Why Not Even Better?

Dr. Joseph F. Johnson, Jr.
National Center for Urban School Transformation
San Diego State University

May 22, 2015
National Excellence in Urban Education Symposium
Dallas, Texas
The schools awarded at this event have achieved impressive results. For example some have…

- More than 90% of Black, Latino, low-income, White, Asian, and English learner students achieving proficiency on rigorous, new state assessments
- Excellent evidence of academic progress for students with disabilities
- Performance on college entrance exams that exceed state and national averages
- Low suspension and expulsion rates
- Many other examples of student success
Excellence & Equity Are Attainable!

- The schools awarded at this symposium are among the best schools in their state AND…

- The schools awarded achieve outstanding results for every demographic group they serve.

- Equity and excellence are not competing goals. In fact, they are dimensions of the same goal. Equity without excellence is just mediocrity. Excellence without equity is an oxymoron.
So how can NCUST award winning schools get even better?

How can any urban school get better learning results for their students?
1. Remember: Improvement requires a SYSTEMIC focus.
Every system is perfectly designed to achieve the results it gets.

Paul Batalden, Dartmouth University
Curriculum
Curriculum Expectations
Curriculum
Expectations
Assignments
Teacher

Quality

Curriculum

Expectations

Assignments

Rigor
Curriculum Expectations Assignments Rigor Collaboration Quality Teacher
1. Remember: Improvement requires a SYSTEMIC focus.

- Systems are regular, consistent, and predictable.
- Leaders constantly build the regularity, consistency, and predictability of systems.

- Effective systems are aligned and coherent.
- Leaders constantly build coherence in systems by helping others see the connections.
2. Strong systems DEPEND upon strong foundations. Cultures and climates are the foundation of every school.
**Building the Foundation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Key beliefs, knowledge, perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>Must believe the change is possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHERS</td>
<td>Must perceive the change is worth their effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARENTS/FAMILIES</td>
<td>Must believe key individuals care about them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF</td>
<td>Must know what is critical in order to pursue the change successfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Must perceive that they have sufficient support to succeed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Remember: Strong systems DEPEND upon strong foundations.

- Leaders are constantly working to strengthen the culture and climate of their schools for each stakeholder group.

- Leaders are constantly assessing key beliefs, knowledge, and perceptions and responding accordingly.
3. Remember: Systems get stronger through cycles of improvement
Simple Learning Cycle

Lesson Input \[ R \] Learner Feedback
PLC Cycle

Common Assessment Feedback

Learning Goals

R

Lesson Planning

Lesson Implementation
Teacher Observation Cycle

- Lesson Goals
- Observation Criteria/Goals
- Observation
- Observation Feedback
3. Remember: Systems get stronger through cycles of improvement

- Leaders try to reduce the amount of “chicken feeding” that occurs in both student learning and adult learning efforts.

- Leaders strive to maximize the amount of constructive reflection so that cycles are increasingly effective.
Yes! We can get even better!

No, it isn’t easy!

But, our students are worth the effort!
See you in San Diego!

May 23, 24, & 25, 2016
San Diego, California
Register now at:
http://www.ncust.org
Resources

