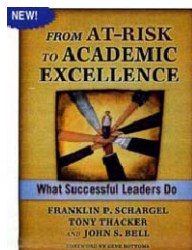
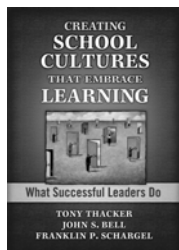


Sources: Schargel, Thacker, Bell



Leadership for School Improvement

Why am I working so hard, yet feeling so helpless?



What We Know

- Currently, 24 million American students have a least one risk factor that may lead them to dropout.
- Currently, 18 million American students have two or more risk factors that may lead them to dropout.
- Soon, America will have more students with risk factors for dropout than those who do not.

What We Must Do

- We must have schools that can lessen the impact of risk factors
- We must improve our approach to teaching and learning – in short, we must improve schools

CHANGE

How Do Schools Improve?

Often, we try to improve/change without understanding (many things)?

What Successful Leaders Do

- The Myths:
 - Schools were created to serve students.
 - Schools are structured organizations that cannot be changed – school is school.
 - A principal can improve a school.
 - To improve a school, one must work on the students.

Improve the Adults

- School improvement is really about improving the work of the adults in the building.
 - What do the adults in the building do well?
 - What needs improving?
 - Who can improve and needs to stay?
 - Who probably will not be able or willing to improve and must go?
 - How will the improvement be accomplished?

Professional Development that Yields Improvement

- An acid test for determining if the school is on track
 - Dissect the School's Mission Statement with adult practice in mind
 - Check alignment of policy vs. practice

A Sample Mission Statement

To meet the challenge of the twenty-first century, XYZ Middle School will seek to develop each student's academic, social, physical, and emotional potential in a safe, supportive learning environment, creating successful and productive citizens in a multicultural and technologically oriented society.

Dissecting the Mission

- Activity:
You and your partners are a review team visiting XYZ Middle School for accreditation purposes.
- What questions would you need answered to be sure that the school had aligned itself to the mission statement? Choose a spokesperson to report to the larger group in approximately 15 minutes

Dissecting the Mission

- Is everyone working from the same understanding of definitions? i.e.,
 - What are the challenges of the twenty-first century?
 - What is meant by "develop each student's academic, social, physical, and emotional potential?"
 - Define "safe."
 - What is the definition of "successful and productive citizens?"

Dissecting the Mission

- Is everyone working from the same understanding of definitions? i.e.,
 - Define multicultural oriented
 - Define technologically oriented

What might the adults at XYZ need to know to meet the mission?

- If the definition of twenty-first century means knowledge of technology – do the adults have this knowledge and ability to use it?
- Academic and physical development are usually expected functions in schools. Which adults at XYZ are responsible for social and emotional development of students? Do they have the skills to help students develop socially and emotionally?

What might the adults at XYZ need to know to meet the mission?

- Which adults are responsible for helping students become successful and productive citizens? (in too many schools, this part of the mission is seen as an automatic byproduct of the schooling – it is not!)
- In a society that has often marginalized certain groups of students, adults in the school must be specifically trained to support students by showing them how to remove barriers to productivity.

What might the adults at XYZ need to know to meet the mission?

- Who is responsible for “safe”?
- Do all the adults in the building have a stake in insuring that multiculturalism is not just a word in the mission. Is multiculturalism just the purview of the ELL teacher?
- If all teachers in the school are not using technology to support learning, and many don't even know how to use PowerPoint, then how will the mission ever be a meaningful one?

With That As a Context... What Did We Find?

- The Schools That We Studied Had Two Things in Common:
 - 1. Consistency of Effort
 - You cannot think your way into a new way of acting, you must act your way into a new way of thinking
 - 2. Purity of Purpose
 - Student needs drive adult actions

Student Learning and Achievement

- True learning only occurs through unhampered participation in a meaningful setting. Illich 1970
- Learning is the product of engagement and effort. It does not occur in the absence of either. Consequently, teachers ARE responsible for student learning.
- Instead of simply identifying the at-risk learner, identify their interferences to learning and allow that to define the support system.

School Improvement

- The culture of any organization is essentially what its leader models and tolerates.
- Though cultures are resistant to change, they ARE always changing. Do you want to guide the change or be subservient to it?
- Shared Mission, Vision and Beliefs

How do we know what we know?

- Do we collect data?
- Do we collect the right data?
- Do we collect meaningful data?
- Do we know what to do with it once we have collected it?

Data Collection

- On two pieces of sticky paper provided, write down two (one on each piece of paper) sources or kinds of data your school or system collects.
- When finished, wait for instructions.

Data Collection

- Come to the front of the room and place each of the data descriptions under the appropriate category of data.

How do you determine needed changes?

- Embrace the data!
- Bernhardt's 4 Domains of data
 - Demographics
 - Student Learning
 - School Processes
 - Perceptions

Root Cause Analysis

- Once we have the data, are we arriving at the correct conclusion?



Staff Empowerment

- No real learning can occur in the absence of mistakes
- The difference between many good schools and all great schools is the extent to which their faculties are energized and actualized
- Collective Knowledge Always Trumps Individual
- Tale of the Tape – an exercise in collaboration

Data on Display

- You are to determine your level of agreement with the following convictions. You will be asked to register your personal level of agreement which will enable us to determine a group dynamic concerning the convictions.

Parent and Family Involvement

- Which parents do you include on your committees?
- Honest and timely communication.
- But...you cannot change the home from which the children come!

School and Community Collaboration

- Community Relations Committee
 - Community Outreach Plans
 - *To prepare students to live as compassionate and caring human beings while enhancing what is taught in the classroom and extending it into the community at large, students engage in community service activities such as working with elementary schools at Optimist Bike Rodeos, participating in city-wide food drives, being buddies with middle school students at the Special Olympics, and adopting families at Christmas.*
- Mary Jo McLaughlin, The Academy of Creative Education

If We Had Our Way

All States Would Implement Systemic Change:

- Standards
- University Redesign
- Certification
- Professional Development
- Barriers

If We Had Our Way

- Leadership standards would be designed by the stakeholders who must embrace them and the practitioners who must align their practice to them.

If We Had Our Way

- All universities with leadership preparation programs in a state would be required to align their programs to the leadership standards.
- All aspects of leadership preparation would be determined by a university/P12 partnership.
- All aspects of the leadership preparation would be based in "real world" application.
- The internship would be meaningful and under the supervision of well-paid trained principal mentors.

If We Had Our Way

- Leader certification would involve a two-year required mentoring program for all new principals.
- Mentors would be trained and well paid.
- A principal leader status would exist that recognized exceptional leaders with salary and prestige.

If We Had Our Way

- The role of instructional leader would be carefully defined including every leader constituent group to which "instructional leader" applies.
- Professional development would be driven by the leadership standards, monitored for quality, and governed by practitioners.
- A statewide system of professional development quality control and delivery would exist in every state.

If We Had Our Way

- Constant attention would be paid to working conditions with the intent of removing barriers to improving student achievement.

What Can I Do Tomorrow?

- Set aside one hour per day which is my instructional support hour
- Control interruptions to class time: Intercom, student and parent interruptions, etc.
- Begin changing those things that are tangible in the school: Lobby, student work, other.
- Model instructional leadership daily
- Change the focus of faculty meetings