Research and Development Work of the National Center on Scaling Up Effective Schools

HTTP://WWW.SCALINGUPCENTER.ORG

This research was conducted with funding from the Institute of Education Sciences (R305C10023). The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the institutions with which they are affiliated or the U.S. Department of Education.
Big Question:

How can the capacity of school districts be enhanced so that they can

• identify effective practices

• adapt them to the contexts of schools and their communities, and then

• implement them in ways that will lead to an increase in learning for all children?
Some challenges to scaling up effective programs in education

- Lack of teacher buy-in and participation (Datnow, Hubbard, and Mehan, 2002; Glennan, Bodilly, Galegher, & Kerr, 2004; Nunnery 1998)

- Inadequate attention to the organizational context in which the practices are to be implemented (Bodilly et al., 1998; Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 2001; Stringfield & Datnow, 1998)

- Conflicts between designs and other district programs or mandates (Berends, Bodilly, & Kirby, 2002; Datnow, McHugh et al., 1998; Stringfield, Datnow et al., 2000).
Our approach

- Use value added models to identify schools that “beat the odds” for minority, ELL, and low income students
- Study both high and low value added schools to understand how they are enacting what research suggests are essential components of effective schools
- Facilitate district participation in conducting needs analyses, then design innovations, that capture systematic differences between high and low value added schools
- Support district and school design teams in adapting to local context and implementing interventions
- Gradually withdraw support as the districts take ownership of scaling up
What is unique about this approach?

- Not just about the what—it is also about the how
- District and school participation in the design work will help ensure that design innovations are aligned with the goals, strengths and initiatives already under way in each district.
- Leveraging teachers and school leader’s unique expertise in the design and implementation process will design innovations address the needs of their respective schools and help bring legitimacy when it comes to implementation and scale up.
Collaboration

- **Five Research Universities**
  - Vanderbilt University, University of North Carolina, Florida State University, University of Wisconsin, Georgia State University

- **Developer**
  - Education Development Center (EDC)

- **Two large urban districts**
  - Broward County Public Schools (FL)
  - Fort Worth Independent School District (TX)
Phase 1—What makes schools effective?

- Use value added models to rank high schools
  - To what extent do students from traditionally low performing groups do better than their prior achievement would predict?
- Intensive data collection to uncover what the high value added schools are doing that contribute to their success and distinguish them from lower value added schools in the same district
  - Interviews: Administrators, core-subject teachers, support staff
  - Surveys: Principals, teachers, students, parents
  - Observation/video taping of classroom instruction
  - Focus groups: Non-core subject teachers; Student activity Leaders; Students
  - Shadowing of students
  - Observation of leadership meetings/professional development
Research Lens: Essential Components of Effective Schools

- Rigorous and Aligned Curriculum
- Quality Instruction
- Learning-centered Leadership
- Systematic Use of Data
- Personalized Learning Connections
- Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior
- Systemic Performance Accountability
- Connections to External Communities

How do the practices that high schools implement create and sustain the essential components?
General Findings from Broward County Public Schools

- Three main areas of difference between our HVA and LVA schools in BCPS
  1) *Personalization for Social and Academic Learning*
  2) A professional culture versus an audit culture
  3) A culture of high expectations (across five components)
General Findings from Fort Worth ISD

- The primary area of difference between our HVA and LVA schools in FWISD
  - Enacting Student Responsibility for Learning
    - High expectations for student learning
    - For students and teachers
    - Daily “learning time” where students falling behind can get assistance
Phase 2—Collaboration to develop an intervention
Phase 2

District Innovation Design Team develops innovations based on research from their within their

Understand the essential components and enabling supports identified in the HVA school research associated with school effectiveness

Design innovations that incorporate factors associated with school effectiveness in HVA school research that can be adapted to different school contexts

Adapt and refine innovation designs to different school contexts with integrity

Implement adapted innovations at scale

While designing and implementing integrated structures of support for the work
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TWO LEARNING AGENDAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Build team capacity for innovation design, transfer, implementation, and scale-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Deepen teams understanding of the differentiating practices of effective high schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content/Process</th>
<th>Content/Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Effective Use of Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Innovation Design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implementation &amp; Transfer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accountability &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Components of Effective High Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Differentiating practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence base from the literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence from the local setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Key components of the innovation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting and/or hindering contextual factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The work that is coming—Phase 3

- Assess the implementation of design innovations and provide feedback to design team
  - Continuous feedback loop
- Build capacity in the partner districts to implement the design innovations in additional schools
  - Success: District taking up the what and the how
- Monitor outcomes to assess effectiveness of the design, implementation, and scale-up
  - Short, medium, and long term outcomes
- Develop tools that can help other districts transfer effective practices from currently effective to less effective schools