Competency as the Leverage Point in School Redesign: Sustaining the Work Through Coherence and Alignment

iNACOL Symposium | October 24, 2017
WHO WE ARE

Is a **non-profit** support organization based in Portland working nationally with schools, districts and state agencies, providing **coaching**, and developing tools.
WE BELIEVE

In equitable, personalized, rigorous learning for all students leading to readiness for college, careers, and citizenship.

That schools must simultaneously attend to policy, practice, and community engagement.

School improvement is context-based, not one-size fits all.
Outcomes

I can use a comprehensive assessment to place my district on an implementation continuum regarding competency education.
Outcomes

I can show how competency education enables equitable implementation of other current significant initiatives.
Outcomes

I can generate a plan that enables colleagues and community members to understand how competency education is the key driver for sustained success.
Agenda

Welcome, Introductions, Outcomes, Overview

Tale of 3 districts

Equity and Vision

Principles of Coherent District Transformation

District Self-Assessment

Action Planning

Closing + Next Steps
Great Schools Partnership is honored to send eight members of our team to present at this year's iNACOL Blended and Online Symposium. Below you will find materials and resources for each of the presentations.

Competency education is a high leverage initiative. It solidifies a commitment to equity, articulates college- and career-ready outcomes for all students, ensures personalized learning is rigorous, and leads to improved teaching and learning. It also provides an array of measureable learning outcomes and informs student-centered accountability systems. Participants will use tools and resources to frame their transformation work as one cohesive, coherent effort leading to greater sustainability.

Materials
# A Tale of Three Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro</th>
<th>Bayview</th>
<th>Hillside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovative PL grant</td>
<td>Innovative PL Grant</td>
<td>Innovative PL Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on PL</td>
<td>Historical commitment to equity</td>
<td>Commitment to equity from district leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Led by project manager</td>
<td>Led by small team</td>
<td>Shared Vision (visual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBE as optional PD</td>
<td>Long term view</td>
<td>Action Plan and timeline for roll out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Time, $ + people dedicated to PD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equity + Vision
GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES
2ND EDITION
An Internationally Benchmarked Self-Assessment Tool for Secondary Learning
Global Best Practices: An Internationally Benchmarked Self-Assessment Tool for Secondary Learning Second Edition is a practical, action-oriented tool for teachers, school administrators, superintendents, school board members, parents, and other stakeholders in a school community. The tool grew out of a recognition that national borders no longer define the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind that students need for success, and that secondary schools may need assistance reviewing learning standards, organizational structures, leadership models, teaching strategies, professional development, and student outcomes in relation to research on high-performing educational systems and practices. The first edition of Global Best Practices was an initial step toward defining, in detail, the characteristics of effective 21st-century education and applying them to the creation of new models of teaching, learning, and leading in today's secondary schools. Now, Global Best Practices Second Edition enhances that definition with findings from the newest research and latest lessons learned from practitioners working in the school-improvement field. This tool distills some common characteristics of high-performing schools in the United States and abroad, and presents them in a concise, user-friendly format. Rather than give school and district leaders and teachers a simple list of recommendations, the tool offers a practical, step-by-step process that schools can use to assess their relative performance in key areas and shape their school-improvement plans. Global Best Practices is intended to make this important research more accessible and useful to the schools and educators across the country. We will continue to revise and update Global Best Practices as new research and strategies emerge, and as we receive feedback from practitioners who are using the tool in their schools. If you have recommendations for strengthening this resource, we strongly encourage you to submit suggestions to gbpfeedback@greatschoolspartnership.org.

Strands & Dimensions

TEACHING + LEARNING
1.1 Equity
1.2 Personalization + Relevance
1.3 Academic Expectations
1.4 Proficiency-Based Education
1.5 Assessment Practices
1.6 International + Multicultural Learning
1.7 Technology Integration
1.8 Learning Communities

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN
2.1 Vision, Mission + Action Plan
2.2 School Culture
2.3 Multiple Pathways
2.4 Transitions
2.5 Supports + Extensions
2.6 Time + Space
2.7 Data Systems + Applications
2.8 Continual Improvement

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
3.1 Teacher Recruitment + Retention
3.2 Administrative Leadership
3.3 Shared Leadership
3.4 Moral Courage

SCHOOL DISTRICT
4.1 School Board
4.2 District Administrators
**1.1 EQUITY**

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

- **INITIATING**
  Teachers and staff question whether all students can or want to succeed. Academic, social, and aspirational inequities across the student body may have been identified, but no formal or strategic actions have been undertaken to address them. Students performing below grade level typically fail to catch up to their peers. The school’s courses, curricula, and instruction do not promote common high expectations or engagement for all students. The academic program is a complex hierarchy of tiered tracks and teachers are not trained in classroom differentiation or other personalization strategies. Student performance and behavioral data are collected and reviewed at the school level, but individual and demographic data are not disaggregated or analyzed to identify disparities in behavior or performance between student subgroups. School discipline structures are punitive rather than strategic or restorative, and consequences interfere with learning time. While all students have access to enriching school activities and co-curricular programs, actual participation patterns reveal that certain demographic groups participate in these programs at significantly lower rates. Some staff members, parents, guardians, and community members display considerable resistance to adopting strategies that would promote a more equitable school structure.

