

A PPENDIX A

PUTTING THE PUZZLE PIECES TOGETHER

While it is not the intention of this appendix to offer readers a complete guide to reform planning, the eight lessons described in this report suggest a variety of key concerns that are likely to affect prospects for success. Taken together, the short exercises here are a “bridge” that will enable policymakers and practitioners to frame issues that will be essential to a strategic action plan.

SECURING STRONG LEADERSHIP

Successful reforms require strong leaders to help plan, initiate, and administer ongoing reform activities. Identifying capable individuals who can promote and sustain your reform idea is one of the more important decisions that you will face as you bring your reform to fruition. Good leaders characteristically:

- ✓ manage reform activities
- ✓ delegate authority
- ✓ assume responsibility
- ✓ build consensus
- ✓ secure participant buy-in
- ✓ gain bureaucratic support

Directions: In the space below, list leaders within your education community who might work on the proposed reform. Since no one person may possess all of the necessary skills, try to identify individuals with complementary abilities.

Name/Position

Strength

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

IDENTIFYING GOALS

Successful reforms are those in which individuals internalize goals and take personal responsibility for carrying out assignments. Since participants in a proposed reform may have different ideas about how to approach a given issue, it is important to take time to identify the goals of your reform and secure buy-in from all participants.

Directions: In the space below, identify different strategies you might adopt to build consensus and motivate buy-in among potential team members.

Goal Setting— How will you clarify the goals and objectives of the proposed reform?

Delegating— How will you secure buy-in among participants?

PLANNING REFORM ACTIVITIES

Educators often use strategic action plans to help organize their reform efforts. Action plans can add structure to reform efforts because they provide a clear framework that arrays reform activities and time frames for accomplishing them. Because action plans are relatively general, they can be easily updated to accommodate different approaches to a proposed reform.

Directions: Use the framework provided below to sketch possible approaches to initiating and sustaining reform in your educational community. Remember that action plans need not offer a single approach to reform or accomplish all steps at once; what is important is to lay out a course of action that will help you organize and monitor your educational reform.

Reform Goal _____

Reform Objectives	Action Step	Timeline	Person Responsible

SUSTAINING REFORM EFFORTS

Education reform often requires redesigning organizational infrastructure to support implementation. This may entail reexamining how staff and community members communicate and collaborate, or changing the way resources are budgeted to support reform activities.

Directions: The following exercise asks a number of questions about day-to-day operations within your school. As you proceed, think about how your present organization supports reform efforts, and what might be done to facilitate change in the future.

- Effective communication can reduce conflict by increasing participant understanding of reform objectives.
 - ✓ How is information presently disseminated in your school, and what steps can be taken to improve communication among staff?

- Collaboration can enhance reform efforts by assembling a wide range of players to solve common problems.
 - ✓ What opportunities for collaboration presently exist within your school, and how could these be changed to encourage reform participants to work together?

- Parents and communities can be valuable assets to reform.
 - ✓ What opportunities are presently available for parents and community members to participate in your school? How could these arrangements be augmented?

- Reform efforts often require the investment of significant capital and human resources.
 - ✓ What are some strategies that could be implemented to reallocate or acquire additional resources to support your proposed school reform?

- Periodic self-assessment is an integral part of reform that can help identify weaknesses and provide feedback to improve instruction.
 - ✓ What kind of information will you need to collect in order to assess the success of your reform efforts?

A PPENDIX B

THE 12 EDUCATION REFORM STUDIES

This appendix provides a brief description of each of the OERI education reform studies. For further detail, see the reports themselves, which are listed in the References at the end of this report.

Taken together, the 12 OERI education reform studies offer a rich tapestry—a chance to look at the ways in which these initiatives were designed and implemented in schools and communities nationwide. Moreover, the array of case studies provides a remarkable opportunity to examine the various reforms in order to identify issues, patterns, and “lessons” that could inform others in planning, designing, or implementing reforms in their own schools.

Assessment: Assessment is a tool that can produce and support a variety of education reforms, especially in the area of curriculum. Assessments help students, teachers, schools, and parents understand what competencies are valued. This, in turn, can significantly affect what is taught and how it is taught. In this sense, the assessment process can improve instruction and raise standards of performance. Furthermore, if students are to acquire new skills, new ways of measuring their success in acquiring those competencies may be necessary. This study focuses on the evolving field of assessment, and on new methodologies that are being developed and implemented to measure the broader, more integrated skills, knowledge, and behaviors that many students are now expected to acquire.

