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Key Components of a Well-Crafted Statewide System of Support

New England Comprehensive Center
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- Introduction & Framing
- Background On State Capacity Issues
- Need for Developing Coherency
- Case Study in MA
- Key Components of a Model Statewide System of Support
- Discussion

- Legal: NCLB and State Law
- Educational
- Moral

NCLB Data for 2005-2006:

- Schools not making AYP: 26%
- Schools identified for improvement: 14%
- Schools in corrective action: 3%

Center on Education Policy, 2006

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NCLB Definition of "Statewide System of Sustained Support and Improvement"

- School support teams (over 72% of states)

- Distinguished principals and teachers (over 61% of states)

- Collaboration with regional technical assistance centers, higher education and private providers

U.S. Department of Education

Background on State Capacity Issues

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- **Little research** has been done on state and district supports or interventions in low-performing schools that could inform new work.

- State education agencies have **not historically engaged in school improvement** at the building level and consequently have relatively little knowledge or skill in school improvement, even as they are being asked to lead the effort.

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

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- **Resources** available to states and districts have **not kept pace with the increasing demands** placed on them.

- The law has increased and will likely continue **to increase the number of low-performing schools** and districts, as well as the speed with which improvements must be made.

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

THEMES OF CURRENT WORK

- Tackling Capacity

- Shifting Priorities

- Aligning Resources and Policies

- Centralizing Control

- Embracing Adaptive Change (i.e., tailored to context)

- Seizing Opportunities

- Zeroing in on Instruction and Learning

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS & ACTIVITIES

- Needs Assessment and Analysis
- Plans and Planning
- Support for Plan Implementation
- School-based Coaching
- School-based Data Analysis
- Professional Development
- Additional Resources

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

- Providing **assistance** in interpreting and using performance **data** in planning

- **Adding resources**, such as assistance teams, coaches or consultants, new staff, and professional development for both teachers and administrators

- **Networking low-performing schools** with more successful schools

- Offering low-performing schools **financial incentives to adopt** particular whole school reforms and/or instructional programs

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

(Massell, 2000, esp. p. 5)

RANGE OF DISTRICT REPONSES TO STATE POLICY

- **Fragmented responses:** little leadership for change

- **Inconsistent responses:** some policies are communicated but there is little interest in fully implementing them

- **Coordinated responses:** deliberate efforts to implement changes

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

(Massell citing Firestone and Fairman [1998])

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- **Leadership focused on results** and committed to instructional improvement
- A **focused strategy for improving instruction**, sustained over years
- The **alignment of critical policies** to guide practice and to support improvement
- The provision of **resources** to implement the reforms
- **Clear expectations** about classroom practice

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

(Corcoran and Lawrence [2003])

DISTRICT CAPACITY ISSUES

- Support for **teacher learning** and adequate investments in professional development

- Development in central offices and schools of **communities of practice** that share a common vision of good practice and beliefs about teaching and learning

- The **use of data** and evidence to drive decisions and revise strategies

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

(Corcoran and Lawrence [2003])

CHOICES & CHALLENGES FOR SEA'S AND DISTRICTS

- Allocating Limited Resources

- Intensity & Duration

- Degree of Centralization

- Shaping Roles & Structures

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

EDUCATION ALLIANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build Feedback Systems to Create Coherence

- Focus on Instruction and Learning

- Address Equity Issues

- Evaluate the Reform Strategies

Education Alliance at Brown University, "Leadership Capacities for a Changing Environment" (2005)

The Need for Developing Coherence

Continuous Improvement Requires Coherent Strategy

- Coherent Strategy is a Set of Key Action Steps Designed to Achieve Critical Goals

- Coherent Strategy is Logically Integrated

Figure A below displays The PELP Coherence Framework (Also see **Exhibit 1**)