- **DEVELOPING**
  There is a disconnect between the school’s stated beliefs that all students can succeed and the structures, policies, and practices it has in place. While there may be clearly stated common and rigorous academic expectations for all students, there may be inconsistencies in the manner in which these are applied. Student performance data continues to reveal persistent gaps among demographic groups. The school is beginning to collect and analyze disaggregated performance and behavioral data to identify and address individual student needs on an ongoing basis. The school offers some support opportunities to academically struggling students, but interventions are not systemic or integrated into regular courses. Some academic tracks have been eliminated, but barriers to accessing higher-level courses remain in place. There is inconsistent use of instructional and assessment practices that are personalized, student-centered, and engaging. The school is beginning to reexamine and revise discipline policies and practices to be more restorative and supportive of learning. Inequities across the student body are monitored at least annually. A small number of staff, parents, guardians, and community members remain resistant to adopting strategies that promote greater equity. Participation in enriching school activities and co-curricular programs is relatively consistent across demographic groups. Community input is solicited and reviewed and personalization is considered when programs are developed or refined.

**STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT ADDRESSED</td>
<td>INITIATING</td>
<td>DEVELOPING</td>
<td>PERFORMING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **PERFORMING**
  Teachers hold each other accountable for engaging in ongoing reflection and courageous conversations with colleagues and students about their own practice and beliefs, and acknowledge the role that bias and privilege play in their work. Teachers develop strong, trusting relationships with all students and employ asset-based approaches to teaching and learning. The school community has embraced the belief that all students can succeed, and this stance clearly informs the school’s actions, structures, policies, and practices. Every member of the school community is able to recognize and interrupt implicit and explicit prejudicial and harmful language and actions such as racial microaggressions or bullying based on gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, social class, or disability. Educators help build upon the experiences and strengths each student brings and promote positive self-images and high academic expectations for all learners. They take responsibility for engaging and motivating students. Every student is enrolled in academically rigorous, college-preparatory courses or learning experiences. Discipline systems and structures are restorative and instructive in their approach, leading to an increased ability for students to address differences in positive and healthy ways. The perspectives, experiences, and voices of every demographic group represented in the school community is sought out, included, and incorporated in the development and refinement of programs.
2.1 VISION, MISSION + ACTION PLAN

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIATING</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>PERFORMING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school has a public vision and mission, but these statements have not been reviewed for many years and no longer reflect the needs of the current student body or the values and contributions of the current staff. The school’s improvement plan does not represent a collective commitment or reflect the expressed values of the school community. State and federal funds for school improvement and professional development often go underutilized or unused. Many major decisions appear to contradict the school’s mission statement, but faculty, students, and parents rarely discuss these inconsistencies. Teaching, assessment, and reporting practices are inconsistent across grade levels, departments, and classrooms.</td>
<td>The school has collaboratively developed a public vision and mission that reflects the contributions and values of diverse stakeholders in the school community, although some staff members and parents remain critical of the school’s new direction. Despite broad-based participation in its development, the action plan tends to reflect the personal interests and desires of a few strong voices. School leaders have discussed the action plan with all staff members and some community leaders. These communication efforts have increased support among parents, the public, and the local media. The principal has presented the school’s action plan to the school board and received general approval of its goals and strategies. Major decisions are increasingly aligned with the school’s vision, mission, and action plan, and instructional practices are being modified to reflect the school’s stated goals and values.</td>
<td>In collaboration with staff, students, parents, community members, and local policy makers, the school has created a bold, student-centered, long-term vision for ongoing school improvement and professional growth. The mission and vision statements express a unified value system that is based on personalizing teaching and learning, promoting common high expectations, cultivating student aspirations and ambitions, and nurturing the holistic development and wellness of every student. The vision and mission statements are clear, understandable, and powerful, and exemplify the shared principles and ideals of the school community. These statements have been formally endorsed by the school board, local policy makers, and business and community leaders. The vision and mission are used to guide all budgetary, staffing, and instructional decisions, and to shape professional development opportunities and annual action plans. The coherence among these parts allows for a singular focus on student learning. The action plan and all relevant documents are publicly available online, and school and community stakeholders are familiar with its major goals and strategies. The school has established a process for allowing stakeholders to continually analyze and contribute to the mission, vision, and action plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL**

