at Littleton High School in Littleton, Colorado (1985-2005). Prior to entering school administration, Dr. Westerberg taught social studies and coached at the high school level in Illinois and in Iowa. Westerberg earned his B.S. and M.A. degrees from the University of Iowa and his Ph.D. in Educational Administration from Iowa State University.

In addition to his work as a teacher and administrator, Dr. Westerberg has been active in a variety of school transformation, staff development, and leadership training initiatives in Colorado, across the nation, and internationally. From 1994 to 1996 Westerberg served on the NASSP/Carnegie Foundation Commission on the Restructuring of the American High School which produced the seminal report, *Breaking Ranks: Changing an American Institution*, and he played a significant role in the development of *Breaking Ranks II* which was released in February of 2004. Other recent professional activities include serving as a site evaluator for the US Department of Education's New American High Schools project, an IDEA '97 trainer for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, a member of the National Staff Development Council's Results-Based Staff Development Initiative, a member of ASCD's *What Works In Schools* staff development cadre, President of the Colorado Association of School Executives, member of the Colorado Commission for High School Improvement, and Interim Executive Director of The Alliance for Quality Teaching.

Dr. Westerberg has received numerous awards in recognition of his service to the education profession, including being named as one of four finalists for the NASSP/Met Life Principal of the Year program in 1994, the Honor Administrator Award by the Colorado Music Educators Association in 1998, and the Department Service Award by the Colorado Association of Secondary School Principals in 1999.