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As one of four people to visit the New Technology High School system in Napa, Calif., I sent an email from Napa to the second wave of visitors from the South Bend Community School System as they prepared to visit Napa the following week. Here is the message I sent.

*We have completed our tour of the two schools in the Napa/Sacramento area, and it is fair to say that we were impressed. For a long time, the business community has lamented the disconnect between what the work world would like to see in high school graduates and what is actually being produced. I think that for the first time in my 30+ years of being in a position to assess and hire people, we witnessed an educational culture that puts content and soft skills into real-world context for kids. Personally, the quest to impact our educational system has been a 30-year journey.*

*Initially, we complained like most of the business community, without offering any significant guidance. However, in 1997, our lives at Daman changed dramatically. We literally deconstructed (blew it up) our business model. With great pain and trepidation, we set about re-inventing ourselves to focus on our real mission: to help our customers be successful. Suffice it to say, there were many leaps of faith required on the path to meeting that goal. We know firsthand what radical change means to an organization. We also know that profound improvement requires profound change and courage.*

*Through our journey, now in its tenth year, we learned some things along the way that helped move us from the chorus of complainers to a new understanding of 'what might be possible if...'*

*Our change required teaching our people the skills that were not being taught in our schools. We also learned about the process of learning as we initially floundered in our transformation, while using conventional methods. The sum of these experiences laid the foundation for a white paper we published, "Harvesting the Energy of Leadership and Innovation Within Our Educational System" (<http://www.daman.com/casestudies/DamanEducation.pdf>), in 2004, establishing a benchmark for what might be, without knowing what form this new educational process would take.*

*In the last two days, we have seen the methodology and the results of a system that is a validated solution. If you have not read this piece, I'm going to go out on a limb and suggest that you do so before you get to Napa. What you are going to experience is the embodiment of what the future of education can be, and it's unlike anything you have seen. We have little doubt that you all will come away equally impressed and convinced about the impact this program can have on our kids, community, and competitiveness.*

It is my sincere hope that New Technology High School systems are implemented throughout the country. They are systems capable of preparing our children to have a profound impact on the way some organizations are working now, and more will work in the future. A workplace that requires skill sets that traditional schools are not equipped to deliver. Skill sets that the military, hospitals, and manufacturing are all looking for in high school graduates. NTHS unlocks the natural passion kids develop for learning when personal responsibility, critical thinking, personal leadership, community service, and teamwork are wrapped around content.

Larry M. Davis  
President