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

1. NOT ADDRESSED
2. INITIATING
3. DEVELOPING
4. PERFORMING

©2016 NEW ENGLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL CONSORTIUM
Equity + Vision Activity

Part 1

1. Read the “Performing Column” in Dimensions 1.1 (Equity) and 2.1 (Vision)

2. **Highlight** what is current practice and **underline** practices you aspire to

3. Turn to a neighbor and share one specific element of your aspiration

4. With no words, draw the vision for learning that you aspire to in your district
Equity + Vision Activity
Part 2

Discuss your visual with your table

1. What do you see?
2. What don’t you see?
3. What do you wonder?
Principles of Coherent District Transformation
Bold, Clear, Ambitious Vision
Frame: Essential Dimensions

1.1 Equity

2.1 Vision + Action Planning

3.3 Shared Leadership

1.8 PLC
Lens: Aligned and Connected Strategies
Comprehensive Action Plan

CBE

Blended Learning

PLGs

Pathways

Early College

PLPs

E.C.
District Self-Assessment
### Proficiency-based Learning Self-Assessment

#### Policy and Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Framework and Core Principles</th>
<th>Initiating</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is little agreement about the essential knowledge and skills for success after k-12 schooling or principles to guide student learning. The school/district utilizes a mastery verification process that is based entirely on course success and expectations vary widely within the school/district. Educators and school committee members are unfamiliar with the state frameworks for proficiency-based learning.</td>
<td>Proficiency-based learning is focused mostly on course-level descriptions of knowledge and skill. The school/district utilizes a verification process based on course success and there are common expectations for success. Learning goals for courses are clear and assessments for courses are aligned to common standards. There is clear alignment with state frameworks for proficiency-based learning. Students may be required to complete capstone projects, exhibitions of learning, or performance tasks to verify mastery.</td>
<td>A clear set of graduation standards exist for transferable skills (cross-curricular) and content-area knowledge and skills. These standards represent the essential knowledge and skills for success in postsecondary education, a career, and citizenship and are aligned with state frameworks for proficiency-based learning. The school/district utilizes a mastery verification process that flexibly supports students demonstrating learning in a variety of ways. Shared criteria for success are applied across a wide variety of demonstrations of learning, resulting in greater personalization for student learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Alignment</th>
<th>Initiating</th>
<th>Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students may experience very different expectations for meeting mastery standards from classroom to classroom within a school. There appears to be little agreement within the district or school about ways that students meet mastery standards.</td>
<td>All schools within the district use a common language to describe proficiency-based learning. A proficiency-based learning team that includes teachers, students, and parents plans professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
District Self-Assessment

1. Review the self-assessment
2. Score yourself in each row
3. Consider the following questions:
   - What are you currently doing that aligns to the 'performing' description?
   - What roadblocks might deter progress?
   - What are you planning that will ensure you stay headed in the right direction?
Action Planning

1. Determine a process for your group
2. Analyze your self-assessment results
3. Consider assets and barriers
4. Set long-term goals
5. Plan strategies and action steps to reach the goals
Consider your self-assessment

1. What is one burning question you have around **Policy**?

2. What is one burning question you have around **Practice**?

3. What is one burning question you have around **Community Engagement**?
District Self-Assessment

Based on your most burning questions, choose a group to discuss:

1. Policy
2. Practice
3. Community Engagement
Questions?
2017 iNACOL Symposium

Orlando, FL | October 23-25

Great Schools Partnership is honored to send eight members of our team to present at this year’s iNACOL Blended and Online Symposium. Below you will find materials and resources for each of the presentations.

COMPETENCY AS THE LEVERAGE POINT IN SCHOOL REDESIGN: SUSTAINING THE WORK THROUGH COHERENCE AND ALIGNMENT | OCTOBER 24, 10:00 AM-12:15 PM

Competency education is a high leverage initiative. It solidifies a commitment to equity, articulates college- and career-ready outcomes for all students, ensures personalized learning is rigorous, and leads to improved teaching and learning. It also provides an array of measureable learning outcomes and informs student-centered accountability systems. Participants will use tools and resources to frame their transformation work as one cohesive, coherent effort leading to greater sustainability.

Materials
THANK YOU

Mo Nunez
Senior Associate
mnunez@greatschoolspartnership.org

Katie Thompson
Senior Associate
kthompson@greatschoolspartnership.org

Mark Kostin
Associate Director
mkostin@greatschoolspartnership.org