Turning Schools Around: The Critical Elements of School Reform

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Objective of This Session
- The ESEA Flexibility Waiver
  - Provides states with a great opportunity to reinvent school accountability.
  - Emphasizes turning around the lowest-performing schools.
- But something is missing …
  - This session will describe the critical (missing) elements that local, state, and national leaders must take into account in order for school reform efforts to be successful.

The Currency of the Day is School Change
- The federal government
- States
- Business
- Parents
- And... lest we forget, there is big money to be made in the school turnaround market (external providers, curriculum publishers, etc.)

Not Forgetting...
Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, ... infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

- George Santayana, The Life of Reason (1905/2009)

So First... A Little History

1950s
Sputnik + Cold War + National Insecurity = National Defense Education Act of 1958

1960s
- The Civil Rights Movement
- Brown v. Topeka Board of Education
- LBJ’s war on poverty (ESEA of 1965)
- The Coleman Report (1966 unintentional effect)
1970s and Beyond

- The Effective Schools Movement (e.g., the Correlates of Effective Schools)
  - Identified success stories (mid 60's to early 70's)
  - Described high performing outliers (70's & 80's)
  - Prescriptive phase (80's & 90's) – Examined the causal relationship between correlates and outcomes

**As a result, we know what effective schools look like and do.**

### Over Thirty Years of Research...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlates of Effective Schools (Edmonds, 1982)</th>
<th>Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools (Shinn &amp; Bylina, 2007)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. the principal’s leadership and attention to the quality of instruction</td>
<td>1. Clear and Shared Focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus</td>
<td>2. High Standards and Expectations for All Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning</td>
<td>3. Effective School Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery; and</td>
<td>4. High Levels of Collaboration and Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation</td>
<td>5. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Aligned with Standards</td>
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### Policy Efforts to Put Effective Schools Research to Practice

- **1997 – The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program**
- **2001 – NCLB**
  - Comprehensive School Reform
  - Reading First
  - Schoolwide Title I
  - School Improvement Plans
- And now … the ESEA Flexibility Waiver

### Primary Buckets of the Waiver

- **College and career readiness expectations**
  - Common Core Standards
  - New assessments
- **Differentiated recognition, accountability, and support**
  - Replace AYP with new system
  - Turn around the lowest performing schools
- **Supporting effective instruction and leadership**
  - Teacher and principal evaluation

### ESEA Waiver: 7 Turnaround Principles

1. **Provide strong leadership** by: (1) reviewing the performance of the current principal; (2) either replacing the principal if such a change is necessary to ensure strong and effective leadership, or demonstrating to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort; and (3) providing the principal with operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staff, curriculum, and budget;

2. **Ensure that teachers are effective and able to improve instruction** by: (1) reviewing the quality of all staff and retaining only those who are determined to be effective and have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort; (2) preventing ineffective teachers from transferring to these schools; and (3) providing job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support systems and tied to teacher and student needs;

3. **Redesign the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration**;

4. **Strengthen the school’s instructional program** based on student needs and ensuring that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with State academic content standards;

5. **Use data to inform instruction** and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data;

6. **Establish a school environment** that improves school safety and discipline and addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students’ social, emotional, and health needs; and

7. **Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement**;
SO WHAT’S THE DEAL? WE HAVE OVER THREE DECADES OF KNOWING WHAT SCHOOLS SHOULD LOOK LIKE!

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t so far.

(Ron Edmonds, 1979)

"All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

– Leo Tolstoy, in Anna Karenina

From School Reform from the Inside Out, (Elmore, 2008)

WHAT WE ARE FACING IS THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE

- The failure of School Reform Models (fidelity to a model is insufficient)
- Political barriers (timelines, lack of research, prescriptive and mismatched)
- Managing the human side of change (emotions, the process of changing behavior)
- Focus on the wrong drivers (accountability, individuals, tech, fragmented approaches)

IF WE ARE GOING TO FIND SUCCESS...

At every level of the educational system:

1. We must manage the human side of change in all the work that we do; and
2. We must create and capitalize on the “right drivers” in order to do so.

MANAGING THE HUMAN SIDE OF CHANGE

- Means addressing the emotional aspects of being human
  - Grief
  - Resistance
  - Uncertainty
  - Loss
  - Self-Efficacy
  - Etc.

TWO EXAMPLES

- CRAM – The Concerns Based Adoption Model
- ADKAR – A model for change in business, government, and communities

Both examples show us that to lead people through change, we have to meet them where they’re at and find a way to nurture them to the next level.
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CBAM - CONCERNS-BASED ADOPTION MODEL

Continuum: Stages of Concern
- Unaware
- Seeking Solutions
- Actively engaged

A model for understanding how people respond to change initiatives.

