



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

School Wide Improvement

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I. Introduction

School Wide Improvement: Not something you ever want to be classified or called out for. Yet, in Idaho the lowest 5% of all schools get put into a Cohort. They get told they have 3 years to improve their scores or else. The or else is somewhat vague. You have 3 years to **make changes**. Those changes will hopefully put your scores above the **lowest 10%** so you can officially be off the list. This sounds more like the hunger games than education, but many schools (including mine) are being faced with this. So how do we get out of this elite club we have been invited into? Are there schools that get out of school wide improvement, and then get put right back in? What are those school that can show **sustained high achievement doing differently** than the ones who are being repeatedly identified?

Research Question:

What strategies contribute to schools transitioning from school wide improvement to sustained high performance?



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Quotes from study participants.

"We try to make decisions based off the mission or vision...we plan based on our vision statement."
"Stop buying into all the BS that's out there and use our teaming to really determine what we need."
"Teachers know what's wrong."
"Every department of ours has three or four key initiatives that come from the off site retreats. All of our meetings in the year are built around those key initiatives."
"Teacher efficacy is at the top of the research because it works. When teachers feel like, hey I am a part of something, that's where people are motivated."
"We have 1000 problems so what are our top three? And it is amazing the self efficacy and the organizational efficacy that comes when at the end of the year you say, yeah we still have 997 problems, but we have fixed three really well."
"100% it is paying for an instructional coach."
"You have to know it is going to take time."
"It's been long term professional development. I think improvements that we have had are so incredible, that is just a non negotiable. now. It is something that is expected here."
"I would say the long term professional development that you make important, is probably what has made the biggest difference."
"You have to be consistent."
"I don't just jump on every bandwagon."
"If you throw too much at them, nothing sticks. It's okay to say no."

II. Methods

Data Collection:

- Gathered school-wide improvement data from the Idaho Department of Education website to identify schools previously designated for improvement.
- Identified schools that:
 - Were previously identified and re-identified within two years.
 - Were previously identified but demonstrated sustained growth in school achievement since identification.

Participant Selection:

- Contacted administrators from each school (superintendent or principal) and asked them to be part of the project

Interviews:

- Conducted interviews with each participating administrator to gather insights on school improvement efforts.

Data Analysis:

- Analyzed interview data to identify common strategies and practices implemented in schools showing sustained high performance, as well as practices that were not being used.

III. Results

All schools that were interviewed thought that having a vision statement was very important. It should also be noted that this vision statement was not something posted on a wall, but something that all decisions get based around.

Consistency was also a recurring theme. It is important that once you make changes that you continue to have consistency in these changes.

Teacher efficacy and collaboration were mentioned by all participants. When teachers believe they can make a difference and are part of the decision making process, that is when positive changes can happen.

Long term professional development was also a contributing factor to improved high performance.

teacher efficacy okay to say no

instructional coach

vision statement
consistency

long term professional development
key initiatives

organizational efficacy

takes time

IV. Next Steps

- Inform my school district of my findings.
- Implement more PD that focuses on building a shared vision and focuses on teacher efficacy.
- Adjust schedules so that consistent collaboration can happen.
- Recommend that long term professional development or an instructional coach be considered as a teacher allocation.

Thanks to my Tom for all the support. Shout out to Cohort 10 for making this adventure amazing!