

Leveraging System Resources: Alignment & Integration to Achieve Education's Priorities

OSEP Project Director's Conference 2010

This discussion will focus on maximizing current system resources to achieve System Alignment & Integration. The following are concepts for consideration:

- o Purpose;
- o Collaborative Resource Management;
- o Fiscal Efficiencies;
- o Effective Implementation across multiple projects; and
- o Leadership.

External evaluator and state level implementer perspectives will provide the platform for discussion and explore current challenges, viable solutions and potential opportunities for ongoing dialogue.

CONTEXT:

The advent of new measures of accountability in a time of fiscal challenges brings the field of education to the brink of transformative systems change. The opportunity to leverage this change to benefit students and practitioners is upon us. The following set of questions provides a platform for transformational leadership in the context of the seismic shifts that are occurring within the arena of education.

PERSPECTIVE:

The concept of leveraging can be described as the "power to get things done". Given the current context in education we suggest that the combination of heightened accountability and diminishing resources provides an opportunity to rethink and redo how we go about the business of educating youth within a democratic society. Consider three responses when approaching a contextual shift:

1. Manage or Control
2. Neutralize
3. Leverage

PLATFORM FOR CHANGE:

Research indicates that successful leaders are able to bring a unique clarity of purpose and a focus on critical elements to bring about extraordinary and transformative change. The discussion over the next hour will focus on four areas to consider

1. Purpose:

- a. Is the purpose shared across the education community? Is there coherence of purpose?
- b. How do we evaluate our achievement of a shared purpose?
 - Process measures; document review of mission/vision statements; log of participants at meetings; action planning document reviews; survey/interview stakeholder perceptions
 - Outcome measures: changes in policies, practices, procedures and/or operations; identify & monitor shifts in the infrastructure
- c. What is an SEA's role in creating a platform for this?

2. Collaborative Resource Management

- a. Are there strategies that promote and actualize the management of resources (human and fiscal) in a more collaborative manner?
- b. How might we evaluate the success of these strategies?
 - Process measures: document reviews of collaborative meetings & action plans; log of participants; assess degree of collaboration (Frey et al. article); review human resource allocation & job descriptions; employee/stakeholder satisfaction ratings
 - Outcome measures: tie action plans to budgets; review funding streams for alignment & collaboration across partners; outcome is fiscal efficiency (see below)

3. Fiscal Efficiencies

- a. How might we determine where fiscal efficiencies could be realized?
- b. How might this inform policy makers?
- c. What are some strategies to evaluate progress toward the achievement of fiscal efficiencies?
 - Measures very similar to #2 above
 - 524B performance measure – cost per unit
 - Pre-post assessments of fiscal efficiencies (pre collaboration/post collaboration); look for streamlining

4. Effective Implementation

- a. How might the development of a shared, purposeful and systematic way of implementing quality educational practices support and enhance the achievement of “System Alignment and Integration”?
- b. How would we evaluate the integrity of our implementation practices for the purpose of “System Alignment and Integration”?
 - Process measures: same measures as previously noted
 - Outcome measures: improved student outcomes (e.g., SPP/APR indicators at SEA & LEA levels); evidence of reduction in redundant policies, practices, procedures & operations across departments/units; identify short term, intermediate, long-term measures

5. Leadership

- a. What are the characteristics of leadership that promote this approach to leveraging resources?
- b. How could the concept of service leadership (*Servant Leadership by Robert Greenleaf*) be helpful to transformative leaders?
- c. How might we evaluate the leadership capacity of the organization or system to bring about this type of change?
 - Process measures: leadership trend tracking (demographics; characteristics); pre-post assessments of leadership & organizational culture
 - Outcome measures: sustainability & fiscal efficiency of the innovation/systems change; improved student outcomes; innovation implemented with fidelity