Figure A

Instructional Core

Teacher

Student   **Content**
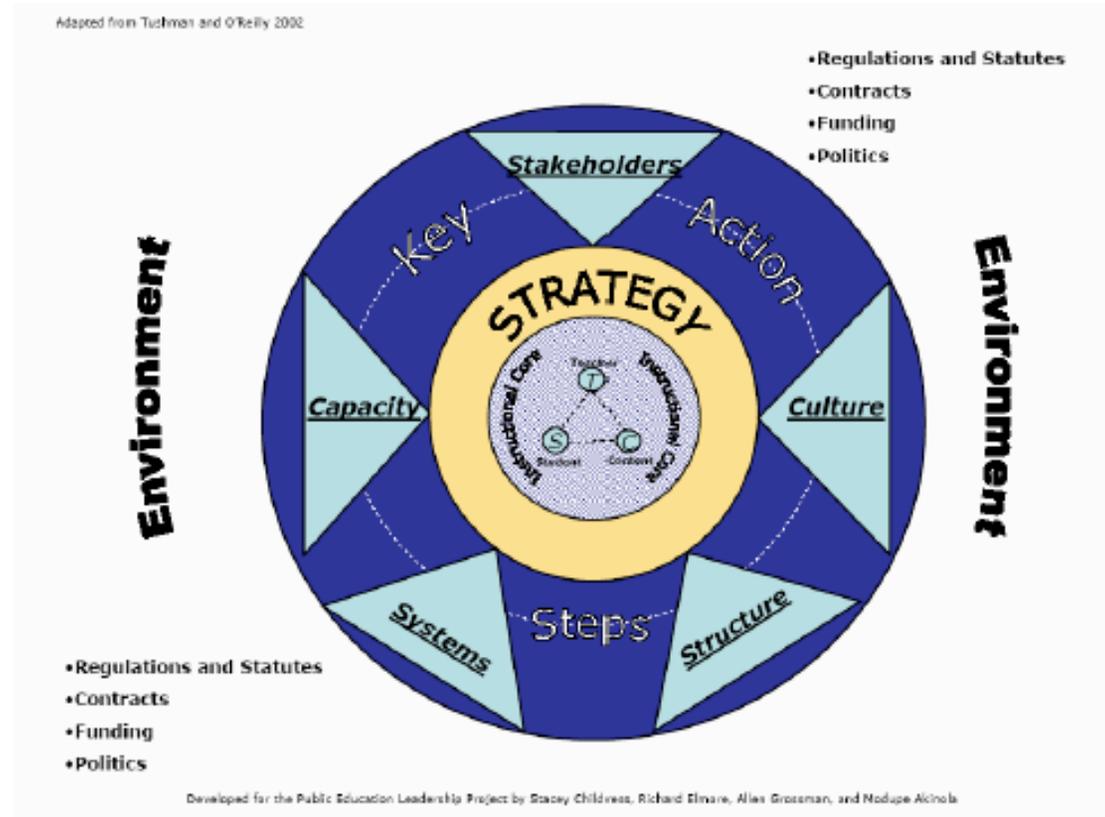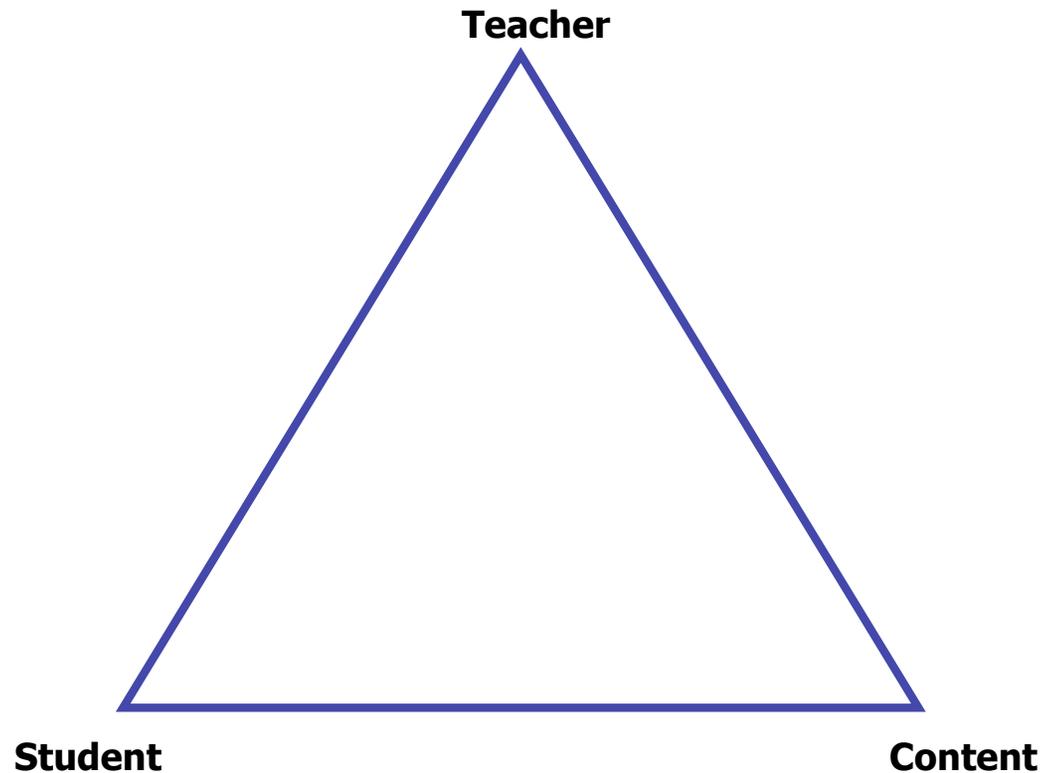
Focus of District-wide Strategy and Key Action Steps

Five Organizational Elements Critical to Success

- Capacity

- Stakeholders

- Culture

- Structure

- Systems

Strategy Requires
A
Theory of Action

= Collective Belief About Causal Relationships
Between Action & Desired Outcomes

e.g. If you improve instruction, you'll improve outcomes.

