MASA Fall Conference 2007

- Advancing Professional Practice for School Superintendents:
  - Linking Effective Research with Effective Implementation
  - Mark Wolak
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  - markwolak@aol.com

Richard Green

- Superintendent of Minneapolis Schools
  - 1980-1988
- Chancellor of New York City Schools
  - 1988-1990
- A strong voice for children and youth
- An approachable, courageous educator

Dear [Teacher],

Thank you for teaching my

teachers and me. You have a very

important job. I hope you stick
with it and like the job.

Got a go

Claire Belisle
Oct. 16, 2002

Dear Dr. Lottack,

Thank you for coming to read to us! Can you name the five parts of a story?

Sincerely,
Lisa
Now I am the superintendent...

- How can I be most effective?
  - What action is needed?
  - What do I know?
  - What do I need to learn?
  - Who can be of help to me?

"Then I made the leap from skilled labor to unskilled management."

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"Well, you sure can, old company, radiator and all. Anything you want, you name it or anything."

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Scholarship in education administration appears to have been influenced by the sense of urgency that stems from a rhetoric of crisis.

(Willower and Forsyth, 1999)
Purpose of Presentation:

• adopt evidence-based practices as an effective means for improving performance

• share what we learn through implementation with other superintendents

• use that evidence to stem the tide of errant political fixes and the rhetoric of crisis

Moment of Enlightenment

▶ Identify those practices of superintendents that are evidence-based....

▶ And, strong implementation data for effective application???
Limitations

- Political aspects of superintendent life
- Financial challenges within profession
- Other evidence-based practices to be shared

Suppose you are to interview...

- How might you answer these three questions?

Interview question

- Identify one effective leader practice that cuts across all aspects of school organization, culture, diversity, politics, varying goals; and, when applied with fidelity, improves student achievement?
interview question

- Describe an effective system for monitoring and reporting continuous improvement in a school district.

(district level or school level)

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interview question

- Identify three emotional competencies demonstrated by an effective superintendent.

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a loud argument really does trump good evidence.

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Rhetoric of Choice

A + B = Improvement of Education

Table 1. Rhetoric of Choice for Improving Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMULA</th>
<th>Evidence Based Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A + B) = Effectiveness</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Subject Matter</td>
<td>Love of Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Training Programs</td>
<td>License Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-centralized Districts</td>
<td>Site Based Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National and State Standards</td>
<td>Accountability Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Testing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Big Wicked Problem

- Global competition lowering wages for many
- Consumer has more choice
- Government has more say
- Some students need more services
- "I want lower taxes"
- "I want everything for my child"
Wicked Problem

- Mason and Mitroff (1981) coined this class of social problems as “wicked” instead of “tame”
- for the approach required to address multiple complex problems

Wicked Problem

The community must not understand the scope
nor the cost of delivery
of public education services today.

Important State Issues

2007 Perceptions of Education in the Metropolitan Area

- Reducing Health Care Costs
- Controlling Taxes
- Improving Transportation
- Adequate Funding for K-12
- Reducing Crime
- Improving Water Quality
- Making College Educ Affordable
- Protecting Natural Areas
- Reducing Cost of Gasoline/Fuels
- Creating Jobs/Economic Growth
- Reducing Cost of Government
- Unsure

Decision Resources, Ltd.
Important Community Issues
2007 Perceptions of Education in the Metropolitan Area

Ways to Improve Education Quality
2007 Perceptions of Education in the Metropolitan Area

Evidence-based
- evidence-based practice is
- the linking of effective research
- with effective implementation so that
- it results in improved outcomes for students.
Definition

- Evidence-based practices are skills, techniques and strategies
- Evidence-based programs are collections of practices and methods necessary for effective treatment

Challenge for Superintendents

- Evidence-based practice plus
  - effective implementation practices and data

Three practices with evidence

1. Alignment of goals
2. Continuous improvement system with balanced scorecard to measure progress
3. Emotional competencies
Alignment of Goals
(Waters & Marzano, 2006)

- Alignment of goals in the district improves student achievement
- School Board, Superintendent, School Leaders and School Goals

Alignment of Goals

- Effective superintendents:
  1. Lead an inclusive process for setting goals,
  2. Define the non-negotiable goals that all staff must address,

Alignment of Goals

3. Align the school board with those goals,
4. Set up a system to monitor work and progress on those goals, and
5. Align resources accordingly to provide the necessary resources of time, money, personnel and materials.
Alignment of Goals

- Superintendent leadership correlates with student achievement. As the superintendent develops leadership skills, one can predict a corresponding increase in student achievement.
- Superintendent tenure is positively correlated with student achievement.

