

Establishing Effective SEA and School District Partnerships that Support Student Achievement

CCSRI Annual Meeting
April 12-13, 2007
Atlanta, Georgia

Setting the Stage

Chris Rhines
Education Consultant

Purpose of this Conference

- To share information and strategies that support high-quality interactions in the area of school improvement within the SEA and between SEAs and the school districts they serve

Interactions, According to Roget's Thesaurus

- Connections
- Communications
- Relations

How are you doing in your state?

Interactions Within the SEA

- How do departments within the SEA connect, communicate, relate, interact?
- Are these *high-quality* interactions?
- Do departments interact in order to more effectively support student achievement?
- If not, why not?
- How can your SEA overcome barriers?

Interactions With Districts

- How does the SEA connect, communicate, relate to the districts it serves?
- Does your SEA provide meaningful support to districts and schools?
- What is the SEA role in school and district improvement?
- Is it effective? How do you know?

What is the Role of the SEA in School Improvement Efforts?

- “Almost everyone has a different take on what role state departments of education play in school reform. Some skeptics question their relevance to improving low-performing schools. Others view state education agencies as no more than regulatory bureaucracies. One thing is clear, however. When it comes to comprehensive school reform, state education agencies are in the eye of the storm.”

Education Commission of the States, “Comprehensive School Reform: Five Lessons From the Field,” 1999.

“States need to model the behaviors they expect of districts and schools engaged in reform. They need to systematically evaluate their processes and make adjustments that will make them more effective.

The state’s role can be summarized in three key functions: oversight, leadership and technical assistance.”

Everett Barnes, RMC Research

Back to the purpose for this conference...

- To share information and strategies that SUPPORT high-quality interactions in the area of SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT...
- What initiatives have focused on SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT?
 - CSR – the program AND the concept
 - Title I Schoolwide Planning
 - NCLB School and District Improvement
 - Others...

Key Lessons Learned From CSR and Other Initiatives...

- Schools can't improve without external assistance
- A mix of "pressure and support"
(Michael Fullan)
- Partnerships are critical!
 - Within the SEA, between departments that support school improvement and reform
 - Between the SEA and districts they serve

“For the first time, comprehensive school reform has pushed leaders in many states to examine how they structure school improvement programs, how public accountability fits in and how best to provide support to schools in ways they never have before.

State leaders are looking at these strategies and others as a complete package, and these states, experts agree, are the ones making the greatest strides.”

Education Commission of the States, “Comprehensive School Reform: Five Lessons From the Field,” 1999.

Guiding Questions

- What is the role of state agencies in supporting school improvement?
- What are the barriers to providing that support?
- How can states develop stronger partnerships with districts?
- How can states effectively coordinate all school improvement initiatives?
- How can there be more coherence, less fragmentation?

Focus for this conference...

- Specific information and strategies from SEAs and district partners
 - Within SEAs and in partnership with districts
 - Successes in eliminating barriers
 - Strategies for working as teams
 - Strategies for working in non-traditional ways across traditional departments

Format of this conference...

- Panel presentations; time for Q&A
 - SEA teams from Alabama and Delaware
 - SEA/District partnerships from Colorado and California
- Facilitated small group discussions
 - Following each panel
 - Time for you to process and discuss what you hear and apply it to your SEA or district
- Special interest topics



The Center

FOR COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT

Chris Rhines, Education Consultant

503-378-7201

rhinescr@comcast.net



877-277-2744

www.centerforcsri.org

1825 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20009