Theory is Preceded by a Mission

e.g. Our mission is that all students shall reach proficiency in English and math.

Strategy is a Set of Actions in Service of a Theory of Action

e.g. Providing capacity and support to instructional core with the objective of raising student performance.

Strategy

- Guides Choices and Helps Make Decisions on Action and Budget

- Needs to be Well Communicated

- Makes a Clear Connection Between Mission & Objectives

- Provides Focus on What & Who is Important

- Illuminates Relationships

- Defines Measurement Parameters

- Acknowledges Environment

- Allows for Adaptation

Key Action Steps

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Definition: The high-level yet specific actions the district must take in order to execute its strategy and accomplish its objectives.

Critical Questions:

- What specific actions should we take to implement our strategy?

- Is the list of key action steps mutually exclusive, or are some key action steps on the list embedded in others?

Stakeholders

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Definition: The people and groups that have a "stake" in the success of the district and the ability to influence its policies and practices.

Critical Questions:

- Which stakeholders will be affected by the key action steps? Which stakeholders can have an impact on the implementation of the key action steps?

- Given the answers to the previous questions, how should we manage our stakeholder relationships in a way that is coherent with our key action steps and strategy?

- What relationship and/or contractual arrangement with our bargaining units would be most beneficial to executing our key action steps? What would it take to achieve this?

- How might we best communicate our progress to our stakeholders in a way that garners their support and their willingness to influence other stakeholders and the environment in ways that are coherent with other strategy?

Culture

Definition: The predominant beliefs and norms that define and drive behavior in the district.

Critical Questions:

• What beliefs underlie our theory of action and strategy?

• What beliefs currently exist in our stakeholder groups and how do those influence their behaviors?

• What behaviors are needed from people throughout the district to execute the key action steps?

• What norms should be established to support the necessary behaviors?

• How can we engage people in behaviors that will shape their beliefs about the ability of all kids to achieve at high levels?

Structure

Definition: The organizational arrangements and relationships that enable individuals to perform key action steps.

Critical Questions:

- How do roles and responsibilities need to be defined to support our key action steps?

- Which reporting relationships would be most beneficial for executing our key action steps and our strategy? How can these relationships be made clear to everyone?

- How should decisions be made and by whom? What decisions should happen centrally? At the school level? In the classroom?

- Are temporary structures such as task forces and steering committees necessary to implement a key action step? If so, what is the ideal composition?

- What informal and formal communication networks are needed to implement key action steps?

© **PUBLIC EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROJECT at Harvard University**

Systems

Definition: The processes and procedures used to manage the district.

Critical Questions:

- What systems are needed to support each key action step?

    - Training and development

    - Data access and use

    - Resource allocation

    - Organizational learning and continuous improvement

    - Others

Capacity

Definition: The resources required to implement key action steps and execute strategy.

Critical Questions:

- What new skills and knowledge do districts need to develop and which ones do they need to "unlearn" to implement the key action steps?

- What role will the district play in helping individuals develop the new knowledge and skills?

- What financial resources are necessary to support the key action steps?

- What non-financial resources are necessary? Information technology, physical infrastructure, time, other?