At Risk: This research focuses on efforts directed at students who are at risk in schools that are working to: 1) raise academic standards, 2) enhance the academic climate of in-school and out-of-school environments, and 3) prevent students from dropping out of school.

Community Involvement: Focusing on the upper elementary and middle school grades (4–8), this study examines programs actively involving disadvantaged and other parents and the community in the education of children. The study describes practices and programs that increase involvement by 1) helping parents strengthen home learning; 2) restructuring schools with parent input or parent involvement as a product; and 3) implementing districtwide programs that offer parents and the community a broad choice of roles. The research discusses exemplary programs, providing models and examples of ways in which these activities contribute to student learning.

Curriculum: Schools today are facing the challenge of teaching students how to become capable thinkers, learners, and problem solvers. The world in which the present generation of students will be living as adults will require that they possess basic skills as well as a broader range of higher order thinking skills. To educate students to meet these new demands, new types of teaching and learning activities must be introduced in classrooms. With reference to mathematics, science, and higher order thinking, this study examines emerging classroom practices and the roles that students, teachers, parents, and others must play to meet this new challenge.

Early Childhood Education: This study focuses on the early development and education of children, especially of those who are at risk, from birth up to and through the early primary school years. It also covers their transition from home to child care, preschool, and elementary school. The study examines 1) how practitioners provide innovative, effective services to prepare young children for success when they enter elementary school; 2) how programs are enhancing the capacity of parents to serve effectively as educators; and 3) how mechanisms can be developed that help parents gain access to other services that, while not directly linked to schools, help prepare children for entering school.

School-Based Management: School-based management refers to the general principle of increasing administrative authority at the school level, enabling individual school sites to control resources, to make decisions locally, and to shape programs to meet their needs. It involves a number of organizational strategies relating to three areas of decision making: budget, curriculum, and personnel. This study examines the changing roles and responsibilities of those involved in school-based management activities; explores issues associated with designing, implementing, and assessing school-based management; and finally, reviews the extent to which school-based management affects teaching and learning.

School-to-Work Transition: The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, along with a number of other programs supported by federal and state governments and employers, is changing the way in which schools and employers perceive their respective roles in the transition process from school to employment. Many American schools have recently designed initiatives to introduce students to the world of work in general and the workplace in particular. This study examines model programs that bring together schools, businesses, and other community institutions to ensure that employment-bound students attain the education and training they need in order to enter the highly competitive world of work.

Student Diversity: As the public school population continues to change and become more diverse, educators are pressed to find ways of engaging students, particularly those with limited English proficiency, in the learning process. This study explores school organizational changes as well as instructional classroom management strategies that language arts programs at the upper elementary level and science and mathematics programs at the middle school level are using to educate LEP students.

Systemic Reform: Systemic reform refers to the deliberate, systematic alignment of curricular goals, student assessments, textbooks, and teacher education and working conditions. Poor alignment may inhibit the effectiveness of other education reforms in schools. In the 1980s, many reforms focused on a single aspect of the education system, but few addressed the system as a whole. This study describes efforts at the school, district, and state levels to develop and implement reforms simultaneously across all these areas of the education system.

Teacher Professionalism: The demands on teachers are changing. The current climate of reform requires that they change their roles as instructors, classroom leaders, and members of school decision-making bodies. As more flexibility is built into state regulations, and as more accountability is expected at the school and classroom level, teachers often assume responsibility for redesigning curriculum to meet new student needs, for understanding and responding to the different ways in which students learn, and for exercising broad discretion and professional judgment in the classroom. This study focuses on reform in teacher education that is designed to help teachers and other school professionals meet these new requirements.

Technology: American students are often considered to possess insufficient higher order thinking skills (such as skills in creative and critical thinking, understanding material in depth, and logical reasoning and problem solving). There is some evidence that technology can help students develop these skills. This study looks at technology-based reform programs—efforts that have used technology not to drive reform, but to assist in accomplishing its goals. The research describes activities that promote higher order thinking, efforts to increase educational opportunities through distance learning, and technology-linked programs to enrich the educational experiences of at-risk students.

Uses of Time: Learning and organizational theory suggest that schools are organized in ways that may not serve students well. Restructuring the school day and rethinking how time is used offers considerable opportunity to make this resource a productive element of a school reform strategy. This study examines a variety of questions related to the quantity and the quality of time spent on instruction and planning and describes a variety of alternative approaches.

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