Interview Question

- One effective implementation practice...
- Answer: Align the goals of the board, superintendent, principals and school improvement plans. Monitor progress on those goals.

Continuous Improvement

- We report results more often than we report progress.
- Continuous improvement practice is possible through improvements in technology.
- While we cannot control inputs, we can control process.
Continuous improvement practice

- Inputs + process = outputs

- Educators can change the process of teaching and leading to improve the outputs
Continuous Improvement Practice

- Discipline of leadership
- At district level and school level
- Use data to make decisions at all levels in the organization
- Leaders set and monitor the processes for improvement
- Monitor progress, not just results

Examples of Practice and Program

- Adaptive testing programs
  - District developed or national models
- Program and curriculum review process
  - Align what is taught with desired outcomes
- Professional learning communities
  - Using data to make decisions

Examples of Program and Practice

- Positive Behavior Intervention Services (PBIS)
- Response to Intervention (RtI)
- Curriculum based assessment measures (CBAM)
- Election campaign process (Lifto)
Examples of Practice

- **Balanced Scorecard**
  - Student Learning, Satisfaction, System Improvement, Community Engagement, Communications
    - Teacher and school measures for student learning
    - Northwest Education Assessment
    - Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)
    - National School Evaluation Survey
    - Regional survey data from citizens

Balanced Scorecard Process
(Kaplan & Norton, 1993)

- A performance management strategy
- Not a recipe but a process for focus of energy, resources, and effort.

Balanced Scorecard

- Likely consist of attention to:
  - Student Achievement
  - System Performance
  - Satisfaction
  - Communication
  - Other???
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Weight (100%)</th>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Meets Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAP Scores</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>Less than 25% of students scoring in the first quartile fail to make expected growth in RIT scores</td>
<td>More than 59% of students scoring in first quartile fail to make expected growth in RIT scores</td>
<td>All students meet or exceed expected growth in RIT scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCA Scores</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>95% of students meet or exceed proficiency levels</td>
<td>95% of students meet or exceed proficiency levels</td>
<td>95% of students meet or exceed proficiency levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Scores</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>The average school composite score is 19-20</td>
<td>The average school composite score is 18-20</td>
<td>The average school composite score is 18-20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategic Advantage**

- Build credibility with your community
- Reduce the complexity and volume of data to what is most important
- More likely to identify levers for change

**Interview Question**

- **Q:** An effective system for monitoring and reporting continuous improvement in a school district or school is
- **A:** the balanced scorecard process
Wicked Problem

▸ Reporting progress means you have to make some progress to continue doing what you are doing

▸ If no progress, you must change practice

Emotional Intelligence

▸ "Emotional intelligence, more than any other asset, more than IQ or technical expertise, is the most important overall success factor in careers."

Warren Bennis (2001)
Resiliency

» Mental Hygiene for leaders

» Prayer, Play and Pilates

"Oh! Here it is!"
Table 3. Success and Failure Profiles of Executives (n=515)
Fernandez-Araoz (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failure in the Role</th>
<th>Trait of Executive Hired</th>
<th>Success in the Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79%</td>
<td>Relevant Experience</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71%</td>
<td>Outstanding IQ</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emotional Intelligence

- Goleman (1998)
- 25 skills of personal competencies and social competencies
- Considerable research since 1995 and more with schools and with students
Adaptive Challenges
- Gap between aspiration and reality
- Narrowing gap requires difficult learning
- The people with the problem are the problem and the solution
- Adaptive work requires disequilibrium
- Adaptive work takes time

Interview Question
- Identify three emotional competencies...
  - Emotional Awareness
  - Self Awareness
  - Conflict Management
  - Management of Emotions
  - Other?

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Wisdom of Crowds


- No matter how brilliant the few, decisions made by large group are smarter
- Son’s football pool for 2006 season

Definition

- Evidence-based practices are skills, techniques and strategies
- Evidence-based programs are collections of practices and methods necessary for effective treatment
Community of Practice

- Depend more on our internal capacity to learn and share knowledge
- Develop a safe process to share what we are learning and what we know works
- Energize our critical thinking skills