Environment

External Factors

- Regulations & Statutes

- Contracts

- Funding

- Politics

THE PUSH TO PROFICIENCY
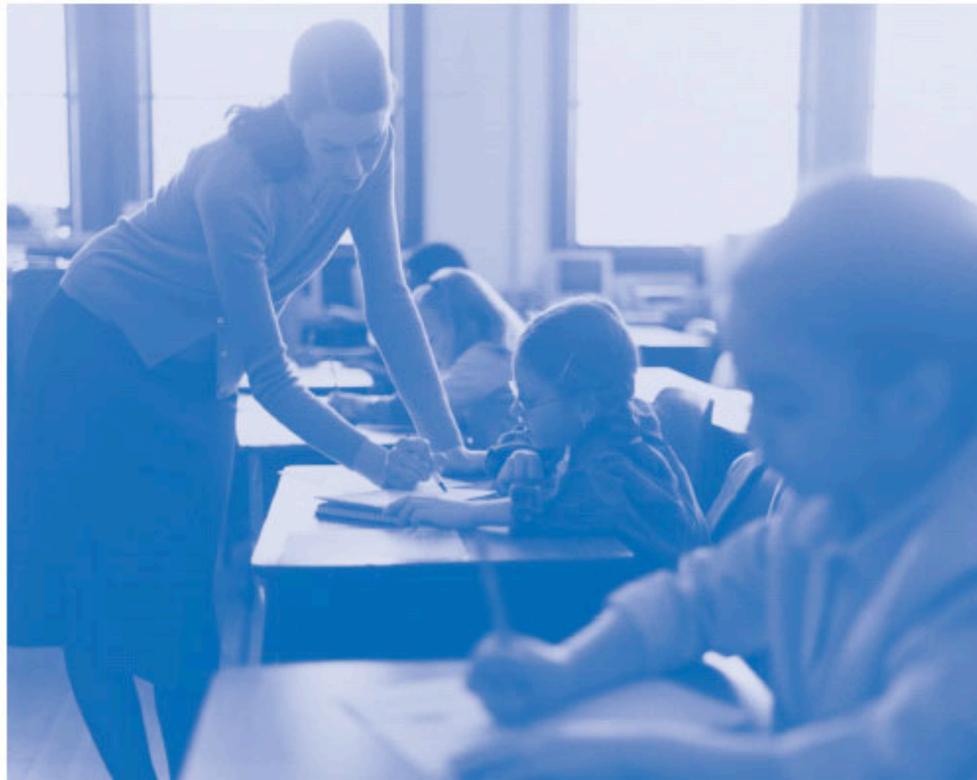
A Case Study of Massachusetts

