Rural Research-Practice Partnerships: Collaborating for Continuous Improvement

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NYKids
Get ready to…

- Appreciate the important role school board members have as change agents in supporting system-wide continuous improvement
- Know how NYKids (an example of a Research-Practice Partnership) can support district-wide collaboration and leadership for improved outcomes
- Take away some key strategies to mitigate obstacles to continuous improvement in P-12 schools
Leading something new isn’t easy...
Would you

• A) stay seated and watch the “lone nut” put on his show?
• B) jump in to start dancing with him?
• C) wait until other people jump in to join?
Poll results
How Changes Spread

- People embrace change at different rates
- How they feel about change may vary depending on the specific change being proposed
- Careful explanations around key attributes of change ideas can help people become more open to change and affect the spread of innovations
- One change in a system can have multiplier effects across systems


Research-practice partnerships

- RPPs are long-term collaborations between practitioners and researchers that are organized to investigate problems of practice and solutions for improving schools and school districts (Coburn, Penuel, & Geil, 2013)
NY State DOB

NYKids Advisory Board

CASDA (Study Council)

University at Albany

NYKids

It’s not enough to just do research, publish, and present it: We have to impact student outcomes

District and school leaders, teachers, and support staff need usable research-based resources and tools to make improvements

Improvement efforts need to be facilitated by expert facilitators and over time

These efforts need to be aligned to a the university’s research, teaching, and community engagement agenda

System improvement needs to be facilitated and researched through partnerships

District and school leaders, teachers, and support staff need usable research-based resources and tools to make improvements
NYKids, a research-practice partnership, with a mission to:

- **INFORM** educators and others about school performance in comparison to other schools in the state
- **INSPIRE** educators through case studies and other reports of promising practices in odds-beating schools
- **IMPROVE** schools through professional development in continuous improvement processes (COMPASS-AIM)

https://ny-kids.org/
Inform: Display user-friendly performance data
Inspire: Investigate odds-beaters

Typical Performer (z-score <= 0.05)

Odds Beater (z-score > 0.5)

Performance
Fort Plain Junior-Senior High School
Improve: Bridge research and practice

• Fort Plain - Small rural school district (330 students)
• Poverty levels 64% (and under-reported) above the state average (54%)
• Graduation rate: Between 83 – 88%
• Duration of involvement in RPP:
  – Team formed 2015 with new superintendent. Team meets throughout the year (a minimum of 4 times)
• Improvement team members:
  – Principal, school counselor, 2 middle level teachers, 2 high school teachers, 1 special area teacher, 1 teaching assistant
The Model of Improvement

Example Aim from Fort Plain Jr.-Sr. High

To improve attendance by the end of the 2017-2018 school year by monitoring student absences and tardys, supporting students’ social and emotional well-being, and fostering more positive parent communications.
Monitor ("check the pulse")

Recalibrate as needed and continue cycle

Plan

• Compare processes and practices to evidence-based practices
• Assess priorities based upon local constraints and affordances
• Select evidence-based practices to test
• Set SMART goals/AIMS

Do

• Action Plan
• Implement Plan

Act

Study

• Monitor ("check the pulse")

Set SMART goals/AIMS
How Does Our Process Work?

SUMMER: COMPASS~AIM Intensive Institutes (Planning)

LATE FALL/EARLY WINTER: Mid-year "Check the pulse" follow-up session (Doing, Studying, Acting)

LATE SPRING/EARLY SUMMER: End-of-year "Check the pulse" follow-up session (Doing, Studying, Acting)

SUMMER: Continued Monitoring, Networking, and Repeat Cycle

Continued Monitoring, Networking, and Repeat Cycle
COMPASS Workshops
Questioning Process – Once Aims are Established, Ask the 5 questions:

1. What are the potential next action steps to achieve this aim?
2. Who needs to be involved and how can they be engaged in implementation?
3. When would the work towards this aim take place? Deadlines?
4. What would the evidence of success look like?
5. How will goals be shared with others?
Example Change:

*Develop and Implement an Academic Coaching Center*
The Model of Improvement

What specifically are we trying to accomplish?

What change(s) might we introduce?

Why do we think those changes may be an improvement?

How will we know if a change is an improvement?

Making Your Theory Explicit

Evidence from odds-beaters
Academic Coaching Center
“The ACC isn’t just a room to me. Personally, it feels like home.” - ACC Student
The Model of Improvement

Example Evidence/Measures:

- Student interview responses
- Absences and tardys
- Summer school attendance
- Academic achievement

Distally – increased graduation rates

What specifically are we trying to accomplish?
What change(s) might we introduce?
Why do we think those changes may be an improvement?
How will we know if a change is an improvement?

Making your theory explicit
Sample Leading Measures

FP Jr-Sr HS - Numbers of students in summer school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>2016-17 Absences/Tardys</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>38/63</td>
<td>24/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (medical excuse 16-17)</td>
<td>18/71</td>
<td>26/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7/11</td>
<td>2/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>2/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>31/24</td>
<td>31/31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (drop out and re-entry)</td>
<td>21/18</td>
<td>33/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16/0</td>
<td>5/0</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>19/4</td>
<td>17/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19/3</td>
<td>18/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Achievement

ELA Regents Exam

TOP COMPARABLE SCHOOLS IN THE STATE (PURPLE)

FORT PLAIN JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL (YELLOW)
Lessons About Leveraging RPPS For Improvement

• District leaders in collaboration with board of education representatives and principals can articulate clear, nondiscretionary goals for the district as a whole, for each school, and for subgroups of students.

• The schools then can establish a common framework of research–based strategies for achieving those goals.

• The researchers and professional development facilitators offer content and improvement expertise to support the organization in becoming a continuously improving organization.
Key Strategies

✔ Use continuous improvement processes and tools supported by open communications between school board members, district and school leaders, teachers, and support staff

✔ Partner with researchers and PD experts to help scaffold the use of CI processes and tools and help set the tone for authentic valuing of expertise and knowledge of different stakeholders

✔ Schedule and prioritize periodic opportunities for reflection on progress – embracing failing forward and celebrating successes

✔ Create new structures and teams to use CI gradually and build from strengths and already-existing routines and structures

✔ Encourage transparency about the system— with the core improvement team acting as a conduit to help drive efforts within and across schools rather than outside actors driving change
Poll #2 Question

Based on this presentation, your next step will be to

A) wait for someone in the school district to come up with a plan to partner with a RPP

B) jump in to start connecting with a RPP like NYKids

C) wait for some other school or district near yours to get involved in a RPP before you do?
Poll results
Thank you and Questions?

Contact us at: nykids@lbany.edu or (518) 442-5171

Head to https://ny-kids.org/school-improvement/ for more resources on COMPASS-AIM

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