Continuum: Levels of Use
- Non-Use
- Learning
- Expert Use

Continuum: Stages of Concern
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ADKAR
- Awareness of the need for change
- Desire to support and participate in the change
- Knowledge of how to change
- Ability to implement required skills and behaviors
- Reinforcement to sustain the change

Change Management & the Waiver

No matter what type of approach one takes, managing change requires us to first think about where people are and then strategically think about how to lead them to the next stage.

This should be an explicit part of the strategies that are used by SEA, LEA, and school leaders in the space created by the ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

Change Management & the Waiver

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WHAT DRIVES WHOLE SYSTEM REFORM?

Right Drivers
- Capacity building
- Ensuring group quality
- Emphasizing high quality pedagogy
- Approaching reform systemically

Wrong Drivers
- External Accountability (on its own)
- Focusing on individual quality
- Relying on technology or other substitutes
- Fragmented efforts

We’ll Know We’re Heading Down the Right Path, If …

The strategies we use:
1. cultivate intrinsic motivation in students, teachers, and school and LEA leaders
2. engage those same people in actions to continuously improve instruction and learning;
3. inspire people to move forward collectively through teamwork; and
4. affect all students, teachers, and leaders.

These are the criteria for knowing whether or not you will overcome the Problem of Change.

Improvement at scale is largely a property of organizations, not of the preexisting traits of the individuals who work in them.

(Wright, 2008)

(Adapted from ADKAR: A Model for Change in Business, Government, and our Community (Hart, 2006))

(Adapted from Implementing Change: Patterns, Principles, and Potholes (Hall & Hord, 2006))

(Adapted from Change Management & the Waiver (Fullan, 2011))

(Adapted from What Drives Whole System Reform? (Fullan, 2011))
1) CAPACITY BUILDING: WHAT IS CAPACITY?

- Latent potential of the vessel to do what it was intended to do.
- In the case of a school, capacity is the potential of teachers’ knowledge, skills and dispositions; professional community; technical resources; program coherence; and principal leadership to impact student achievement. (Newmann et al., 2000)

WHAT ELSE IS CAPACITY?

- In addition to human capital, we need to address social capital.
  - Social Capital
    - The “social conditions that maximize instructional performance” (Adams & Jean-Marie, 2011)
    - Organizational health (e.g., data on staff and student perceptions)

2) GROUP QUALITY AND CONNECTEDNESS

- Strong social capital becomes the foundational resource for building human capital
- How do you change social capital?
  - Displace bad NORMS with good NORMS
- The purpose of honing Group Quality through new norms is to build Collective Efficacy

3) FOCUS ON HIGH QUALITY PEDAGOGY

The Characteristics of Effective Schools are the end-goal, but the mission of SEA, LEA, and school leaders should be to build a culture in the schools and districts that is focused on continuously improving the INSTRUCTIONAL CORE to meet the needs of all learners.

A culture with this focus will have the momentum to solve the problems that the leaders don’t yet know even exist!
BE PURPOSEFUL, NOT DISTRACTIBLE

- Technology (or any other perceived silver bullet)
  - Great if used as an "accelerator of change"
  - Not so great if it's not used side by side with a focus on excellent pedagogy

4) SYSTEMS THINKING

What’s wrong here?

Systems think about connectedness and allness.

Connectedness of:
- People
- Processes
- Means
- Results
- All Levels

BALANCING ASPECTS OF SYSTEMS THINKING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student Self-report grades</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Student Piagetian programs</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teaching Formative evaluation</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Teacher Micro teaching</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>School Acceleration</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>School Classroom behavioral</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teaching Comp. interventions for LD students</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teacher Teacher clarity</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Teaching Reciprocal teaching</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Teaching Feedback</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>Teaching Student control over learning</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Visible Learning (Hattie, 2009)

“A SYSTEM IS A GROUP OF LINKED PARTS THAT WORK TOGETHER TOWARD A COMMON END”

(REDDING, 2006)

THE ESEA WAIVER AND DRIVERS

- To what extent do the elements of the waiver use the right drivers?
  - New, higher, and internationally benchmarked standards
  - New assessments
  - Evaluation systems for teachers and leaders
  - Turning around the lowest 5% of Title I schools by requiring prescribed interventions

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References


**Many other great resources for school turnaround and system reform are available for free at [http://www.centerii.org/survey/](http://www.centerii.org/survey/).**