Rennie Center Research Report – April 2005

Percent of all students NOT achieving proficiency in 1998 and 2003

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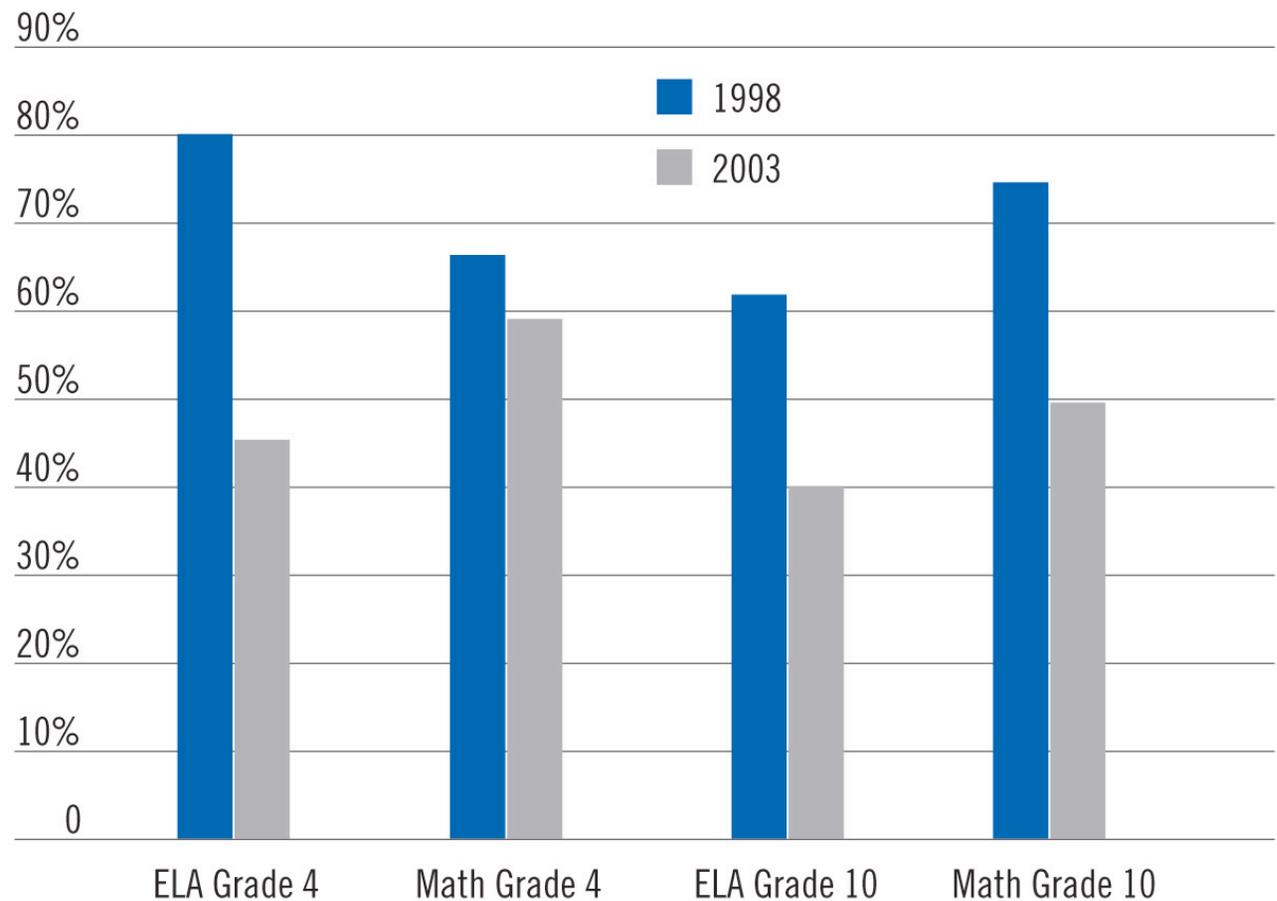
376 schools and 132 districts labeled for inadequate MCAS progress for 2+ consecutive years
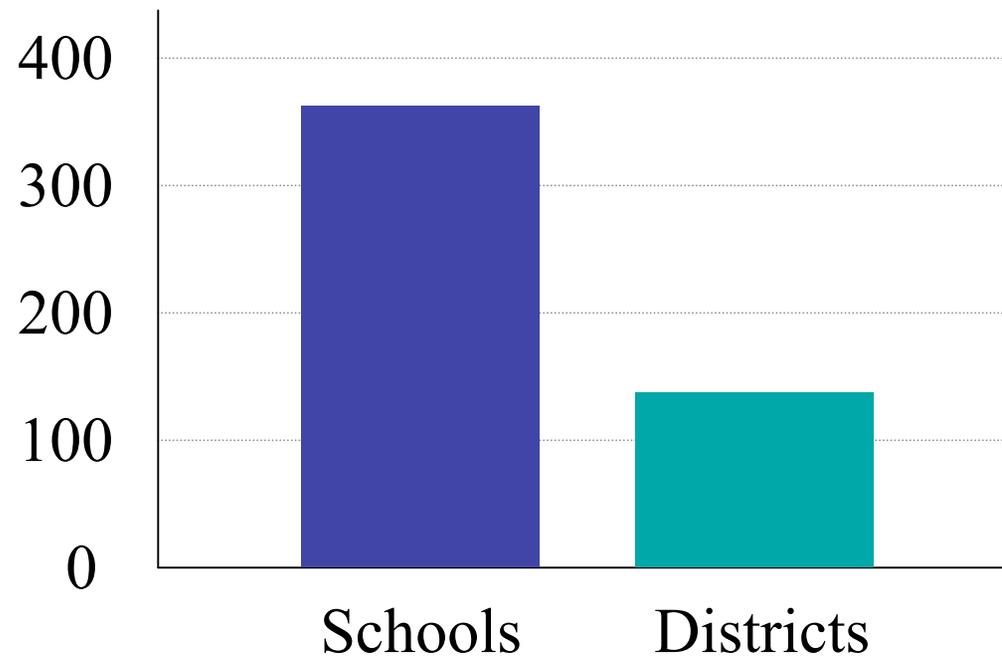
WHY DO THIS RESEARCH?

- Continued achievement gaps

- Logic of standards-based accountability

- Limits of tight-loose model

- Support: more than financial

Key Question: What components are needed in a state system to support low performing schools & districts?

55 interviews: *supers, principals, DOE & policymakers*

Other states

International

Literature & web review

Cost analysis

What do we mean by:

Capacity building

Expertise

Effectiveness - Scale

A state system

Department of Education

Partners

SUPERINTENDENTS' NEEDS

Responses of superintendents when asked what services they would need to add, expand or improve to get all students to proficiency.

Number of superintendents citing as a need (N=14)

