



CT Superintendent's Community of Practice

January 26, 2016

Series Facilitators

From the Great Schools Partnership:

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www.greatschoolspartnership.org/presentations

Series Outcomes

- Build capacity to implement mastery-based learning at scale across a school district
- Explore and share ideas and strategies underway or planned in alignment with implementation
- Create a network of like-minded educators for political and cultural support

Meeting Dates

- September 22, 2015—Cromwell, Crowne Plaza
- October 27, 2015—New Haven
- December 8, 2015—Farmington
- January 26, 2016—Meriden
- **March 1, 2016—Cromwell, Radisson**
- May 3, 2016—location TBD

Agenda

Welcome, Overview and Outcomes

Individual Reflection on the Leadership Dimension of Global Best Practices

Group Discussion of the Leadership Dimension of Global Best Practices

Consideration of Next Steps at Your School

Dilemma of Practice presentation from Farmington

Group Norms

- Build on and support one another's efforts
- Acknowledge and encourage different approaches as we collaborate
- Trust the integrity of our colleagues
- Monitor our air time in group gatherings
- Communicate openly, clearly, and directly
- Acknowledge and honor different perspectives
- Assume positive intentions of all members
- Honor confidentiality regarding the conversations held here

Participant Expectations

- Follow and support the norms
- Attend all PLG meetings
- Contribute as able between meetings



Outcomes

Understand critical leadership considerations needed to guide your school change efforts



Outcomes

Identify leadership strengths and challenges in your school setting



Outcomes

Commit to next steps you will take as a school leader



NEW ENGLAND
SECONDARY SCHOOL
CONSORTIUM

GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES

*An Internationally Benchmarked
Self-Assessment Tool
for Secondary Learning*



STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS**1 INITIATING**

The school culture is largely characterized by complacency and a “don’t rock the boat” mentality, and many important decisions are made in the effort to sidestep potential resistance or pushback from staff and parents. There are no formal structures or processes in place to examine student data at the classroom or team level, largely due to a desire to avoid singling out a specific teacher, group, or department. The principal and other school leaders routinely avoid confrontation or discussions about persistent issues, and poor student-performance results are not openly or honestly discussed with individual teachers. Poor scores on state assessments and other unflattering data may be hidden, excused, or minimized. Inappropriate and unprofessional behavior is often tolerated, which has eroded trust and collegiality among the staff. The school culture remains largely resistant to self-reflection, and the belief that “we’re doing good enough” persists despite evidence that too many students are failing to succeed or graduate.

3 DEVELOPING

The superintendent, principal, and leadership team have developed a strategic plan for confronting challenges that may arise in response to school-improvement efforts. Decisions are increasingly guided by identified student needs, research on school effectiveness, and sound principles—not by a fear of confrontation, resistance, or possible failure. The school community is no longer making excuses for poor student scores or other unfavorable data, but is taking steps to identify the root causes and undertake strategic actions to address the issues. Administrators, teachers, and other staff have collaboratively developed standards and norms for professional behavior and interactions, although unprofessional behavior by some individuals continues to go unacknowledged by administrators and colleagues. The school’s action plan is bold and ambitious, but the principal and leadership team have been unwilling to advocate for key elements with the superintendent and school board, even though the strategies are in the best interest of their students.

5 PERFORMING

The principal, administrators, and teacher-leaders skillfully handle contentious issues and defend equitable ideals and practices—even in the face of actual or potential attacks—that promote positive learning outcomes for all students. Good intentions and well-laid plans are not undone by careless words or actions, but they are achieved through collaboration, professionalism, and goal-driven moral courage. Each faculty member assumes personal responsibility for addressing interpersonal issues before they turn into problems. School leaders are self-reflective, process concerns and conflicts openly, and move the collective dialogue beyond personal issues and interests. School faculty and staff advocate for the school’s improvement work within the community, and the principal and leadership team work closely with the superintendent and school board to advance critical policies that support a student-centered academic program. When difficult situations arise, the principal proactively communicates with staff, students, parents, and the larger community to minimize the spread of misinformation, including reaching out to school board and local media. In general, challenges are not avoided or postponed, but embraced by administrators, faculty, and staff.

STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an **X** on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.



STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

1 INITIATING

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3 DEVELOPING

The superintendent develops strategies that may encourage staff efforts. District leaders sound potential resistance, no longer other until the root causes are addressed. Staff have norms for behavior, although continuous improvement and collective ambition have been unmet. Superintendent strategies

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Individual Reflection

Highlight in **GREEN**: what's in place in your setting? What's going well?

Highlight in **ORANGE**: what's a particular challenge?

Group Reflection

In groups, look for commonalities and differences.

Discuss observations

WHOLE GROUP SHARING



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But first back to last session:

What actions did you take based on your conversation from the Open Space discussion last month?

Find a “stranger” and share what you have been doing since we last met in December.

Whole group debrief.

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Step 1: Presentation of Dilemma (10 minutes)

Step 2 — Audience asks clarifying questions (5 minutes)

Step 3 — Audience asks probing questions (10 minutes)

Step 4 — Audience conversation: What did we hear? What do we think about the problem? (15 minutes)

Step 5 — Presenter response (5 minutes)

Step 6 — Debrief the process (5 minutes)

Consultancy

How can Farmington Public
Schools...?



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PARTNERSHIP



THANK YOU