How Whole-System Change Dramatically Accelerates Student Learning: Key Lessons Learned

AASA National Conference on Education | Phoenix Convention Center | February 11, 2016

Joanne McEachen
President & Chief Destiny Changer

Rob Neu
Superintendent

“The Learner First™ is a change process with a goal of 100% student success. We focus on the students who struggle the most. By lifting them, we lift everyone.”

– OKCPS school change team member

5 Key Capabilities

The Learner First™ framework focuses on 5 key capabilities that the best evidence and experience tells us make or break a system’s ability to ensure all learners thrive.

- Leading and managing change right through to results for learners
- Leadership for Accelerated Change
- An unshakable belief that every learner can and will succeed, and teaching that makes this a reality
- Teaching for Zero Failure
- A school culture where every learner feels they belong and is expected and supported to succeed on what matters to them
- Parents as Real Partners
- Learning from parent, family, and community expertise to truly understand every learner
- Understanding the Real Problem
- A school where well different approaches are working
- Culture of Belonging and High Expectations for All

We identify the learners who are MOST struggling in the current system, and ask, “How strong are our capabilities when we view them through the lens of those learners?”

When we create a system where those learners thrive, it works for everyone.

Measurable results: Dramatically accelerated achievement, reduced staff turnover, genuinely engaged students and teachers, principals who know how to create deep, sustainable change.
A Whole-System Approach to Change

Multiple levers for change must work together to enhance system alignment and coherency.

For example, building teacher skills to do things differently is not enough to change practice.

Teachers work within a system that pressures them to focus on some things more than others.

We need to change the system in which teachers work, in ways that enable, encourage, support, and empower them to do what makes sense for learners.

Authentic Mixed Method Assessment (AMMA)

Authentic Mixed Method Assessment is a crucial system-level change lever that helps focus the entire educational system on what really matters.

What gets measured gets focused on.

When the system treats test scores as the only true measure of student achievement, teachers feel pressured to teach to the test.

That makes learning less authentic and more disconnected from learners’ lives. It also kills teachers’ passion for helping kids learn.

For teachers to create truly engaging learning experiences, the success of their efforts must be assessed in a way that captures what really matters, not just what lends itself most easily to measurement on multiple-choice tests.

Authentic Mixed Method Assessment allows teachers to synthesize the rich mix of evidence they already have (formal assessments, student work product, observations, and more) to produce a trackable, richer metric of student success.

For further information or a copy of the slides, please get in touch!

Joanne McEachen
Joanne@TheLearnerFirst.com
http://www.TheLearnerFirst.com

Rob Neu
rrneu@okcps.org
http://www.okcps.k12.ok.us/AboutOKCPS/TheLearnerFirst/tabid/77916/Default.aspx