Superintendents' median estimate for increased funding was an additional 11%

Superintendent assessments: Degree of budget crisis

Not a problem

21%

36%

A problem but progress is possible

43%

Critical
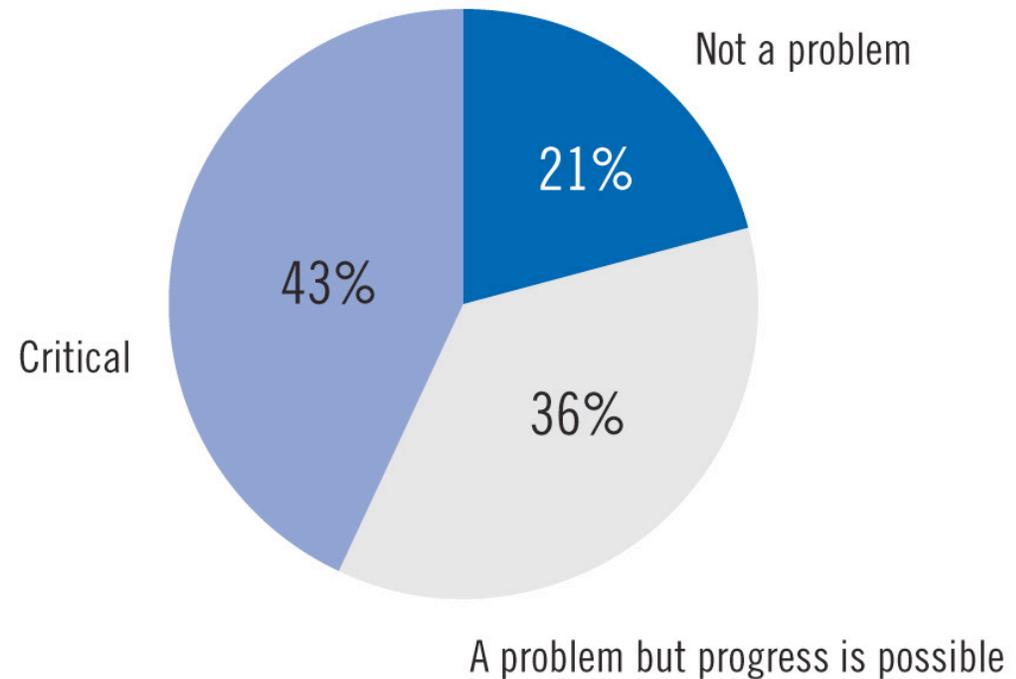
Key Strategies

- Curriculum & professional development

- Data and assessment

- Leadership & strategic planning

- Time on learning

Challenges with the current state system

Current state review & intervention capacity

Size of the DOE

Funding for the DOE

Salary scale for state education staff

**Schools identified for performance deficits versus schools reviewed**

376 schools identified
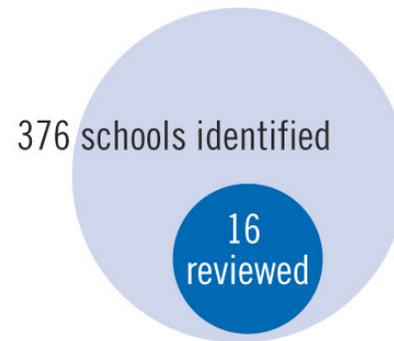
16 reviewed

Districts identified for performance deficits versus districts reviewed

132 districts identified

17 reviewed

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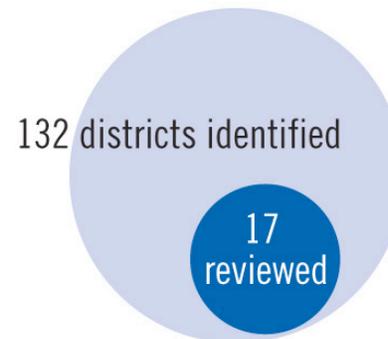
- In 1980, DOE had 990 employees. Now, DOE employs 510 staff.

- Boston Public Schools employs 548 administrators to oversee direct support to 6.5% of the state's students.

- MD, SC, WI & MA educate similar numbers of students. But, MA has <25% DOE staff than these states.

Massachusetts total education budget versus DOE budget

Year	Total Budget	DOE Administration	DOE % of Total
1994	$1,837,772,790	$8,031,642	0.44%
1997	$2,580,098,052	$8,150,673	0.36%
2000	$3,606,222,658	$9,779,190	0.27%
2004	$3,903,291,016	$9,336,084	0.24%

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Median annual salary of DOE employees compared to teachers and administrators (2003-04)
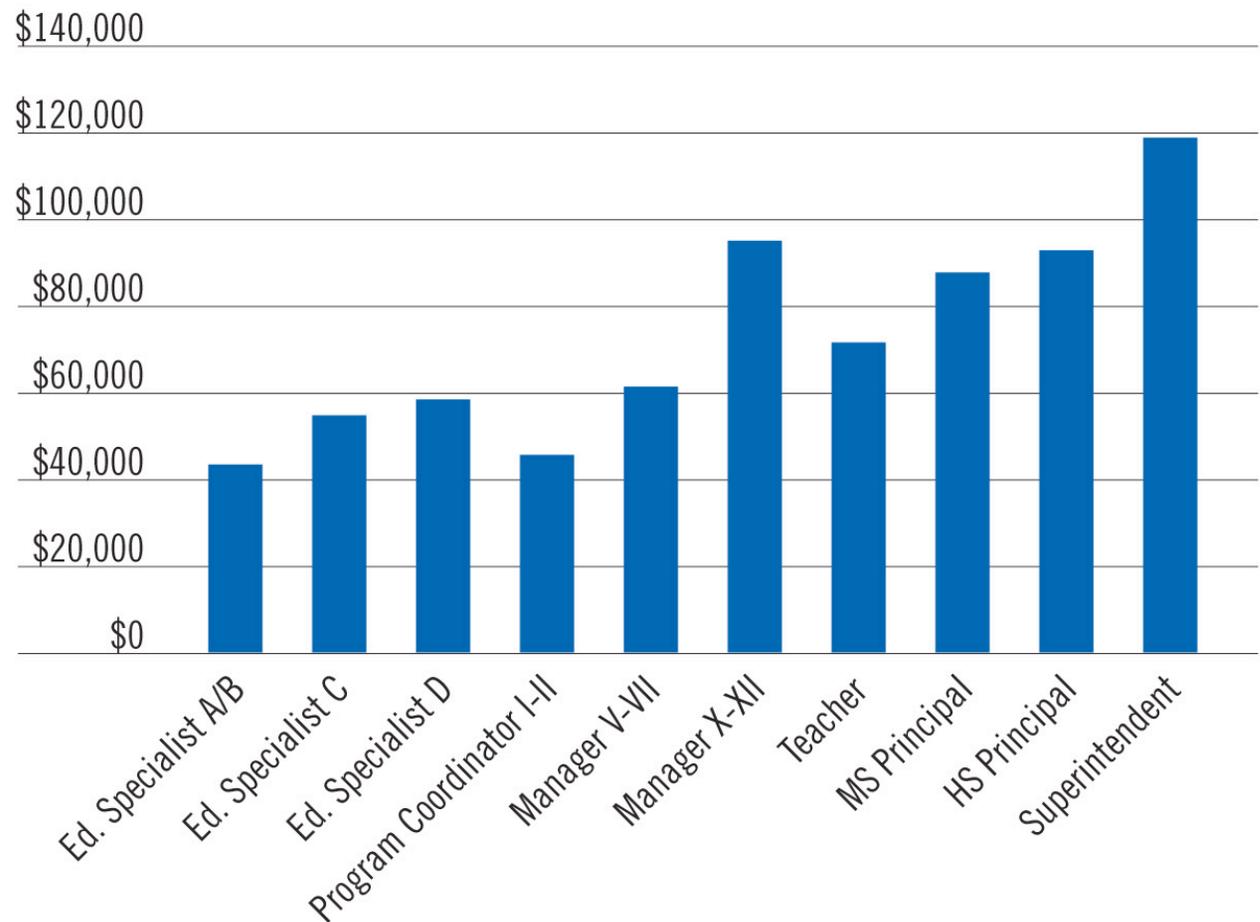
PROGRAMS & INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Professional development & curriculum
Increased state guidance on options and provision of professional development

Data & assessment
Support for formative assessment systems and value added analysis tools

Leadership & strategic planning
Urban leadership training and creation of state-level incentives

- Increase state guidance on curricular and professional development options, beginning with low performing schools.

- Improve state capacity to provide professional development, particularly in math, and strategies for special education students and English language learners in academic content areas.

Support formative assessment systems for a small number of urban districts, beginning with those that have the largest achievement gaps.

Develop a value-added analysis system for Massachusetts.

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- Sponsor urban leadership training for aspiring and current administrators, as well as for potential turnaround partners.

- Create state-level incentives to strengthen leadership at the local level.

- Service-oriented intervention process

- Quality staffing at DOE

- Regional approach

- Research

- Turnaround partners

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Greater state capacity is urgently needed to assist districts and schools in fulfilling the promise of education reform.
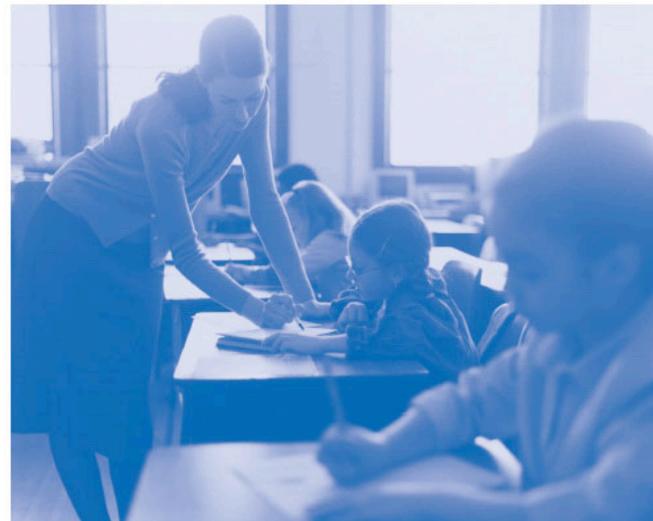
Key Components of a Well-crafted Statewide System of Support

- Planning and Implementation
- Leadership Support
- Better Access to and Use of Data
- Curriculum Support
- Instructional Support
- Professional Development
- Building District-level Capacity
- Other Considerations

Planning and Implementation

Helping schools identify root causes and develop and implement action steps to effectively address challenges:

- Needs assessments (based on data)
- Improvement plans
- Support for implementation (differentiated based on need)

Planning and Implementation

- Maryland and Georgia Sample School Improvement Plans and Templates

- Turnaround Partners – Virginia School Turnaround Specialist Program.
    - DOE partners with university to provide "turnaround specialist" credentialing program
    - Supplies credentialed turnaround specialists to schools in need of improvement
    - Uses a digital forum for sharing resources and multi-media case studies

Planning and Implementation

Differentiating the Needs of Schools

- District Audit Tool (NV, WY, WV, SD) – helps states prioritize the degree and intensity of their support and technical assistance to districts and schools in need of improvement.

- Chancellor's District (NYC) – chronically underperforming schools provided with additional resources and supports

Leadership Support

Building *instructional* leadership focused on results, developing "professional learning communities" among all school staff, and addressing the supply of new leaders

- Leadership coaches
- Ongoing professional development
- Mentor principals
- Developing a pipeline of new leaders

Leadership Support

- Arizona Leads[3] – provides targeted professional development for principals and superintendents focused on student achievement

- National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) – trains principals in the theory and practice of standards-based instructional leadership

Better Access to and Use of Data

Providing data systems that produce timely and useable data and supporting schools in the use of data to drive decisions and instructional strategies

- Formative and benchmark assessments tied to state standards
- Professional development in classroom-based analysis of student data for instructional improvement
- Assessments based on growth

Better Access to and Use of Data

- Data utilization guides (CA, GA)
- New Mexico Consumer Guide to Formative Assessments – reviews 7 formative assessment programs
- New York City and Grow Network – development of formative assessments tied to state standards
- Northwest Evaluation Association - Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), state-aligned computerized adaptive tests that measure growth
- Michigan Academic Coaches program – provides school data coaches

Curriculum Support

Support for curriculum selection and mapping and content area professional development.

- Curriculum selection committees
- Aligning curriculum to standards
- Curriculum mapping
- Recommending curriculum materials and resources

Curriculum Support

- South Carolina Committee of Practitioners – diverse committee that meets quarterly to select and monitor implementation of new curriculum in corrective action districts

- Model curriculum maps (KY)

- Database of recommended curriculum materials (CA)

Instructional Support

Support for improving teachers' practice and pedagogy

- Academic coaches
- Model lessons
- Demonstration sites

Instructional Support

- Georgia Academic Coaches program – selects state certified *Master Teachers* to be coaches in all content areas

- Alabama Reading Initiative – provides professional development to any Alabama school to 100% literacy among all students

- California Secondary Literacy Demonstration Sites – program descriptions of model middle and high schools implementing school-wide literacy models.

Professional Development

Supporting the development of communities of practice and ongoing, embedded professional development focused on student achievement.

- Provide guidance on professional development providers
- Support the development of "professional learning communities"
- Encourage schools to make time for regular professional development

Professional Development

- Florida Professional Development Partnerships Program - partners with institutes of higher education and regional providers

- Regional Professional Development Centers (MO, CO, CA) – partner with regional centers to provide professional development to local teachers

Building Capacity at the District Level

Building district leadership to support school- and classroom-level improvement.

- Professional development focused on student achievement for superintendents and other central office leaders
- Assistance in developing district improvement plans based on meeting diverse needs of individual schools
- Central office reviews

Building Capacity at the District Level

- Kentucky Voluntary Partnership Assistance – an intensive and voluntary assistance model designed to build district capacity for improved student achievement

- Tennessee Executive Development Program – superintendents training in organizational leadership as well as curriculum and instruction

- Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative - district support for the process of continuous school improvement

- Annenberg Institute Central Office Review for Results and Equity - helps districts develop overarching policies that allow for variation in implementation according to the varying needs of schools, their staff, and their students.

- Policy interventions
  - Time on learning
  - Early childhood education
  - Teacher quality
- Financial support

CHALLENGES

- Urgency
- Constituency Building
- Capacity Building
- Reflective Practice
- Results

- How would you modify this model to fit your context? What is missing?

- Could/would you adopt this model in your state?

- What are some principle obstacles to achieving this vision?

- What are some ways that state departments of education can advocate for the resources needed to fulfill their responsibilities?